

**HYMNS
IN
HUMAN
EXPERIENCE**

HART



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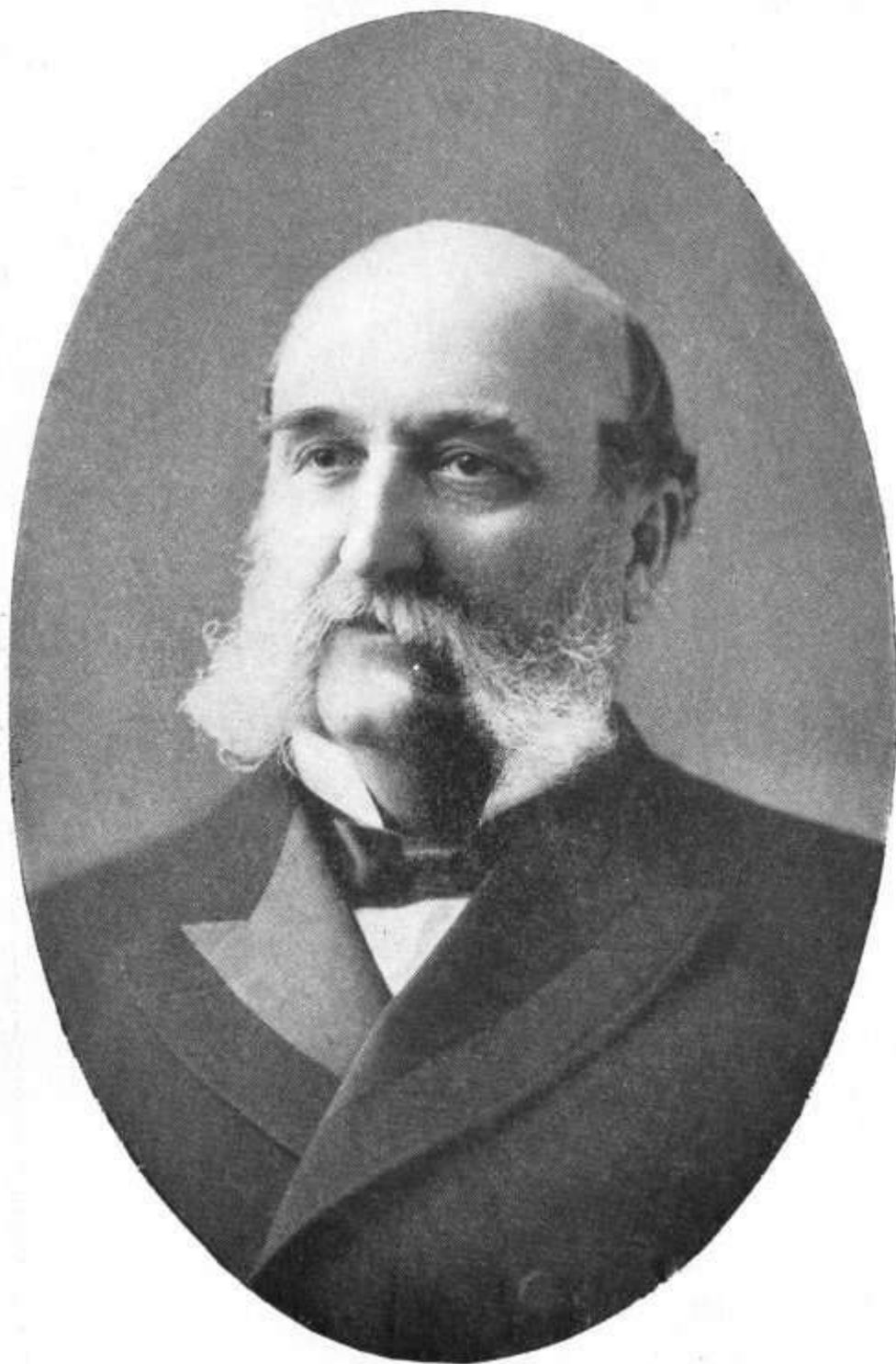
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HUMAN EXPERIENCE ***



IRA D. SANKEY

HYMNS

In Human Experience

by
WILLIAM J. HART, D.D.



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To
My Wife and Daughters

THE GOOD OLD HYMNS

*There's lots of music in 'em, the hymns of long ago;
An' when some gray-haired brother sings the ones I used to
know
I sorter want to take a hand—I think o' days gone by—
“On Jordan's stormy banks I stand and cast a wishful eye.”
There's lots of music in 'em—those dear, sweet hymns of
old,
With visions bright of lands of light and shining streets of
gold;
And I hear 'em ringing—singing, where memory dreaming
stands,
“From Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral
strands.”
We hardly needed singin' books in them old days: we knew
The words, the tunes, of every one, the dear old hymn book
through!
We had no blaring trumpets then, no organs built for show;
We only sang to praise the Lord, “from whom all blessings
flow.”
An' so I love the dear old hymns, and when my time shall
come—
Before the light has left me and my singing lips are dumb—
If I can only hear 'em then, I'll pass, without a sigh,
“To Canaan's fair and happy land, where my possessions
lie!”*

—FRANK L. STANTON in *The Atlanta Constitution*

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PREFACE

Half a million hymns, it is estimated, are written in more than two hundred languages and dialects in which Christianity is preached. Some of these are translations, but many are original expressions of the Christian faith. This extraordinary production is an impressive testimony from Christian experience.

Having for many years made a study of the influence of hymns in human experience, I have during that time gleaned material from newspapers, periodicals (both American and British) and books; and to both the authors and the publishers of these I here express my indebtedness. Little is said in this volume concerning the origin of hymns and tunes, or of their place in literature. These aspects of the subject are well discussed in "The English Hymn" by Louis F. Benson, "The Hymn as Literature" by J. B. Reeves, "The Story of the Hymns and Tunes" by T. Brown and H. Butterworth, "The Evolution of the English Hymn" by F. J. Gillman, "Stories of Great Hymns of the Church" by Silas H. Paine, "English Hymns: Their Authors and History" by S. W. Duffield, and many others.

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The chief purpose of this volume is to show how hymns have been actually used, and how people have been helped by them in different circumstances of life. Each chapter has a brief introduction bearing on the special topic, and the various incidents are linked together in a manner which gives continuity to the whole.

Some of this material was used in addresses at church services, and also in Chapel Addresses at the Northern New York Summer School for Ministerial Training. As dean of this school the author desires to associate both the members of the faculty and the student body with this volume. Their expressed appreciation of the incidents which they heard, and their urgent request for the publication of the same, encouraged me to complete this work.

I desire to make special mention of the assistance received from the Rev. Oscar L. Joseph, Litt. D. His wise counsel has been invaluable. Furthermore, he has edited the volume with the utmost care, and its final form is the result of his experience as an author and his painstaking labors. The introductory notes in each chapter were also written by Dr. Joseph and these constitute an important feature of the volume.

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Ministers and laity alike, it is believed, will find this book of value. My hope is that it may help towards a renewed emphasis upon the value of Christian experience, and a broader recognition of the rich heritage which Christianity has in its songs.

WILLIAM J. HART

Utica, New York

1931

Hymns In Human Experience

CHAPTER I

A Singing Faith

Christianity came to the world on the wings of song. From that memorable night when the angels celebrated the divine grace in “Glory to God in the Highest” up to the present day, song has been a powerful agency in spreading the Gospel of Redemption. Consider the influence of hymns in leading people to God, in giving courage to the depressed, hope to the disappointed, comfort to the sorrowing, guidance to the perplexed; in creating and confirming faith; in inspiring for the performance of duty and for steadfastness in fidelity.

The hymn holds a premier place in the literature of poetry, but it is much more than poetry. “It belongs with the things of the spirit, in the sphere of religious experience and communion with God.” Some of the best hymns which have touched and transformed the depths of human life may not meet the tests of literary critics. But more important than such academic standards is the conclusive proof that these writings have animated and sustained faith, hope and love. They have done this more effectively than any other means employed to produce these exhilarating and virtuous qualities of Christian character.

It is true that Christianity came out of a religion which has its rich heritage in the Psalter. Indeed, this is the world’s greatest hymn book; its sentences of prayer and praise have captured the hearts of generations of pious souls and ministered to their religious and moral needs. It is equally true that Christianity has liberated song far more effectively than any other religion. Of all the liturgical aids to private and public worship hymns are the most popular because of their freedom from any sectarian note and their wholesome ability to rouse emotion and direct life in ways of humane service.

This chapter is a selection of incidents which illustrate how hymns have voiced the deep instincts of the soul under a variety of circumstances. They witness to the power of the Gospel to soothe, calm

and sustain in ways hardly otherwise possible. They show how hymns are woven into the fabric of life and that in times of pressure they express the latent and active emotions which give evidence of the real worth and dignity of human personality.

Tastes differ about hymns, but many will agree with these two men concerning:

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THE SUPREME HYMN

Emerson and Oliver Wendell Holmes were once discussing what they considered the best hymn ever written. Holmes said that the hymns published by the various churches were mere bits of cabinet-work—phrases from the Scriptures or from devotional writers such as Thomas à Kempis being patched together in metrical form. Emerson signified his assent; and then Holmes, rising, continued, “In my opinion the greatest hymn ever written is this:

‘Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows,
I see from far Thy beauteous light,
Inly I sigh for Thy repose:
My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest, till it finds rest in Thee.’”

“I know, I know!” exclaimed Emerson. “That is the supreme hymn.”

Its author was Gerhard Tersteegen, one of the most prolific of German hymn writers. It was translated by John Wesley when he was in Savannah, Georgia, in 1736. It must have made a profound impression upon Holmes who wrote the hymn:

“Lord of all being, throned afar,
Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Center and soul of every sphere,
Yet to each loving heart how near!”

4

Harry Lauder, in *Roamin' in the Gloamin'*, refers to it as “that gorgeous bit of poetic imagery,” and adds that Holmes would have been the greatest hymn writer in the world had he only written some more.

The reference to John Wesley recalls an interesting incident:

WHEN TWO HYMN-WRITERS MET

On a fine summer's day in the first half of the eighteenth century a traveler on horseback, crossing one of the lovely hills of Derbyshire in England, was aroused from his meditations by the voice of singing. Pausing to listen, these words came on the still air from the valley below:

“Could we but climb where Moses stood,
 And view the landscape o'er,
 Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
 Should fright us from the shore.”

Instantly, in a clear voice, the traveler sent ringing down the hills the glad response in his brother's words:

“The promised land, from Pisgah's top,
 I now exult to see:
 My hope is full, O glorious hope!
 Of immortality.”

5

And then the two greatest little men in all England, John Wesley and Isaac Watts, met and talked together of the deep things of God.

How indebted we are to these two men for the enrichment of English hymnody! Watts sang of the majesty of God while Charles Wesley, the brother of the founder of Methodism, magnified the love of God, but all three were one in purpose. We join with Watts in singing, “Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,” and with the same enthusiasm we sing with Charles Wesley, “Jesus, Lover of My Soul.”

How profoundly Watts had influenced his contemporaries is seen in

JOHN WESLEY'S LAST HYMN

The great evangelist had reached the age of eighty-eight and his passing hence was in a cloud of glory. Arnold Lunn thus describes it in

[2]

his book *John Wesley*: “The end was very beautiful. He lingered for three days, surrounded by those who loved him. No pain, only a growing sense of weakness, and a tranquil acceptance of the inevitable. He slept much and spoke little, but sometimes the dying flame flickered up, and the inner light which had changed the face of England glowed with its old intensity. On the afternoon before he died, he surprised his friends by bursting into song:

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‘I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.’

He sang two verses and then sank back exhausted. These lines were from Watts’ well-known hymn. Some hours passed as Wesley continued to sink, and with ebbing strength his last words of triumphant faith were: “The best of all is, God is with us.”

Such a consciousness of the divine presence has sustained many others. Here is one instance entitled:

SINGING THEIR FAREWELL

Having spent forty years in educational work in England, a Scotch schoolmaster and his wife moved back to their native land to spend their days of retirement. Since they were active in one of the local churches, the membership came together for a farewell service. When they came to sing the closing hymn, choice was made of an

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[3]

arrangement of Psalm 34. Doubtless the aged couple going into the sunset period of life afterwards recalled the words which they and their friends in Christian service sang that evening:

“Through all the changing scenes of life,

In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.
... ..
Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
He'll make your wants His care."

Cheerful and encouraging words were these in which to voice a farewell.

The happy outlook of a faith which breaks out in song impressed me when I was a patient

IN THE HOSPITAL

Christmas was near, and I was a patient in a hospital away from home. The attending physician informed me that Dr. William D. Marsh, the founder of "The League of the Kindly Tongue," an organization which has a large membership in the United States as well as in some other countries, was in the same hospital on the floor below. The day he was discharged, he came to visit me. During the conversation he stated that he had recently been relearning and trying to live a hymn which he found very precious. It was one of Toplady's:

"If, on a quiet sea,
Toward heaven we calmly sail,
With grateful hearts, O God, to Thee,
We'll own the favoring gale."

Special reference was made to the last verse:

"Teach us, in every state,
To make Thy will our own;

And when the joys of sense depart,
To live by faith alone.”

Such was the hymn beloved by the man who endeavored to enlist men and women to bring their daily conversation into harmony with the Golden Rule.

This experience brought to my mind the gracious sufficiency of Him whom every believer confesses as

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“SUN OF MY SOUL”

Years of constructive service were given by Dr. Charles N. Sims to the important task of building up Syracuse University. It was during the time of the early struggles of the development of that institution that he served heroically as the Chancellor. Later there followed some years of pulpit activity. Then came the time of retirement from educational and pastoral leadership, and he returned to his native state of Indiana to spend the eventide of life.

When it was evident that the time of his home-going was near, a member of the family went to the piano and played the hymn he greatly loved. Softly also it was sung:

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

The second stanza was reached:

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

Relatives, looking on the peaceful form, then observed that he had quietly answered the call of his Lord, and that the spirit had gone to the home of many mansions.

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Here is an incident which recalls one of the bitter tragedies of the ocean. See also [page 30](#).

THEIR LAST SING-SONG

Permission was obtained from the purser of the *Titanic* to hold a song service in the saloon one Sunday evening. The Rev. E. C. Carter, of Whitechapel, London, a clergyman of the Anglican Church, was in charge. A young Scotch engineer presided at the piano.

The passengers were asked to make their selections. It was significant that many of the hymns chosen had to do with dangers at sea. There was a hushed tone with which all sang: "For those in peril on the sea."

The service lasted until after ten o'clock, with wishes exchanged by all that they might soon reach the end of their pleasant voyage by landing in New York. Little did they realize at the time that only a few miles ahead lay one peril on the sea in the iceberg that sank the great liner. The leader of this service and his wife were among the hundreds who perished ere the dawn of the next day.

The power of hymns to calm and sustain is seen in

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OTHER REFUGE HAVE I NONE

An air raid of the enemy threatened the destruction of a munitions factory "somewhere in England" where thousands of women were working, according to Mrs. Burnett Smith. A very tense feeling prevailed, for it was realized that the worst might happen at any moment. Nerves began to break a little, while sobs and screams were being heard. Then some one in a far corner began softly to sing:

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,

Let me to Thy bosom fly."

The others quickly joined in the song until all were singing softly and quietly. The danger passed, and the women were unharmed.

One can imagine the courage of that group of women rising as they prayerfully sang the words:

"Other refuge have I none;

Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me:
All my trust on Thee is stayed,
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.”

12

Their help in giving the fortitude of faith is illustrated by

AN UNFORGOTTEN SONG

A British writer has told us of an evening which he spent at a fashionable watering place in Scotland. The visitors were seated in the drawing-room, spending the evening in a leisurely manner in reading or conversing.

Presently two ladies walked up to the piano, one to sing, the other to play her accompaniment. Conversation still continued, as the air was played over. But as soon as the words were reached, a hush fell upon the audience. The piece was Topliff’s setting of “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.” The drawing-room was a large one, capable of seating some hundreds of people, and furnished in a way calculated to deaden sound. Yet every word was heard distinctly.

The man who tells the story says that next to him was sitting a man, apparently from the west of England, “endowed with a wise and gracious Christlike spirit, the fruit of many years’ experience in his Master’s service.” This man listened with rapt attention. Then he turned to his neighbor, and whispered in a hushed voice, “I can tell by the way that girl sings that she is a Christian.”

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The narrator of the incident, anxious to know more about the young lady, learned something of her experience. He records it as follows: “She had been engaged to be married to a medical man—a very fine Christian. One day, when he was staying at a place far distant from the home of his fiancée, he was suddenly stricken with typhoid fever, and died almost

immediately. The lady was not told about it till after the funeral was over. The shock was so great that she was prostrated for some days. When she was able to get about again, her lovely voice, her greatest gift, was gone. Something like paralysis of the throat prevented her speaking above a whisper. Many months after, the voice gradually came back. When she was able to sing once more with her old power, she made a solemn vow that she would devote her voice very specially to God's service. Thenceforth her most treasured possession was the Bible of her beloved. I saw it. It was crowded with notes from cover to cover, for the book was woven into its owner's life."

The secret of such a faith is finely expressed in

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SOUNDING THE SILVER TRUMPET

"I had read in the biography of Sir Edward Burne-Jones a legend which he had noted," said Dr. R. G. Gillie. "When Lucifer was cast out of the Holy City he founded a kingdom of his own, and one of his retainers, greatly caring, asked what he missed most now that he was shut out of Heaven. Pondering, the Prince of Evil paused and answered: 'I miss the sound of the silver trumpets in the morning.' According to the legend all the glad populace was called each day to labor and achievement by silver trumpets."

"Today on weary nations
The heavenly manna falls;
To holy convocations
The silver trumpet calls."

The response to this call is touchingly related in an incident:

GRANDCHILDREN OF CANNIBALS PRAISED GOD

Stirring reports were brought back from Africa by Mr. W. J. W. Roome when he went there in 1929 for the British and Foreign Bible Society. The main station of the great English Baptist Mission on the Congo is at Yakusu. When Mr. Roome arrived at this point the children

of the mission, who were the grandchildren of cannibals, greeted him by singing Lyte's great hymn.

15

“Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing?
Praise Him! praise Him! praise Him! praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King!”

The irrepressible faith in missionary work was recently advertised by

A SONG WHICH BELTED THE GLOBE

Over four thousand women attended a communion service in Columbus, Ohio, October 30, 1929. It was held in connection with the sixtieth anniversary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was thus described by Eloise Andrews Woolever in *The Christian Advocate*:

“The last great day opened with the communion service at 6:45, conducted by Bishop William F. McDowell. At 4:30 on that dark, rainy morning eight hundred women were standing on the steps of Memorial Hall. For nearly three hours the procession passed forward to receive the broken bread from the brass communion plates sent from Korea, and to drink the wine from the Chinese communion cups, and to stand a moment in prayer. And in the solemn hush one thought of the communion services being held around the world on this day, when the communion song, ‘The Light of the World is Jesus,’ would belt the globe.”

16

This is the theme, announced with variations, concerning

THE WONDROUS STORY

A company of friends were in the *Sunday School Times* party which took a trip by water from Philadelphia to the Pacific coast. In an article

on “Cruising to California,” in 1930, Dr. Charles G. Trumbull related the following:

“They were gathered together on the after-deck of the steamer, singing the old hymns. Night had come down over the ocean, the myriad stars of a tropical sky were twinkling overhead, and more than one of the Sunday School Times party who were joining in the singing were thanking God for the precious memories the old hymns brought them. Stewards and stewardesses in the service of the ship were on deck near by, resting in steamer chairs, enjoying the cool breezes and listening to the hymns.

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“It was interesting to note the deep interest with which the passengers on board listened to the singing of the old hymns. Some joined in; the lips of others were seen moving as words of the hymn were being repeated; one man removed his eyeglasses to wipe a certain mistiness from his eyes, then he rather timidly asked that a certain hymn might be sung, ‘I Will Sing the Wondrous Story.’”

Some incidents are parables of life as when a congregation

SANG AMID THE DARKNESS

Many years ago the Bishop of Ripon preached at Harrowgate on the text, “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36). Earnestly and impressively he presented Christ as the Light of the World. Those away from Christ were pictured as being out in the darkness. Tenderly urging the congregation to come into the light, he announced the hymn, “Abide With Me!” The large congregation had joined with the choir in singing the first line:

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“Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide,”

when every light in the church suddenly went out.

Without a moment of pause, however, the choir continued to follow the organ, and sang:

“The darkness deepens—Lord, with me abide!

When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,

Help of the helpless, O abide with me!”

While singing the next lines, a few of the gas jets were lit. These words were:

“Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day;
Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away;”

But the lights feebly flickered and died, and the congregation, again in darkness, continued:

“Change and decay in all around I see:
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!”

But the choir sang on to the end. When they reached the last stanza some of the gas jets were burning; and in the dim light the words were stirringly appealing:

“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!”

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The Christian Advocate gives two illustrations of the popularity of the hymn,

“GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU”

A blind man was seen crossing the street at a dangerous place in the Bronx, New York City. When a friend approached he saw that the lips of the blind man were moving, and as he listened he heard him singing softly, “God will take care of you.” When the friend made himself known to the blind man he carelessly inquired, “Why are you singing that hymn?” He replied: “The reason is that I must cross this dangerous crossing just ahead of me in about a minute, and I was thinking that possibly one of the many wagons or trucks might strike me and I would get killed. But the thought came to me that even if it did occur my soul would go straight to God. And if He led me across all right it would be just another evidence of His care of me. So I just could not help singing to myself, ‘God will take care of you.’ Hallelujah!”

A young woman who had lost both her husband and little daughter, and was left to support herself in sorrow, took a slip of paper on which was written the song, "God will take care of you," and pinned it over the place where she did her dishwashing, and testified to the great comfort the song brought to her.

20

A different kind of testimony, both interesting and exceptional, is given in

A SEXTON'S TRIBUTE TO A SINGER

Traveling amid the great artificial lakes in the Elan Valley, from which Birmingham receives its water supply from the Welsh mountains, the visitor had pointed out to him by the driver a little church on the hillside. The visitor was interested in the "little sanctuary, nestling among the green mountains," and confessed that he liked to think of places which recall the words, "It's quiet down here... And God is very near." Being a newspaper man, however, he was particularly impressed by a somewhat garbled version of the time when Dame Clara Butt sang in the little building. Later, in London, he had the opportunity of hearing the story from Dame Clara Butt herself. She was motoring with some friends through the valley beyond Llandrindod Wells and espied this simple and tiny church, without spire or tower, standing alone on the hillside. It seemed so like a little private sanctuary that she exclaimed, "I wish that little church were mine!" and halted the car, and crossed the river to have a closer look.

21

It happened that a service was almost due, and the sexton and an old companion were there; so the visitors were able to enter the sanctuary. They remained in silence a few minutes, when one of the party, pointing to the little organ, asked Dame Clara to play it and sing. She shook her head; the request was repeated; the impulse came and the singer sat at the instrument, and sang the opening lines of Liddle's setting of "Abide With Me."

In a few minutes she was conscious that the old sexton was chiming in with notes which harmonized; but, as the great voice rang through the little church, he stopped to listen, for nothing like it had ever been heard

there. When the last notes died away, he said, "But who is this lady who has sung to us?"

When he was told he held up his hands, and with tears falling, exclaimed, "The great Madame Clara Butt has come to our little church and sung to us!" Then pointing upward, he said reverently: "Ah! They heard that up there!"

22

This tribute, coming from the sexton who had himself once sung in Welsh choirs, was all the more gratifying because it was simple and spontaneous.

Here is an interesting sidelight upon

THE AUTHOR OF "BEULAH LAND"

Edgar Page Stites, the author of "Beulah Land" and many other popular hymns, was a local deacon of the Methodist Episcopal Church and served as a supply preacher in Dakota. At the outbreak of the Civil War he lived in Richmond, Virginia. After enlisting he was stationed in Philadelphia and had charge of feeding the troops which passed through that city. At the time of his death in Cape May he was the oldest insurance agent in New Jersey.

During his retirement he once wrote to a friend: "I am whittling away on my eighty-second year. Have written a great many songs the last fifty years signed 'Edgar Page,' which is the front of my name. I was enabled by great spiritual help to write 'Beulah Land' in 1876, at Philadelphia. I was wonderfully converted sixty-five years ago this month [November, 1852] and am still on board the old ship Zion."

"Uncle Joe" Cannon, ex-Speaker of the House of Representatives, once met Mr. Stites in Cape May and told him he would rather have written "Beulah Land" than to have been President of the United States. Chaplain McCabe was the first to introduce this now famous hymn to the public, singing it at a ministers' meeting in Philadelphia. Since then it has been sung around the world and during the World War it was a general favorite of the soldiers overseas.

23

And another sidelight upon the writer of

A HYMN OF CONSECRATION

Miss Frances Ridley Havergal was visiting a home in Cavendish Square, London, where the aristocracy live. She was to be a guest for five days. Knowing that several members of this family were not rejoicing Christians, she made a prayer, "Lord, give me *all* in this house." The way was opened through her singing and she entranced everyone in this home. The father, mother, children and servants were all brought clear into the Kingdom of joy and peace before she left. On the last night of her visit she was too happy to sleep, and spent the greater portion of it in meditation and prayer. Then it was that there came to her the hymn which she wrote with buoyant feeling,

24

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,"

ending with the line, "Ever, only, all for Thee."

The energy and endurance of this singing faith come from the Holy Spirit. I quote a description of a singular event in Heidelberg, Germany, written for *The Christian Advocate* by Professor J. Newton Davies. It might be called

KINDLING THE TORCHES AT THE BONFIRE

"On a June evening, the student corporations of the university, a thousand strong, assembled on the banks of the Neckar to celebrate the coming of summer. Each student carried in his hand an unlighted torch. At a given signal, they marched, singing, across the old bridge, and up the steep path to the Bismarck tower, where a bonfire blazed. At this bonfire each man lighted his torch, and then continued his march to the valley below. The thousand burning torches glinting through the dark fir trees were an unforgettable sight.

"In Jerusalem, at Pentecost, the fires of a religious enthusiasm were kindled, at the blaze of which a small band of Christians lighted the unlit torches of their personalities. With loins girt, and lamps lit, that gallant group of torchbearers set forth, singing songs of victory and triumph, to herald the advent of a New Day. As we today,

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nineteen centuries afterward, look back on their astonishing victories, we cannot but fervently join in Charles Wesley's prayer:

‘O Thou, who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart!
There let it for Thy glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble love and fervent praise.’”

One of the hymns which stirs our spirits for valiant endeavor is

“ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS”

The Rev. S. Baring Gould was the author of one hundred and forty books, showing versatility of genius in these works of religion, fiction, folklore, mythology, travel, biography, art. Many of these writings will doubtless be forgotten when a hymn which he improvised and wrote in great haste, as a marching song for a band of schoolchildren in his parish, will continue to be remembered. About this hymn, “Onward, Christian Soldiers,” the author once wrote, “Certainly nothing has surprised me more than its great popularity.”

26

The universal appeal of this hymn has justly made it a heritage of Christian civilization. It belongs to every church and nation and no one thinks of the author as an Anglican rector but as a large-hearted soul, which he truly was. It is sung by surpliced choir boys in the incense-laden air of Roman Catholic churches; and by lads without vestments in the plain country church; by the Knights of Columbus and by the Knights Templar; by Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists and every other denomination. Indeed, it is used by all Christians as a rallying call and it will so continue till the church militant becomes the Church triumphant.

The romance of American history is impressively illuminated by

A SHRINE CREATED BY A SONG

“There’s a church in the valley by the wildwood”—this song has been sung for threescore years and more in all the world. It has furthermore made famous “The Little Brown Church in the Vale,” located in the village of Nashua, Iowa. The associations of this sanctuary go back to early pioneer days when the settlers contributed lumber, logs, stone and labor for its erection. Dr. W. S. Pitts, a physician who had helped to build this church, was inspired to write the song.

The railroad came in 1868 to Nashua and the Little Brown Church began to thrive as the population had now increased to about a thousand. Dr. Pitts taught a singing school in Bradford, a few miles away. It was necessary to have an organ but the only instrument in all this region was in the Little Brown Church. His song at once gained popularity. Jubilee singers took it up and concert companies carried it all over America and Europe. It was even heard in New Zealand, Australia and South America.

The song was then forgotten and with the drift of the population away from the country the Little Brown Church was abandoned. But about twenty-five years ago the old song was revived and an interest in the little church was quickened. It was restored to its original condition, largely due to the song it had inspired. Every year thousands of visitors go to Nashua to see it. It has also become a sort of Gretna Green, for over five hundred couples have been married there. Indeed, the church is largely supported by these fees and it continues to do the work of a real country church. Seldom have a church and a song been so closely identified as in this instance.

CHAPTER II

Songs in the Night

The quality of our faith is made known in times of stress and storm, when appearances are anything but favorable and the outlook is bleak and barren. Just as the courage of the soldier is shown in the thick of the battle rather than at the camp fires, so the fortitude of the Christian is exhibited in the strife and strain of untoward circumstances. These may be caused by some calamity such as sickness or death or some serious loss. The pessimist sees only darkness and danger and is ready to let go. The optimist sees only brightness and security but is nonplused before mishaps. They are both one-sided and superficial because they reckon with a limited set of facts. The meliorist, on the other hand, is convinced that, because his faith is fixed trusting in God, he can weather the tempest and survive the severe ordeal.

It has been said that many hymns are weakened by excessive sentimentalism. This criticism carries the point too far and overlooks the fact that in the final analysis we are influenced far more by the monitions of the heart than by the admonitions of the head. What Dr. Joseph Collins calls “adult infantilism” is due, according to this keen analyst, to our failure to educate and regulate our emotions. To be sure, there is such a thing as frothy emotionalism, but when we go to the other extreme and pretend we are living in an ice pack it is often due to the inferiority complex. Better a sentimentalism which stirs our emotions than a rationalism which suppresses them.

The answer to this inept criticism is given in the following incidents. They illustrate how men and women have expressed the buoyancy of religion in the darkness of peril, accident, sorrow, suffering and other trials. It was their faith which made use of hymns to carry on until the day dawned.

Here is an incident from a memorable tragedy which tells how one

PLAYED A HYMN ON THE DECK OF A SINKING BOAT

“Wallace H. Hartley
Died April 15, 1912
‘Nearer, my God, to Thee’”

Such was the simple inscription on the rosewood coffin of one of the heroic figures of the musical realm, whose name was carried all over the world when the *Titanic* was sunk. As the boats were hurrying away from the wreck the marine band continued to play until their instruments were choked by the swirling water that closed about the musicians and sent them to heroes' graves. Of the eight bandsmen six were Englishmen, one a German and one a Frenchman. 31

Their leader was Mr. Wallace H. Hartley. One who had been with him on twenty-two voyages on the *Mauretania* states that he once casually asked him what he would do if he were on a boat which was wrecked. He promptly replied that he would play “Nearer, my God, to Thee.” And this was the hymn he led the bandsmen in playing after they had long been rendering popular tunes, when he had to make a last selection before the great ship made her final plunge.

Among the 815 passengers and 688 crew who were drowned was W. T. Stead, editor of *The Review of Reviews*. A few years previous he had published “*Hymns That Have Helped*.” In this list of the best hundred hymns, “Nearer, my God, to Thee” stands seventh. The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, sent a letter to the editor in which he expressed a preference for this hymn and said, “There is none more touching nor one that goes more truly to the heart than No. 7 on your list.” Mr. Stead made the terse comment, “The hymn is as dear to the peasant as it is to the prince.” 32

Mr. E. J. Elliott, president of the local musicians' union at Louisville, at the time of the disaster said there is a standing rule in the national organization requiring bands attending funerals of dead members to conclude the rites with this tune. “That is the last thing we play at the grave of a musician—‘Nearer, my God, to Thee.’ I believe that, knowing they were doomed as the result of their own heroism, the members of the ship's orchestra thus commended their own souls to their God, giving expression to their petition in the notes of their instruments.”

What a fitting expression for souls about to wing their way into eternity!

Equally impressive is this incident when

RESCUERS STEERED IN THE DIRECTION OF THE SINGER

When the English steamer *Stella* was wrecked on the Casquet rocks twelve women were put into a boat which the waves whirled away, leaving them helpless without even an oar. They passed a terrific night not knowing what awaited them. Wet and cold they would have perished but for the courage of one of them, Miss Marguerite Williams, who was a contralto singer.

33

There was no thought of ruining her voice at such a crisis, and through the night she sang parts from “The Messiah” and “Elijah” and also hymns. This cheered the desolate women. About four o’clock in the morning a lifeboat which was sent out to save any surviving victims came to a pause in the waters as the men heard a woman’s voice singing in the distance. The words, “Oh! rest in the Lord,” were carried to them by the wind and they promptly steered in their direction. Before long they sighted the boat with the twelve women who were taken aboard the steam launch.

The singing of Miss Williams not only braced up her companions and herself but led to their rescue.

Dr. W. T. Grenfell recounts a rescue under similar circumstances in his book [4] entitled

34

“ADRIFT ON AN ICE-PAN”

He had returned home on Easter Sunday after the service when he received an urgent call to go sixty miles to help a young man on whom he had previously operated. Crossing the ice the next day, as it was breaking up, he found that he was on a piece which was drifting into the open Atlantic. Three of his dogs were killed, and from their bones he

made a flagpole; while their coats were used to keep him warm during the night.

All night long he drifted, but was rescued in the morning, although there seemed little probability that he would be. Through the night, expecting death at any moment, there ran through his mind the words of an old hymn which came back to him from his boyhood days:

“My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home, on life’s rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say,
Thy will be done!”

Referring to this rescue, Dr. Grenfell said: “As I went to sleep that first night there still rang in my ears the same verse of the old hymn which had been my companion on the ice, ‘Thy will, not mine, O Lord.’”

There is much significance in a ceremony associated with

35

DEDICATING A LIFEBOAT

Five hundred lives had been saved by a lifeboat service at the Scilly Islands just off the coast of Cornwall, England, between 1828 and 1930. These islands are near the main lines of Atlantic travel.

A new lifeboat costing \$42,500 was dedicated in August, 1930. It was named the *Cunard* in honor of the donors, the Cunard Steamship Company. This boat is fitted with twin screws and two engines, each of forty horsepower, which could work even though the engine room were filled with water. She has water-tight compartments, generates her own electricity and is manned by a crew of eight men.

Two prayers were offered by ministers, and two hymns were sung. Led by the local band, the assembled company, who fully realized the perils of the great waters, joined in singing:

“Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bids’t the mighty ocean deep,

Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.
“O Christ, whose voice the waters heard
And hushed their raging at Thy word,
Who walkedst on the foaming deep,
And calm amid the storm didst sleep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.”

36

Equally appropriate was the second hymn rendered:

“O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!”

The confidence of such faith is illustrated in

WHAT LED TO “HE LEADETH ME”

The birthplace of this world-renowned hymn was marked in Philadelphia by a tablet containing the first stanza and the following inscription:

“‘He Leadeth Me,’ sung throughout the world, was written by the Rev. Dr. Joseph H. Gilmore, a son of a Governor of New Hampshire, in the home of Deacon Wattson, immediately after preaching in the First Baptist Church, northwest corner Broad and Arch Streets, on the 26th day of March, 1862. The church and Deacon Wattson’s house stood on the ground on which this building is erected.

37

“The United Gas Improvement Company, in recognition of the beauty and fame of the hymn, and in remembrance of its

distinguished author, makes this permanent record on the first day of June, 1926.”

The subject of the sermon was the Twenty-third Psalm, especially the words “He leadeth me.” After the service a few met with the minister and rehearsed the impression, emphasizing the timeliness of the sermon, since this was the darkest hour of the War of Rebellion. “Then and there,” wrote Dr. Gilmore, “on a blank page of the brief from which I had intended to speak, I penciled the hymn, handed it to my wife, and thought no more about it.”

It was later published in a Boston paper, which attracted the attention of William B. Bradbury, who set the hymn to music. Since then it has gone on its mission, translated into several languages and sung by people of different churches. Bishop Paddock had it included in the revised hymnal of the Protestant Episcopal Church, saying “how could I conduct a service in a home for the aged if I couldn’t give out ‘He Leadeth Me’?”

38

This hymn was once sung in a Chinese court of justice by a native who had never seen a white missionary, to show the presiding judge what a Christian hymn was like. The man was being tried for renting a building to some Christians who had opened an opium refuge. When he told the justice that at their meetings the Christians prayed and sang hymns, he was asked for a specimen and sang “He Leadeth Me.”

How a crisis was averted is seen when

A GERMAN GIRL LED IN SINGING “A MIGHTY FORTRESS”

A few years ago there was a fearful accident at the coal mines near Scranton, Pennsylvania. Several men were buried for three days and all hopes of their rescue seemed to be futile. Most of the miners in this region were Germans. Their excitement was intensified by sympathy for the wives and children of the buried men and their failure to rescue them.

On the third day at evening, a mob assembled at the mouth of the mine in a sullen temper because it was hopeless to dig further since the men were probably dead by this time, and in their mad rage they blamed

the rich mine owners for the tragedy. They were ready for any violence if only some reckless word was spoken.

The atmosphere was tense but it was suddenly changed when a little German girl, about eleven years of age, pale with fear, lifted her voice in song. She began in a hoarse whisper but her childish voice gathered strength as she went on with the first verse of Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

There was silence as these lines fell on the ears of the Germans, familiar with them from the cradle. Others joined and before long the whole company were singing:

"Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Doth ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth is His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle."

The tide was turned and, encouraged, they resumed their work and kept at it. Before morning the joyful news came up from the pit that the men were found and that they were alive. What a word in season was this girl's hymn!

Here is a touching story about

WHAT A BLIND SOLDIER WANTED TO HEAR

When a Salvation Army officer was conducting a song service in the wards of the hospital at Bazeilles, France, where there were many wounded American soldiers during the World War, a blind lad asked them to sing something for him. The choice was appropriate and pathetic as he expressed a desire to hear the old hymn:

“Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!”

One can easily imagine that the words prayerfully expressed the deepest desire of his soul.

The theme of this chapter is impressively brought home concerning a girl who was

41

BLIND AND LONELY, BUT STILL SINGING

She had just entered her 'teens when she was stricken with tuberculosis. Sent to the Adirondacks, she did not recover. Later she went to the home of her grandparents, and there she died. She was a member of the Sunday School in the church of which I was then pastor. She had a sweet, clear voice, and on special occasions she was generally on the program for a solo.

When called to conduct the funeral, her relatives told me that the night before she died she became blind. Unable to see, she three times called, “Papa, Papa, Papa!” But her father was not present to respond to her call.

Not long afterwards she broke into song. Those watching with her were deeply moved as she began:

“Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide,
[5]
God will take care of you.”

She sang the entire hymn, even to the last verse:

“No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast,
God will take care of you.

42

God will take care of you,
Thro' ev'ry day, o'er all the way;
He will take care of you,
God will take care of you."

When the morning came, God took her into the heavenly home, and she had passed from darkness and pain to light and joy.

How a night of sorrow ended is seen when a man was

TRANSFIGURED BY MATHESON'S HYMN

Dr. George Matheson, the blind preacher of Edinburgh, is best remembered by his hymn, "O Love, that wilt not let me go," written when forty years of age. "It is the quickest composition I ever achieved," wrote the author. "It was done in three minutes. I was sitting alone in my study in a state of great mental depression, caused by a real calamity. My hymn was the voice of my depression. It was wrung out spontaneously from the heart." A close friend of Matheson testified that the distinctive ideals of this hymn "possessed him all his life." Many thousands of people have been stirred and comforted by its gracious message.

43

A missionary from India attended a service in Algiers, Africa, where about sixty people were present, mostly tourists. After the sermon this hymn was announced, and as the minister was reading the first verse a man of perhaps fifty was seen to change seats with the lady organist. Suddenly the keys were touched and the little American organ seemed to take on new life. Surely a master was at the keys. He played and sang and carried the congregation to heavenly heights of rapture. The deep emotion of the organist, his face stained with tears, passed to the audience and the climax was reached when the last verse was sung:

"O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red

Life that shall endless be.”

After the service several went forward to thank the organist. He received them with a quiet smile and quickly left the church. It was discovered later that he was a distinguished British singer. Two years previous to this incident, his wife lay dying. She was an American lady of great musical ability. She asked him to sing this hymn as she was passing into the shadow of death. And this was the first time he had ventured to sing it again since that trying day. No wonder his soul spoke from the depths, as through this hymn he was passing from the Darkness of sorrow to the Light which followed all his way, like many another pilgrim on the journey of trial and travail.

44

The secret of strength in weakness is given in this confession of faith:

“THROUGH CHEERFUL YEARS MY GUIDE”

Consecrated and cultured, a young man began his work in the ministry of Jesus Christ in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Unsparing of himself, he labored with intense earnestness. Popularity was soon achieved, and he was placed in responsible centers of influence. Success came to him in each successive field of activity.

Faith and character had to meet severe tests. While in the very prime of life, health failed. Operation after operation was performed, but without avail. Courageously he met the situation, and though unable to do much public work, he continued to cultivate his brilliant mind.

Over and over again during those last days of weakness and suffering he quoted the hymn of Dr. Frank Mason North, which had grown to be his favorite among the many hymns he knew. He (the Rev. Charles L. Peck) told the writer he believed the hymn was destined to become increasingly popular. It was sung at his funeral.

45

“Jesus, the calm that fills my breast,
No other heart than Thine can give;
This peace unstirred, this joy of rest,
None but Thy loved ones can receive.

... ..
O Christ, through changeful years my Guide,
My Comforter in sorrow's night,
My Friend when friendless—still abide,
My Lord, my Counselor, my Light.
My times, my powers, I give to Thee;
My inmost soul 'tis Thine to move;
I wait for Thy eternity,

[6]

I wait, in peace, in praise, in love.”

The Christian heroism of another young man is described in what might be called

46

“THROUGH EVERY DAY” FOR A THOUSAND DAYS

He was in training to be a physician when he was stricken with a deadly disease. He then resolved to face the situation manfully. Dr. Merton S. Rice thus refers to this case:

“He immediately adopted every precaution in what he knew must be a long, long contest, if he should live. Day after day, for weeks, months and years, that indomitable young soul fought that fight with death. Every day he held scientific record of his life for one thousand and fifteen days. He has charted on an unbroken chart the full record of his heart and his temperature, and in eleven volumes of carefully listed observations of life pursued by death he has left us this great story. Through it all, and down to the very last breath of it all he has sung, and then asked us to sing when he was gone:

“Through every day,
O'er all the way,
God will take care of you.”

Here is what a veteran confessed at a time when he

“SANK IN BLISSFUL DREAMS AWAY”

“I am now in my seventy-third year, and just completing the fiftieth year of my ministry,” said the Rev. T. Ferrier Hulme, D.D., fraternal delegate from the Wesleyan Methodist Church of England to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Kansas City, May, 1928. In closing his address he said:

47

“May I give you my experience? I have known Jesus for many years. I have been preaching for fifty years. Twelve years ago it seemed as if my work was done. I was laid low by a terrible illness, and had to undergo a major operation that might well have been fatal. My life was in the balance. I said: ‘Charles Wesley, What have you for me? Give me something short and sweet.’ And he gave me:

‘Jesus, the first and last,
On whom my soul is cast;
Thou didst Thy work begin
In blotting out my sin;
Thou wilt the root remove,
And perfect me in love.
Yet when the work is done,
The work is but begun;
Partaker of Thy grace
I long to see Thy face;
The first I prove below,
The last I die to know.’

48

“I repeated it to the last line, and then sank in blissful dreams away. When I came out from that nursing home, before I could walk, I just crawled to Charles Wesley’s grave near this home and gave God thanks for all that Charles Wesley had been to Christendom, and especially for what he had been to me.”

The following letter, quoted in part, from a woman who underwent an operation tells of the influence of

HYMNS IN HOSPITAL

“I am sending you my testimony for the prayer meeting. First I want you to thank God with me and for me that all is well. Then ask God to bless each and every nurse up here because they certainly are a splendid lot. They hold chapel here every morning. The day I was operated they sang, ‘I need thee every hour.’ I felt they were just singing that for me.

“I was terribly frightened when I lay on the table but I prayed that God would be near me. I certainly felt His presence. I could not see Him, neither could I see the two doctors in the operating room but I knew they were there just the same. Do you wonder that the first words I said after the operation were, ‘O Light that followest all my way’?

49

“It surely means something to have a Friend who can go with you down even to the valley of the shadow of death. The next morning was the worst yet and they sang:

‘Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.’

“What do you think of that? Why, if I had been the only one in the hospital they could not have sung anything better for me.

“Just across the way from me there lies a lady very ill, and the other night while I was awake, I heard her singing, soft and sweet and trembling,

‘Or if my way lie
Where death o’erhanging nigh,
My soul doth terrify
With sudden chill.’

And then her voice came out strong:

‘Yet I am not afraid:
Whilst softly on my head
Thy tender hand is laid,
I fear no ill.’”

50

Here is another testimony when

PATIENTS LISTENED TO “PRECIOUS NAME”

Early one morning in a city hospital, above the distracting noise, there was heard the sweet voice of a woman repeatedly singing the refrain:

“Precious Name, O how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven.”

No silver bell ever sounded more clearly and no appeal was more winsome than these lines as they were heard by the sick and dying. It is not known whether she herself was a sufferer. In any case her message wafted through the air came with cheering timeliness to the men and women on their beds of sickness. One who heard it then has not forgotten its effect after fifteen years, and it will be a choice memory for years to come.

The reference to the bell recalls an incident when

CHURCH BELLS REMINDED HER OF AN OLD HYMN

An aged saint who dwelt beneath the shadow of her church was lying in a last sickness and it occurred to her pastor that the peals, breaking the stillness of the night, might disturb her. On being told about it, she said:

51

“Not at all, I love to hear them. It’s the kirk bell; and whenever I hear it, it makes me think of the hymns we used to sing:

‘Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o’er land and sea.’”

She then added, “It’s His voice, and it’s sic a comfort to me. I aye weary to hear it.”

52

CHAPTER III

Hymns Mothers Loved

It may be disputed whether religion is an inheritance or an acquisition but the fact remains that the influence of personality is the final explanation. And who has exercised such a power more beneficially than mothers? They constitute the heart of every home, the first and the last in everything. Whoever may fail us in the tumult and struggle of life, our mothers have never gone back on us but have remained steadfast even at the cost of incredible sacrifices. Indeed, mothers hold the key to every difficult situation in life, and they have opened doors closed to every other approach. During the World War most of the letters from the Front were written by the boys to their mothers, and this daily mail ran far into the tons.

By their faith, devotion and consolation our mothers have done for us what no other mortals have ever been capable of doing. Even when we are inclined to make an exception of our wives, it is really the mother instinct in them which makes them so indispensable to us. Quick in sympathy, ready in resource, patient in trials, versatile in ability and adaptability, mothers stand sentinel in the crises of life, and because of intuition and inspiration they are the saviors of society.

53

God be praised for our mothers, and may the blessing of the Eternal Father abide with all mothers, that they may continue to fulfill their gracious ministry for the highest welfare of mankind. This sheaf of testimonies bears glowing witness from grateful hearts to the sacramental virtue of mothers. May their memory be forever blessed!

The Bible and the hymnal were the two books from which our mothers received their spiritual replenishment. This poem by the Rev. G. H. Winkworth tells of the hymnal which he fittingly describes as

“The old brown book was worn and finger-stained.
To touch it gently children’s hands were trained.
It had within the hymns that mother sang
In peaceful worship after church bells rang.
I hear her voice again so sweet and clear,
According praise to Christ her Saviour dear.
The old brown book had words that blessed her soul;
She sang them, ‘While the nearer waters roll.’
’Tis years since mother gently passed to rest,
And hands were gently folded on her breast,
She sleeps, but in our ears the old hymns ring—
The sweet old hymns that mother used to sing.
The years are passing onward one by one,
And with them changes to the church have come;
The old brown book no longer fills its place;
We struggle now to sing new hymns of grace.
But when the Sabbath evening takes us home,
And we are gathered there with friends alone,
We take the old brown book and once more sing,
‘Hide thou beneath the shadow of Thy wing.’
And who can tell but what in heaven above
They sing again the old sweet hymns we love?
We only know that when we sing them here
They bring to us the Heavenly Presence near.
Thus we can fight life’s battle calm and sweet,
Each unborn day with courage wait to meet,
‘Blest be the tie that binds,’ we smooth the way,

‘Nearer my God to Thee’ each closing day.
The old brown book a treasure still we keep,
The same old hymns that rocked our friends to sleep;
And if we fail to catch the newest strain,
Our hearts would sing the old hymns once
[7]
again.”

55

The same theme is continued in another poem by Maud Frazer Jackson in *The Sunday School Times*, entitled,

“MY MOTHER’S SONG”

“I heard a song that touched my heart
And filled my eyes with tears.
It was the song my mother sang
In long-departed years,—
‘Only trust Him, only trust Him,
Only trust Him now;
He will save you, He will save you,
He will save you now.’
How sweet the words that gave me hope
That I might be restored,—
‘Come, every soul by sin oppressed,
There’s mercy with the Lord.’
I seemed to hear her gentle voice
As in the long ago,—
‘Plunge now into the crimson flood
That washes white as snow.’
She knows tonight, my mother knows,

Up there, her prayers are heard;
For Jesus gives the wanderer rest,
I'm 'trusting in His Word.'”

56

Dr. W. J. Dawson, in his reminiscences entitled *The Autobiography of*
[8]
a Mind, thus refers to

THE NOTE OF ASSURANCE IN THE OLD HYMNS

“I came the other day upon a Methodist hymnal bearing the date of 1877, and in it I found the hymns which my mother loved to quote, and I was struck with their depth of emotion, their genuine spiritual quality. They have a note of profound assurance which I miss in the modern hymns.

‘Leader of faithful souls, and guide
Of all who travel to the sky,
Come and with us, even us, abide
Who would on Thee alone rely.
On Thee alone our spirits stay
While held in life’s uneven way.’

“How fine is the crusading note in this verse! Particularly noble in sentiment and emotion are the numerous hymns dealing with death and the future state. Here is one which I confess I read with tears:

‘Rejoice for a brother deceased,
Our loss is his infinite gain;
A soul out of prison released,
And freed from its bodily chain.
With songs let us follow his flight
And mount with his spirit above,
Escaped to the mansions of light,

57

And lodged in the Eden of love.’

One can fancy this hymn sung by Cornish fishermen over one of their numbers lost at sea.”

The sacred memories of the past may slumber for a while but they are often awakened under favorable conditions, as seen on this occasion, as reported in *The British Weekly*, when

CANADIAN RAILROAD MEN SANG IN MEMORY OF MOTHER

A student of Manitoba University, Winnipeg, accepted camp service for the long vacation in connection with the building of the last transcontinental railroad in Canada. He became one of the men and soon made friends with them. After the midday meal on the first Sunday he asked “the boys” if they would “roll up” to the service he proposed to hold? The tent was crowded. He started the service by asking if any of them remembered their mother’s favorite hymn. He was answered at once by one who said his mother liked best “Rock of Ages, Cleft For Me.” So it was sung, and, like other “mothers’ favorites,” it was sung over and over again. The service continued till eleven o’clock and under that star-lit northern sky they left the tent for their bunks, resolving that the God of the old home should be their God. By many a bunk that night the prayer went to heaven:

58

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

The result was equally beneficial in another instance when John Callahan

HEARD MOTHER’S HYMN IN A MISSION

He was long superintendent of Hadley Mission in New York City, and known as “the Bishop of the Bowery.” He said, “It was ‘Abide With Me’ that I heard in a mission, and that I had not heard since it was sung when I was six years old at my mother’s funeral, that brought me to my senses and made me realize that I was not traveling on the right road.”

The same effect was produced at the front when fond memories made

VOICES HUSKY WITH EMOTION

The message of the Gospel took on a reality it had never worn before as the story of the Cross was recounted by the Salvationists to the American soldiers in France. The thunder of artillery was heard; and the flashing of signal lights, together with the hum of the airplanes, vivified the whole background of war. After an address on the God of their mothers a young woman began to sing:

“I grieved my Lord from day to day,
 I scorned His love so full and free,
 And though I wandered far away,
 My mother’s prayers have followed me.
 I’m coming home, I’m coming home,
 To live my wasted life anew,
 For mother’s prayers have followed me,
 Have followed me the whole world through.”

Many hearts echoed the words; and the voices of the men were husky with emotion when they tried to join in the closing hymn.

A different testimony is given where one

WANTED TO HEAR THE HYMNS THAT MOTHER LOVED BEST

Countess Somers, the mother of Lady Henry Somerset, presented Frances E. Willard with a music-box. This may still be seen in Rest Cottage, Evanston, Illinois. The little guide-book, *Historic Rest Cottage*, says:

“When this music-box was to be made, Miss Willard was asked what music she would most enjoy and she instantly replied: ‘The hymns that mother loved best.’ So the visitor hears, ‘How firm a foundation’; ‘Nearer, my God, to Thee’; ‘While the days are going by’; ‘There is a

land of pure delight'; 'Home, sweet home' and 'In heavenly love abiding.'”

Concerning this first hymn the following incident tells how Miss Frances Willard's mother

SALUTED HER FAVORITE HYMN

“There was the gay summer ‘garden party’ at Rest Cottage (Evanston, Illinois) in honor of Anna Gordon’s birthday with Miss Willard as master of ceremonies, when speeches and presentation of gifts, poems and tributes, were in order. And at the close all united in singing ‘How firm a foundation,’ as the aged saint, Miss Willard’s venerable mother, then in her closing eighty-eighth year, rose on the upper balcony, where she sat enjoying the bright scene in the garden, to wave her handkerchief in salutation at the words of her favorite hymn,

61

‘And when hoary hairs shall their temples adorn,

Like lambs they shall still in My bosom be borne.’”

The substantial faith of mothers is illustrated in the case of one who

SANG THE NICENE CREED

The sixth child in a family of eight, Joseph Von Wittig was born in a one-room cottage. He tells us how his mother used to sing before her marriage in the choir of the village church. “What did you like best to sing, mother?” he once asked her, and she answered, “The Creed.” He remembered a day when she was busy with field-work, and he heard her clear voice rising in the closing words of the Nicene Creed, *et vitam venturi sæculi*, “and the life of the world to come.”

The foretaste of the life to come has been enjoyed in the present life, to judge from these words by Bishop Adna W. Leonard, in his book, *Evangelism in the Remaking of the World*,

[9]

concerning his mother's

62

SINGING WHILE SLEEPING

“My own dear mother as she lay upon her dying bed, after many years of the severest suffering and invalidhood, fell into a very sound sleep. It was only a night or two before her outgoing. My father was keeping his faithful vigil, when suddenly he heard a familiar voice singing,

‘O Thou, in whose presence my soul takes delight,
On whom in affliction I call,
My comfort by day, and my song in the night,
My hope, my salvation, my all!’

“It was my mother’s voice singing in a marvelously clear tone the hymn that had been a favorite with her all her life. Though asleep she sang every verse clear through to the end. Other members of the family were awakened by it and listened in breathless silence, for it was like the song of an angel. She did not waken for some time after she had ceased singing, and when told of what had taken place she was not surprised, for the hymns of the church had been such a comfort to her throughout her entire life.”

Another witness is Dr. Oscar L. Joseph who on every Mother’s Day has his congregation sing

63

“PEACE, PERFECT PEACE”

Beyond all other hymns, his mother loved this one written by Bishop Edward H. Bickersteth. She often sang it in the family circle. No burden or distraction could interfere with the “perfect peace” which Christ imparted to her soul. Hence, when she died, it was the message she wished to have set over her resting place. So on her tombstone in Ceylon may be found the three words:

“Peace, Perfect Peace.”

When the members of the congregation hear this bit of family history from the lips of their pastor, they most feelingly sing at his request:

“Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?”

The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.
Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?
To do the will of Jesus,—this is rest.

... ..

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus, we know, and He is on the throne.

64

... ..

It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace."

The sacrificial loyalty to Christ is seen when

A MOTHER ANSWERED WITH A HYMN

A missionary secretary of one of the Methodist churches in England once went to see a mother whose only remaining son had offered himself for foreign mission service. Two other sons had gone to the same country and there they had laid down their lives in the service of Christ and the natives. The secretary sympathetically referred to this pathetic fact, and wished to ascertain from the mother whether the last of her boys was to go with her full consent.

The mother grasped the trend of the visitor's conversation, and, without waiting for the secretary to put the direct question, she very quietly repeated the lines she so often sang in church, which conveyed her spirit of surrender:

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

65

There was no need for further questioning. The secretary said in my hearing, "I knelt with that mother and her boy and we had a tearful but beautiful season of prayer."

It is not surprising that in the soldiers' hours of danger, according to [10]
The War Romance of the Salvation Army, by Booth and Hill,

MOTHER HELD HER PLACE IN THEIR HEARTS

The night of the St. Mihiel drive was the blackest night ever seen. It was so dark that one could positively see nothing a foot ahead of him. All that was heard was the sound of thousands of feet tramping, through the mud and slush, as the soldiers went to the front. In groups they were singing softly as they went by. One group was singing "Mother Machree."

“There’s a spot in me heart that no colleen may own,
There’s a depth in me soul never sounded or known;
There’s a place in me memory, me life, that you fill, 66
No other can take it, no one ever will;
Sure, I love the dear silver that shines in your hair,
And the brow that’s all furrowed and wrinkled with care.
I kiss the dear fingers, so toil-worn for me;
O, God bless you and keep you!
Mother Machree!”

The simple pathos of the men's voices, many of whom were tramping forward to their death, brought tears to the eyes of the Salvation Army lassies in the canteen.

After an interval, sweetly and solemnly through the chill of the darkness there came floating by, with a thrill in the words, another group of voices:

“Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens—Lord, with me abide!”

CHAPTER IV

When Preachers Sing

Even in these days of pulpit exchanges, ministers show their denominational alliances in their sermons. Not so when it comes to hymns, which are more catholic and comprehensive than creeds and other ecclesiastical pronouncements. Indeed, the hymnal of any church contains the writings of Catholics and of Protestants of every variety, for most hymns express the deeper aspirations of the soul without any sectarian accent. They are admitted into these compilations because of their intrinsic worth as transcripts from Christian experience, dealing with the essential truths of the Gospel. There is a healthy omission of those incidentals which interrupt whole-hearted Christian fellowship with all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept Him as their central authority.

If our preaching were as free and fervent as the hymns sung by ministers and people, and if our practice more closely harmonized with the sentiments in hymns, the day of Christian union would come more quickly. Here are some incidents which illustrate the ability of ministers to make melody in their hearts as unto the Lord.

It is in a crisis that the depths of the heart are exposed as here when

68

A MINISTER REQUESTED HIS FAVORITE HYMN

Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, England, preached a beautiful sermon in memory of his college friend, the Rev. E. S. Glanville, of Warwick. He told how the dying minister had requested his father and sister to sing to him his favorite hymn, and they sat in the chamber of death and sang:

“There is a land of pure delight,

Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.”

Equally significant was the

MARCHING SONG OF VETERAN MINISTERS

When the names of the forty-five retired ministers were called in the Baltimore Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1930, these men who were facing the sunset period of life stood and sang:

“Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord
And thus surround the throne.”

69

“The light that never was on sea or land” crept into their faces as they recalled the days and the songs of their pilgrimage, and blended their voices in the triumphant refrain:

“We’re marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion;
We’re marching upward to Zion,
The beautiful city of God.”

Then, to give emphatic expression to their Christian joy, when Dr. Charles W. Baldwin, a veteran leader, ninety-one years of age, gave the signal, they exclaimed in unison: “Hallelujah!”

But those who are in active service show their spirit of consecration by being

READY FOR ANOTHER DAY’S WORK

The business had been transacted, the committees had reported, and the resolutions of appreciation had been read. The closing moments of the Methodist Conference were approaching. Soon the presiding bishop would read the appointments, and one hundred and eighty ministers would enter on a new year of ministry. Several of these would be assigned to new fields.

Many had seen years of service. For some of them this would probably be the closing year, for it generally happens that during the year some fall at the post of duty. But among the number there were nine young men who for the first time would enter on their great adventure of ministerial service.

The closing hymn selected was one rarely heard at such a moment, yet it was impressively appealing, and soon all the ministers were blending their voices in the words of Miss Warner:

“One more day’s work for Jesus,
One less of life for me!
But heaven is nearer,
And Christ is dearer
Than yesterday, to me.”

In connection with what was said above about young ministers, it was an impressive occasion

WHEN A BISHOP SANG AT THE ORDINATION SERVICE

A group of young men were ordained into the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church on a glorious Sunday afternoon in May in the presence of many hundreds of ministers, relatives and others. The service apparently was about to end when Bishop Adna W. Leonard knelt inside the altar by the side of these young preachers. By pre-arrangement with the organist, the strains of music softly came and then the voice of the bishop was heard singing the expressively appropriate words:

“It may not be on the mountain’s height,

Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle's front
My Lord will have need of me;
But if by a still small voice He calls
To paths that I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine,
I'll go where You want me to go."

The young ministers who had just taken upon themselves the solemn vows of the ordination service then joined with the soloist in the chorus:

"I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord,
O'er mountain or plain or sea;
I'll say what You want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what You want me to be."

72

The voice of the bishop was again heard:

"Perhaps today there are loving words
Which Jesus would have me speak;
There may be now in the paths of sin
Some wanderer whom I should seek.
O Saviour, if Thou wilt be my guide,
Tho' dark and rugged the way,
My voice shall echo Thy message sweet,
I'll say what You want me to say."

Then for the second time, the young ministers united their voices with the one who was leading them in song, as together they rendered the chorus.

The third stanza followed, by the Bishop:

"There's surely somewhere a lowly place,
In earth's harvest fields so wide,

Where I may labor through earth's short day,
For Jesus the crucified;
So trusting my all to His tender care,
And knowing Thou lovest me,
I'll do Thy will with a heart sincere,
[\[11\]](#)
I'll be what You want me to be.”

Hundreds of eyes by this time were mist-filled, and it was with difficulty that many could control their voices when Bishop Leonard asked the entire company to sing the refrain. Soon, however, about twelve hundred voices were songfully pledging their loyalty to their Lord as they sang the words of the chorus.

73

Few were the words spoken by the leader of the service before another hymn was rendered:

“I need Thee every hour,
Most gracious Lord;
No tender voice like Thine
Can peace afford.”

These lines voiced a prayer for divine strength, guidance and blessing. With the young ministers now standing at the altar, young people were asked to consecrate their lives to the service of Christ. From all parts of that historic church young men and young women moved forward until sixty of them had publicly registered their decision. Some of them for the first time took their stand for Christ, others expressed a desire to become ministers, missionaries, workers in their home churches.

The effects of this service will remain for many years. For there went forth from that church in the central part of the Empire State of New York a great company of hearts touched by the Spirit of God and resolved to render faithful devotion to Christ's cause.

The consciousness of the divine providence was emphasized in the confession:

74

“THOU MY DAILY TASK SHALL GIVE”

When sixty ministers, heads of various Summer Schools of Ministerial Training in the Methodist Episcopal Church, met in Evanston, Illinois, to review the work of the previous year and to plan for the future, the leader of the devotions one morning called attention to a hymn of great personal value. Then, on that January day, it was sung with deep feeling as the ministers were just entering on their task for another year. This hymn was written by a layman, Josiah Conder, who “passed a busy life as bookseller, editor and author.” It is well worth committing to memory; at least, such was the conviction of that group of ministers who sang:

“Day by day the manna fell:
O to learn this lesson well!
Still by constant mercy fed,
Give me, Lord, my daily bread.
‘Day by day,’ the promise reads,
Daily strength for daily needs:
Cast foreboding fears away;
Take the manna of today.
Lord! my times are in Thy hand:
All my sanguine hopes have planned,
To Thy wisdom I resign,
And would make Thy purpose mine.
Thou my daily task shalt give:
Day by day to Thee I live;
So shall added years fulfill,
Not my own, my Father’s will.”

75

The assurance of divine guidance was expressed in the declaration:

“ALL MY HELP FROM THEE I BRING”

“When ... storms of unpopularity and tempests of financial disaster threaten the tiny bark upon life’s troubled seas,” wrote Sir Henry Lunn, “my friend and colleague, Hugh Price Hughes, whose ministry in some small degree I shared, asked me to believe with confidence that there was One ‘in the heavens to give attention to our personal concerns,’ and taught me to say with a new emphasis, ‘Thou, O Christ, art all I want,’

‘Other refuge have I none,

76

Hangs my helpless soul on Thee,

... ..

All my trust on Thee is stayed,

All my help from Thee I bring.’

“And now that the limit of three score years and ten is passed and life’s journey must be drawing to a close, I say triumphantly: ‘Here I raise my Ebenezer. Hitherto the Lord hath helped me and hither by His grace I have come.’”

Episcopal dignity was enriched on a recent occasion when, according to *Zion’s Herald*,

BISHOPS SANG THEIR SPECIAL HYMN

When the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church held their semi-annual meeting in San Francisco, in November, 1929, they were given a reception and a banquet. Eight hundred persons assembled to do them honor, including officials of the city and the state. The bishops contributed a vocal number to the evening’s entertainment. Bishop Francis J. McConnell, with his richly melodious voice, led his colleagues in the episcopal hymn, ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.’ Those present insisted on an encore, but as the episcopal repertoire is limited to a single number, the bishops could only modestly bow their acknowledgments to the sustained applause.

77

But these bishops are not really confined to just one hymn, for they also sang on another occasion

“LAND ME SAFE ON CANAAN’S SIDE”

The most remarkable feature of the singing of the Board of Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, wrote Bishop Francis J. McConnell, when reporting one of their meetings in Boston in May, 1930, consisted in their skill in fitting almost any song to the “only tune which I have heard them sing with any conspicuous success.” Reference was then made to a dramatic moment “when that one tune was sung with marvelous power.” Bishop Earl Cranston, at the age of eighty-nine, “had just made a farewell speech in which he had said that he did not see how he could again attend the Bishops’ Meeting. At the conclusion of the address the bishops sang, adapting their favorite tune, the stanza: ‘When I tread the verge of Jordan.’”

One can easily imagine that scene, and how deeply affected the others were after listening to the words of the veteran leader. It is difficult to conceive anything which would have been more appropriate for such a time than the words in which the company blended their voices:

78

“When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Bear me through the swelling current,
Land me safe on Canaan’s side:
Songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee.”

This confidence of immortality is also shared by others as seen on a memorable occasion when

MINISTERS SANG THEIR HOPE

Many ministers had assembled to pay their last tribute to a comrade who had fallen while in the ranks of service. Words of commendation were spoken concerning the fidelity and devotion of the one whom God had called in the prime of life. Prayers were offered. Soon the body, accompanied by the bereaved relatives, would start for the little cemetery

in the boyhood home. But before leaving the church where the services were conducted, the ministers stepped forward, surrounded the casket, and united their voices in singing:

“There’s a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way,
To prepare us a dwelling-place there.”

79

The refrain voiced the assurance of immortality cherished and preached by that company of pastors:

“In the sweet by-and-by,
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.”

80

CHAPTER V

Songs of Soldiers

When faced by the stern realities of life and death, it is not easy for any person to practice the subtle art of camouflage so far as faith and destiny are concerned. The experiences of G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, one of the war chaplains at the Front, were similar to those of other men engaged in ministering to the religious needs of the soldiers. He was once brought face to face with one of the boys in a crisis, and was asked the pointed question: "What is God like?" The soldiers who know that God is like Christ the Sufferer and Sympathizer, have an assurance that gives them courage to go through the rough and distracting ordeal on the field of battle. This was true in the World War and in all similar grim encounters.

Another chaplain, Thomas Tiplady, wrote that when the great hours draw near, and even in the lighter hours, the soldiers like hymns most of all, and at the religious services they cannot have too many hymns. They care little for patriotic songs since they are living their patriotism in the severe struggle with the enemy. The hymns for which they have a special preference are those which give them cheer and hope and deepen their consciousness of the presence of the Comrade Christ.

81

These incidents belong to our Civil War and to later wars. But in essence they bear on the same themes and frankly reveal the recesses and the resources of the soul.

The unexpected turns in war are illustrated in

A MEMORY OF PICKETT'S BRIGADE

Reminiscences were being exchanged by veterans of both sides of the Civil War at a banquet given in their honor by the Board of Trade of New York City. Colonel J. J. Phillips, of the Ninth Virginia Regiment,

Pickett's Division, presided. Speaking of night attacks, he recalled one in particular because of the peculiar circumstances which resulted almost in the compulsory disobedience of orders, in response to a higher command.

“The point of attack had been carefully selected,” said Colonel Phillips, “the awaited dark night had arrived, and my command was to fire when General Pickett should signal the order.

“There was that dread, indescribable stillness; that weird ominous silence that always settles over everything before a fight. You felt that nowhere in the universe was there any voice or motion.

82

“Suddenly the awesome silence was broken by the sound of a deep, full voice rolling over the black void like the billows of a great sea, directly in line with our guns. It was singing the old hymn, ‘Jesus, Lover of My Soul.’

“I have heard that grand old music many times in circumstances which intensified its impressiveness, but never had it seemed so solemn as when it broke the stillness in which we waited for the order to fire. Just as it was given there rang through the night the words:

‘Cover my defenseless head

With the shadow of Thy wing.’

“‘Ready, aim! Fire to the left, boys!’ I said.

“The guns were shifted, the volley that blazed out swerved aside, and that ‘defenseless head’ was ‘covered’ with the shadow of His wing.”

A Federal veteran who listened to this story spoke up and said, “I remember that night, Colonel, and that midnight attack which carried off so many of my comrades. I was the singer.”

Such confirmation produced a deep impression, and after a silence “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” was again sung as on the fatal night in 1864 when it rang across the lines at Bermuda Hundred.

The reference to the same leader is brought out under exceptional circumstances in

83

THE SONG OF THE DEFEATED

“Written in Defeat, After the Battle of Five Forks,” is the heading given to a letter written by General George E. Pickett to his wife, April 2, 1865. It is included by Arthur Crew Inman in his volume, *A Soldier of the South*. Here is part of it:

“All is quiet now, but soon all will be bustle, for we march at daylight. Oh, my darling, were there ever such men as those of my division? This morning after the review I thanked them for their valiant services yesterday on the first of April, never to be forgotten by any of us, when they fought one of the most desperate battles of the whole war. Their answer to me was cheer after cheer, one after another calling out, ‘That’s all right, Marse George!’ and ‘We only followed you!’ Then in the midst of these calls, silencing them, rose loud and clear old Gentry’s voice, singing the old hymns which they all knew I loved:

‘Guide me, oh, Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.’

84

“Voice after voice joined in till from all along the line the plea rang forth:

‘Be my sword and shield and banner,
Be the Lord my righteousness.’

“I do not think, my Sallie, the tears sounded in my voice as it mingled with theirs; but they were in my eyes, and there was something new in my heart.

“When the last line had been sung, I gave the order to march ...”

What the soldiers felt in the depths of their life is revealed in

A CHORUS OF TEN THOUSAND

The night after the Battle of Shiloh, when there were thousands of wounded on the field, one Christian soldier as he lay there dying under the starlight began to sing, “There is a land of pure delight.” When he reached the next line there were scores of voices singing, “Where saints

immortal reign.” The song was caught up all through the fields among the wounded until it was said there were at least ten thousand wounded men uniting in the triumphant closing verse of that beautiful hymn:

“Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o’er,
Not Jordan’s stream, nor death’s cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore.”

Mrs. Margaret Bottome relates an incident about

MARCHING TO MUSIC

“I had a brother who was in the Battle of the Wilderness during the Civil War. He told me of a day in that dreadful wilderness when the Connecticut regiment was traveling through such deep mud that they could hardly pull their boots out of it as they took one step after another. They were thoroughly dispirited and they had no music—the band was far in the rear, but all at once they heard the sound that told them the band was coming, and as it drew nearer they caught the strain. The band was playing a tune known to every Methodist:

‘Come on, my partners in distress,
My comrades through the wilderness,
Who still their bodies feel.
Awhile forget your griefs and fears
And look beyond this vale of tears
To that celestial hill.’

“My brother said it acted like magic on that regiment, the largest proportion of which were Methodists; new life entered into them. A moment before their feet had stuck in the mud, and they did not see how they were ever to get along, for again and again they had to pull their boots out of the mud with their hands, but from the time that tune, with

the words that memory made so distinct, was heard, not a step
[13]
faltered.”

This story from the Crimean War might be duplicated from other wars for it tells of

A SOLDIER SAVED BY SONG

Duncan Matheson, a Bible reader to the soldiers in the Crimea, was returning one night to his lodgings in an old stable. Sickened by the sights he had seen, and depressed with the thought that the siege of Sebastopol was likely to last for months, he trudged along in the mud, knee-deep. Happening to look up, he saw the stars shining calmly in the clear sky. Weariness gave place to the thought that in heaven is rest, and he began to sing aloud the old hymn:

“How bright these glorious spirits shine!

Whence all their bright array?”

87

The next day was wet and stormy. While going his rounds he met a soldier, soiled and in ragged clothes; his shoes so worn that they did not keep his feet from the mud. In the course of conversation this man said:

“I am not what I was yesterday. Last night I was tired of life and of this blundering siege. I took my musket and went down yonder, determined to blow out my brains. As I got around that hillock I heard some one singing, ‘How bright these glorious spirits shine!’ It recalled to me the Sunday School where I used to sing it, and the religious truths I had heard there. I felt ashamed of being such a coward. I said to myself, ‘Here is a comrade as badly off as I am, but he is not a coward—he’s bearing it!’ I felt that man had something which I did not possess to make him accept with cheerfulness our hard lot. I went back to my tent, and today I am seeking that thing which made the singer so happy.”

Here is another from the World War, related in *The War*

[14]

Romance of the Salvation Army, by Booth and Hill, how

88

SUNSHINE CAME INTO A SOLDIER’S HEART

It was one Sunday afternoon in Bazeilles, France, at a service conducted by three Salvationists. One of the girls sang:

“There’s sunshine in my soul today,
More glorious and bright
Than glows in any earthly skies,
For Jesus is my light.
O there’s sunshine, blessed sunshine,
When the peaceful, happy moments roll;
When Jesus shows His smiling face,
[\[15\]](#)
There is sunshine in the soul.”

The sequel is best explained in a letter written to his mother by one of the boys:

“You will be surprised to hear that I am in the hospital, but I am getting well quickly and am having a good time. But best of all, some Salvation Army people came along and sang and talked about sunshine, and while they were talking the sunshine came through my window—not into my room alone, but into my heart and life as well, where it is going to stay. I know how happy this will make you.”

An incident from the Spanish-American War reveals the unity of Christian faith in the way

AMERICAN SOLDIERS GREETED CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve, 1898, found the Seventh Army Corps encamped along the hills at Quemados, near Havana, Cuba. Suddenly from the camp of the Forty-ninth Iowa rang a sentinel’s call, “Number ten; twelve o’clock, and all’s well!” Lieutenant-Colonel Curtis Guild thus wrote about it:

“It was Christmas morning. Scarcely had the cry of the sentinel died away, when from the bandsmen’s tents of that same regiment there rose the music of an old, familiar hymn, and one clear baritone voice led the chorus that quickly ran along the moonlit fields: ‘How firm a foundation

ye saints of the Lord!’ Another voice joined in, and another, and another, and in a moment the whole regiment was singing, and then the Sixth Missouri joined in with the Fourth Virginia, and all the rest, till there on the long ridges above the city ... a whole American army corps was singing:

‘Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed, 90
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.’

Protestant and Catholic, South and North, singing together on Christmas day in the morning,—that’s an American army!”

We next go to Palestine for two stories. One is about

SOLDIERS AND SANKEY’S HYMNS

At a meeting in Blackheath, London, some time ago, according to a writer in *The British Weekly*, a missionary to the Jews related one of his experiences at a Jewish settlement in Palestine. He asked to see the head of the settlement, who said, “Are you an Englishman?” He answered, “Yes,” feeling that perhaps he would not be pleased. Then he said, “Are you a missionary?” And he answered “Yes,” feeling certain now he would not be pleased. To his astonishment the man said, “Oh, I am so glad, so very glad. And can you play the piano?” to which he answered “Yes.”

The missionary was then told that when the soldiers were there they came almost daily and played Sankey’s hymns on the piano, and sang them. The people in the house crowded round to listen, and others gathered outside. The result was that there were about thirty people in the settlement who wanted to become Christians, and the missionary stayed there for a month, at the end of which time they were baptized. 91

The other is from Mrs. Carrie J. Bond about

MARCHING MEN

“A few years ago I was in Jerusalem in the American Colony Home. It was a bright moonlight night and I heard the marching feet of soldiers. Soon they began singing ‘The End of a Perfect Day.’ I looked out to see about twelve soldiers marching by. In the morning I asked my host about it and he brought out an old worn sheet of ‘A Perfect Day’ and told me this story: Two American boys had been billeted to the American Colony House and every evening during their stay one had played and the other had sung that song. When they were well enough to leave they left the music as a token of their gratitude.”

Now we go to the Transvaal for a testimony to the influence of Fanny Crosby’s hymn, “Blessed Assurance,” as related by Mr.

92

[16]

Sankey, which might be entitled

“SIX FURTHER ON”

“‘During the recent war in the Transvaal,’ said a gentleman in my meeting in Exeter Hall, London, in 1900, ‘when the soldiers going to the front were passing another body of soldiers whom they recognized, their greetings used to be, “Four-nine-four, boys, four-nine-four;” and the salute would invariably be answered with “Six further on, boys; six further on.” The significance of this was that, in “Sacred Songs and Solos,” a number of copies of the small edition of which had been sent to the front, Number 494 was “God Be With You Till We Meet Again”; and six further on than 494, or Number 500, was “Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine.”’”

The last incident brings us back to the World War in the touching words,

“SING IT AGAIN, LADDIE”

In times of stress, Scotsmen turn toward God, for in the heart of them they are all religiously inclined. During the World War a service in the historic church in Ayr, Scotland, began with that beautiful Psalm paraphrase: “I to the hills will lift mine eyes”, sung to the tune of “French.”

93

The sermon had a reference to a young Highlander who was wounded in a recent battle and lay stretched on the field. In his youth he had learned “I to the hills” in Gaelic. He now began to sing that old Psalm in his native tongue, and out over the field his singing reached as far as his voice would carry. Just then a Scotch regiment came marching by and the men heard it. One of them noted the spot from which the song proceeded and at night, after the conflict, he went back to look for the singer.

All was quiet as this Highlander wandered backward and forward and it seemed as though his quest would be futile. He then raised his voice and called out: “Sing it again, laddie, sing it again.” The laddie heard and responded and sang on till the searcher found him and carried him back to the base. In due course he returned home wounded but thankful that He had not slumbered who kept him.

The higher unity of faith carries further than the discordant notes of mere nationalism. This was illustrated by a writer in the *Kansas City Times*, relating the experience of

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A VIOLINIST IN THE TRENCHES

Outside of the dugout, shells whined and machine guns spattered with a staccato of rat-tat-tats. Inside a violin sang and sobbed. The magic of its music made men forget. They forgot the homesickness. They forgot the mud. They forgot the cold. They forgot the ever presence of danger and death.

They listened, heads propped up on sand bags and feet wrapped in blankets as they stretched on mattresses of sand bags covering the rough planks of their underground cots.

In another dugout, across No Man’s Land on the German side, others were also listening. They heard the strains of Mendelssohn’s “Spring Song,” as sweet and gentle and refreshing as an early summer shower. A strange thing happened. A German picked up a cornet, and floating to the Allies’ dugout came the notes of the horn harmonizing with the violin.

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CHAPTER VI

Heard Within Prison Walls

Some of the world's greatest books were written in prison. Think of the Epistles of St. Paul which came from such secluded confines. *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which has been translated into more languages than any other book except the Bible, was written by Bunyan in Bedford Jail. Silvio Pellico, an Italian man of letters, recounted his ten years of imprisonment at Spielberg, Austria, and declared that religion was his chief consolation. The singing of St. Paul and Silas during their imprisonment at Philippi had memorable results. There are many other instances of beneficial consequences in connection with these dismal incarcerations.

The incidents in this chapter have to do with the influences upon the prisoners themselves and how they were converted to Christ and comforted in their distress. Such transcripts of life under inconceivably trying circumstances give evidence of the power of the Gospel. One of the most remarkable recent books is entitled *A Gentleman in Prison*, giving the experiences of Tokichi Ishii, a converted Japanese criminal, who was executed in due course for murder.

The first one tells how

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PRISONERS SANG "THE GLORY SONG"

"The Glory Song" attained a marvelous popularity soon after it was published in 1900. In less than five years it was being sung in many languages all over the world. Several interesting incidents are related of its influence but one that Homer Rodeheaver wrote in *Zion's Herald*, Boston, is worthy of note:

"I have heard it in a number of instances sung by over ten thousand people, but the most impressive rendering I ever heard given to it was by

a certain audience of over one thousand men. These men were all dressed in steel gray suits, and sat with folded arms; the man who played the organ and the man who held the baton and led the song were dressed in exactly the same way. Down the right side, across the rear and up the left side of the chapel room, on high stools, sat a row of men in blue uniforms, holding heavy canes across their knees, these men seemed never for an instant to take their eyes from certain spots in front of them. Not a man whispered during the service—for it was a state’s prison. Among the congregation of 1077 men, 256 were there for life—there to live and die—and on each of their cell doors, where they would read it every time they left and re-entered, was that startling word ‘Life.’

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“How strangely their voices impressed me—these men without a country, without a home, without a name, deprived of every privilege accorded to all men by the Almighty, and known only by a number. As I sat before them, the prison pallor of their faces against its background of gray within that frame of blue, made a picture never to be forgotten. With few exceptions, every man sang. Here sat one with downcast eyes, there another with mute lips, while yonder near the center a large, strong fellow was weeping like a little child—but silently. They told me he had been there but a short time, and I wondered if he had heard the song before, under different circumstances—and where, for he had a kindly face. Softly they sang that last stanza:

‘Friends will be there I have loved long ago;
Joys like a river around me will flow;
Yet, just a smile from my Saviour, I know,
Will through the ages be glory for me.’

The song ended, the chaplain said a brief prayer, and that great crowd of men, at signals from the guards in blue, marched out squad by squad, keeping step to the music of the organ played by the man in gray.”

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Their deepest feelings are portrayed in

THE HYMN OF THE PRISONER

Describing a chapel service in Auburn (New York) prison, a newspaper correspondent wrote:

“One of the hymns the men sang was ‘Pardon the Debt and Make Me Free.’ They sang that over and over again, and it seemed to express the feelings of every convict.”

The extraordinary circumstances in which a hymn was used are described in this incident when

A CONDEMNED MAN WANTED “FACE TO FACE” SUNG

The story of the writings of Mrs. Carrie Ellis Breck, who spent her girlhood days on her father’s fruit farm in New Jersey, was related by A. L. Lawson in *The Christian Herald*. From that article the following is taken:

“Perhaps the experience that touched her most deeply of all, and the one she most treasures, is that of the time when a poor condemned man, sentenced to be hanged, asked that her hymn, ‘Face to Face with Christ My Saviour,’ be sung before his execution. As the doomed wretch was led out, and looked for the last time upon what was left him of the world, there came to him the sweet words of her hymn—

‘Face to face with Christ my Saviour,
Face to face, how can it be,
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ, Who died for me?
Face to face shall I behold Him
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
[\[17\]](#)
I shall see Him by and by!’”

The pathos of the situation is recounted by a prison chaplain in England who tells of

HYMNS SELECTED BY PRISONERS

This chaplain, the Rev. G. A. Metcalfe, found men confined for various crimes. One was convicted of murder, but his sentence of death had been commuted to penal servitude. During the first service this murderer sat alone on the front seat. “There were hardened criminals behind, and here and there some mothers’ lads with fine faces and soulful eyes glistening with tears.” After his address he asked the prisoners to select two or three hymns. One was “Jesus Is Tenderly Calling” and they sang it with the utmost fervor. Then a young fellow called out his choice and there was a sob in the voices as they sang:

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“Holy Father, in Thy mercy,
Hear our anxious prayer:
Keep our loved ones, now far absent,
’Neath Thy care.”

An experience of the days before prohibition was recorded in *The Youth’s Companion*, when

JUDGE AND CRIMINALS LISTENED TO “THE HOLY CITY”

Thirty men, red-eyed and disheveled, lined up before a judge of the San Francisco police court. It was the regular morning company of “drunks and disorderlies.” Just as the momentary disorder attending the bringing in of the prisoners quieted down, a strange thing happened. A strong, clear voice from below began singing:

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“Last night I lay a-sleeping,
There came a dream so fair.”

Last night! It had been for them all a nightmare or a drunken stupor. The song was such a contrast to the horrible fact that no one could fail of a sudden shock at the thought the song suggested.

“I stood in old Jerusalem,
Beside the temple there,”

the song went on. The judge had paused. He made a quiet inquiry. A former member of a famous opera company, known all over the country, was awaiting trial for forgery. It was he who was singing in his cell.

Meantime the song went on, and every man on the line showed emotion. At length, one man protested.

“Judge,” said he, “have we got to submit to this? We’re here to take our punishment, but this—” and he began to sob.

It was impossible to proceed with the business of the court, yet the judge gave no order to stop the song. It moved on to its climax:

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Sing for the night is o’er!
Hosanna in the highest! Hosanna for evermore!”

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In an ecstasy of melody the last words rang out, and then there was silence.

The judge looked into the faces of the men before him. There was not one who was not touched by the song; not one in whom some better impulse was not stirred. He did not call the cases singly—a kind word of advice, and he dismissed them all. No man was fined or sentenced to the workhouse that morning. The song had done more good than punishment could have accomplished.

CHAPTER VII

The Music of Submerged Lives

Hope is the great gift of Christianity. It pierces through the darkness and rejoices in the light beyond. It looks through the cloud and is assured that the sun is shining in the heavens. It insists on looking at the bright side even when it knows that there is a dark side. The English artist, George Frederick Watts, painted Hope as a blindfolded figure sitting on the top of a globe above a yawning abyss, playing upon a lyre with only one string, in harmony with the music of the Evangel, while in the distance a star is shining. Fanny Crosby, the blind hymn writer who died at the age of ninety-four, once said: "Hope's star shines clearer on my pathway today than it did fifty years ago." It is this same spirit of hope which Gilmour of Mongolia had when he declared that the future is as bright as the promises of God.

So long as we are thus inspired we cannot be soured by cynicism, because we are sweetened by the confidence which insists that "the day must dawn and darksome night be past." This is the triumph of lives handicapped by harsh circumstances but rising above what would submerge them because of their assurance that hope is the anchor of their soul, sure and steadfast. Here are some illustrations of this truth from unexpected quarters.

104

A letter giving the impression of a radio service by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman tells how

A CRIPPLE STOOD ON CRUTCHES

The writer related that he was greatly stirred by the singing of

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus!

Ye soldiers of the cross."

He then added: "I have been on crutches for more than twelve years but today when you sang 'Stand up for Jesus' I got up from my bed and stood on crutches out of respect for the Master."

Another somewhat like the above is about the

SONG OF THE MAN WITH THE WOODEN LEG

"Adah Vachell of Bristol" is the story of a brave, gifted, delicate lady who devoted her life to the blind, deaf, crippled poor of the city of Bristol. Her contact with the maimed and halt was made in the ceaseless round of slum visitation, dens of filth and want, sometimes revealing a brave endeavor to triumph over adverse conditions.

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A guild was formed with a startling motto, *Lætus sorte mea*, "Happy is my lot." Indissolubly linked with it was the tug of war hymn, "The Son of God Goes Forth to War." "I can picture him so well, sitting close to the fire ... the wooden leg stretched out, his rough rugged old face softened as he sang in husky voice:

'Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears his cross below,
He follows in his train.'

Here is a story of a famous hymn which was

SUNG FOR THE SCRUB WOMAN

While the choir was waiting for the delayed organist, a celebrated soprano recounted one of her experiences. She said: "I have sung before all the greatest folk in America. I sang before a company of titled folks from Europe who were visiting here in this country. But the greatest thrill I ever got in my life was singing before one lone woman, and she a scrubwoman." "Tell us about it," said the tenor. "We were getting ready for a great musical event, and had been in the church rehearsing. As I passed out on my way home,

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the scrubwoman, with duster in hand, stopped me and said, ‘Lady, you sing so beautifully—I wonder if some day you would sing “Face to Face” for me,—it isn’t asking too much, is it, lady?’ I told her I would be glad to do so some day. When I got to the doorstep something said to me, ‘Do it now,’ so I turned back. The organist was still there, and I asked him to play. When the scrubwoman heard the strains of the organ on the familiar tune, she came into the church and sat on the very front seat with the duster in her lap, and her eyes intensely upon me with a strange light in them. I never had such a thrill in all my life of song. I never felt so lifted up, for there in that front seat sat the Lord Jesus Himself listening to me sing to Him.

‘And I shall see Him face to face
And tell the story—Saved by grace.’”

Another of the annals of the poor is

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WHAT THE WASHERWOMAN SANG

During his early ministry, Bishop William Burt was a pastor in Brooklyn. From that period he carried the memory of a woman who earned her living by taking in washing. Sometimes when making his round of pastoral calls the young pastor would hear the woman, as she was working at her daily task at the washtub, singing snatches of hymns which were used at the services of the church and the prayer meeting. But one which particularly impressed him was the day when he was approaching her humble rooms and heard her voice, as she sang:

“I’m the child of a King.”

Assurance was in her voice, and there was a note of triumphant certainty on the part of this humble daughter of toil that she was the King’s child, and therefore heir to all the promises made in the Bible.

Billy Bray, the Cornish miner, had the same happy consciousness. Frequently he would exclaim, “I’m the King’s son!”

The ability to rise above depressing circumstances is seen in this incident

BEFORE WORSHIP

A few had gathered at the Goodwill Chapel service fifteen minutes before the time to begin. The leader often allowed his audience to select the opening hymn. And these early comers were making their choices.

“Here’s a hymn I like,” said one. “It’s ‘We’re Marching to Zion.’” “I like it, too,” said another, “but why do you like it?”

“Well,” replied the first speaker, “there’s nothing uncertain about that hymn. It knows where it’s going. A person can stand a whole lot of hardship if she knows the end is worth it. Yes, I like that hymn. If Mr. Dawson asks us what we want to sing, this morning, I am going to ask for this one.” And so they talked happily among themselves.

Others came in and took their seats, a motley company of depressed old age wearing the marks of poverty and sorrow. The leader entered and this time he gave out the hymn. “I don’t care. I like this just as well,” observed the one who had chosen “We’re Marching to Zion.” Well might she and the others, for it expressed faith and hope in the lines:

“Be not dismayed whate’er betide,

God will take care of you;

Beneath his wings of love abide,

[\[18\]](#)

God will take care of you.”

Thus encouraged they went from that service to the humdrum routine of daily drudgery.

The power of the Gospel to reach those on the outskirts of civilization is evidenced

WHEN LUMBERJACKS SANG “JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL”

Thomas D. Whittles tells of many an interesting incident in his book,

[\[19\]](#)

The Parish of the Pines —the story of Frank Higgins, the

Lumberjacks' Sky Pilot.

One morning after breakfast the men went to the bunkhouse to wait for the word of the "push" ordering them to "the works." While they waited a rich tenor struck up the hymn,

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly!"

One by one the men joined in and the solo passed into the chorus of a hundred voices. Out through the twilight the melody rolled, waking the sleeping pines, crossing the frozen lakes. The men in the stables, harnessing their horses, heard the song and softly whistled it; the cook, busy with the pots and pans, hummed it in unison and the swearing cookee closed his profane mouth and listened in astonished silence. Over in the office where the officials slept, the song caused silent amazement, for it was unlike the morning hour when oaths and curses break the stillness.

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"Other refuge have I none;
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee."

sang the men, unconscious of aught save the song.

"Leave, ah! leave me not alone"—

and it came from the hearts of those who knew the weight of lonely weeks and months. The Sky Pilot in the office turned his face to the wall and prayed while they sang this hymn which the men had sung at the service the night before.

"All out," cried the "push."

From the shack streamed forth the men, singing the song of comfort. Into groups they separated, each going his appointed way, but the hymn continued in all parts of the forest until the sweet melody died to tender murmurs and was lost in the distant evergreens. In all that North Star State no happier body of men went forth to toil, for with them went the spirit of song.

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Here is an instance of gratitude expressively shown in the words,

“PASS IT ON”

Henry Burton’s famous hymn, “Pass It On,” was inspired by a story relating to the early life of the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, noted as a preacher and a writer, and who died just a few months before Dr. Burton. The latter married a sister of Mr. Pearse. How he came to write this hymn was related in *The British Weekly*.

“Returning from school in Holland, Pearse once found himself on a steam packet bound from Bristol to Hayle in Cornwall, having had a hearty supper, and later finding that he had reached the limit of his finances. The steward was inclined to be severe, but on hearing the lad’s name he changed his tone. Pearse’s father had recently helped the steward’s mother in a difficulty, now the opportunity had come for the old debt to be repaid. The steward paid the supper bill with the remark, ‘Now pass this on to some one else.’”

This furnished the inspiration for the appealing lines:

“Have you had a kindness shown?

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Pass it on!

’Twas not given for thee alone—

Pass it on!

Let it travel down the years,

Let it wipe another’s tears,

Till in heaven the deed appears,

Pass it on!

Did you hear the loving word?

Pass it on!

Like the singing of a bird?

Pass it on!

Let its music live and grow,

Let it cheer another’s woe,

You have reaped what others sow—

Pass it on!

... ..

Love demands the loving deed!

Pass it on!

Look upon thy brother's need,

Pass it on!

Live for self, you live in vain;

Live for Christ, you live again;

Live for Him, with Him you reign—

[\[20\]](#)

Pass it on!”

CHAPTER VIII

Songs of Salvation

It has been rightly observed that the three ideas most frequently expressed by Jesus are translated by the words lost, last, least. He constantly repeated the message that the lost shall be found, that the last shall be the first, that the least shall be the greatest. This is the Gospel of the World's Saviour who saw possibilities in what others called hopeless lives. He appealed to what was latent in them and secured a response from the despised, the outcast, the depraved. To all appearances they were incapable of better things but Jesus knew better and He was not disappointed.

These unfortunate individuals belong to the "broken earthenware" of humanity. Scarred by sin, hurt by temptation, haunted by fear, torn by passion, repressed by prejudice, their lives have been redeemed by the Saviour, and transformed. So much so that their present has not the slightest resemblance to their past, and their future has the glow of greater progress toward holiness and happiness. As long as such results are obtained by the Gospel it is certainly good news to all classes and conditions, and should be broadcast to earth's remotest bounds. Here are some recent proofs of the glory of the divine grace.

There are no hopeless cases as seen in the instance of one who was

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SAVED BY SANKEY'S SINGING

Mrs. Emily Sullivan Oakey was a well-known writer but she is best remembered by her hymn, "Sowing the Seed by the Daylight Fair." In the winter of 1876, W. O. Lattimore, who had been separated from his wife and child by drink and had become a miserable drunkard, stumbled in an intoxicated condition into Moody's Tabernacle in Chicago. When

he came to, he realized his mistake and was about to leave when Sankey's solo held him. He was singing the stanza:

“Sowing the seed of a lingering pain,
Sowing the seed of a maddened brain,
Sowing the seed of a tarnished name,
Sowing the seed of eternal shame:
O, what shall the harvest be?”

These lines followed Lattimore even to the saloon and he returned to the Tabernacle and was converted. He went back to his family, engaged in active work at the Moody meetings, accepted the call to the ministry and was pastor of a flourishing church in Evanston, Illinois, for twenty years.

This hymn was doubtless suggested by the Apostle's words: “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

The insight of Jesus is finely illustrated by

HYMNS FROM THE BOWERY MISSION

Fanny Crosby was a friend and devoted worker at the Bowery Mission for several years and many of her hymns were inspired by experiences at this center of aggressive evangelism. Few hymns by any writer show deeper sympathetic insight than “Rescue the Perishing,” especially the lines:

“Down in the human heart,
Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore:
Touched by a loving heart,
Wakened by kindness,
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more.”

The circumstances under which this hymn was written are worth recounting in her own words:

“I recall the period of more than sixteen years ago when it was my privilege to be a humble worker in the Bowery Mission. The world is still, and I am holding communion with the past; sweet, hallowed communion, carrying me back to the fervent heartfelt testimonies of those who, evening after evening, told of the peace flowing like a river which had entered their stained lives, had washed away their sins, and made them clean through the precious blood of our Lord’s atonement. 116

“One evening a man for whom we had been praying, said, his face radiant with joy, ‘Now I can meet mother in heaven, for I have found her God.’ That night I wrote my hymn, ‘Rescue the Perishing.’”

Here is a remarkable case of one who, while

SINGING OF CHRIST, SHE ACCEPTED HIM

In the absence of the organist at East Northfield, Massachusetts, at one of the meetings during the summer gathering, a woman stepped forward and volunteered her services. She made a deep impression by her playing and also by the sweetness of her singing, with the result that she was in constant demand at the other services. When urgently requested she related her experience.

She used to be one of the leading singers of New York, going from place to place, singing classical and operatic music, but hymns she disliked. One evening, while attending a mission service, she was invited to sing a solo, which she did with pleasure. Then someone asked her to sing a Gospel hymn. She first laughed at the idea, and refused. Later she consented. Opening the book at random, she began: 117

“My Jesus, I love Thee, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the follies of sin I resign.”

The words caused her to think of her past life. She continued:

“I’ll love Thee in life, I will love Thee in death,
And praise Thee as long as Thou lendest me breath.”

These words struck her forcefully, and she began to wonder if she really meant them. The last verse followed:

“In mansions of glory and endless delight
I’ll ever adore Thee in heaven so bright;
I’ll sing with the glittering crown on my brow,
If ever I loved Thee, my Jesus, ’tis now.”

It was enough. She arose from her seat at the organ a Christian woman, and henceforth served Christ whole-heartedly.

The initiative is always taken by God, as seen in the story where

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GOD WAS THE SEEKER

“How long since ye sought and found God, Jamie?” said some of the friends of an old Scotch elder as he lay dying.

“Oh, Robin, Robin, I never sought and found him,” answered the dying man.

“Oh, his mind is gane, and he will never recognize us again,” remarked the friend sadly.

But the old saint opened his lips, and faintly said: “Listen! Not I—not I—I never sought Him:

‘Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God,
He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His precious blood.’”

The old Scotchman had grasped the fundamental fact of Christianity, that Christ came to seek and to save the lost.

Dr. Charles A. Blanchard once related the conversion of a friend of his through

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A SONG AT MIDNIGHT

This friend was for many years an infidel, a hard drinker, a Sabbath breaker, unkind to his wife. One day, after a debauch, he went out on a stringer belonging to a wharf in process of building, drank two bottles of whisky, and lay down on the stringer, expecting to fall asleep, and roll over into the water in his sleep. He wanted to end his miserable existence, but had not the courage to do it in any other way. He did fall asleep, but did not turn over, and awoke with the stars shining in his face. He went home at midnight, saw his wife through the window still at work ironing, and heard her singing, "What a Friend we have in Jesus." The thought came to him, "If Jesus can make my wife sing at midnight, He can make me stop drinking whiskey." He never touched a drop of intoxicating liquor after that, and he became a sincere, trusting Christian.

The truth of the words, "Cast thy bread upon the waters and thou shalt find it after many days," finds an illustration in this story of a writer who was

HANDED A COPY OF HER OWN HYMN

Charlotte Elliott first published her famous hymn,

"Just as I am, without one plea

But that Thy blood was shed for me,"

in a volume entitled *The Invalid's Hymn Book*. The sister of the author related this incident:

"A lady was so struck with it that she had it printed as a leaflet and widely circulated without any idea by whom it was composed. It happened rather curiously that while we were living at Torquay, our valued Christian physician came to us one morning, having in his hand this leaflet. He offered it to my sister, saying, 'I am sure this will please you;' and great indeed was his astonishment on finding that it was written by herself, though by what means it had been thus printed and circulated she was utterly ignorant. Shortly after we became acquainted with the lady who had printed it."

Mr. Sankey saved many hymns from obscurity by singing them at the Moody meetings. Here is the story of

“THROW OUT THE LIFELINE”

This hymn and the tune were written by the Rev. E. S. Ufford of Springfield, Massachusetts, although it was greatly popularized by Mr. Sankey’s singing of it with such signal results. Mr. Ufford relates that he lived for many years near the seashore in a little village thirteen miles from Boston. In the summer he would often stroll along the beach and see an old wreck half hidden in the sands and rubbish and wonder whether such a wreck might have been avoided if a life line had been thrown out to the passengers and crew. He wished that he might write a hymn with a searching message. After a meeting held on the sands by the old wreck, he offered the help of the Gospel to the wrecks of manhood who were present.

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The inspiration of this service so stirred him that he sat down and in fifteen minutes wrote four stanzas of the hymn which has justly become famous. Sankey got hold of this hymn and at once began to sing it. It was Moody’s favorite. When Mr. Ufford later took a trip round the world the fact that he was the author of this hymn gave him a welcome everywhere. It was his privilege to hear it sung by the natives of Honolulu in their own tongue.

Mr. Sankey also popularized another hymn which he casually came across

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IN A NEWSPAPER

It was in 1874 that he discovered “The Ninety and Nine” in a weekly newspaper which he bought at the Glasgow railway station. He cut out this poem, hoping to use it if he could get a suitable tune. After an address on “The Good Shepherd,” Mr. Moody turned to him with the request for an appropriate solo. To quote his own words: “At this moment I seemed to hear a voice saying, ‘Sing the hymn you found in the train.’ I thought this impossible as no music had been written for the hymn. Again the impression came strongly upon me that I must sing the beautiful appropriate words I had found the day before, and placing the

little newspaper slip on the organ, I lifted my heart in prayer, asking God to help me to sing that the people might hear and understand. Laying my hands on the organ, I struck the chord of A flat and began the song. Note by note the tune was given, which has not been changed from that day to this. Mr. Moody was greatly moved. Leaning over the organ, he looked at the little newspaper slip, and with tears in his eyes said, ‘Sankey, where did you get that hymn? I never heard the like of it in my life.’”

This hymn was written by Miss Elizabeth C. Clephane of Melrose, Scotland, who died in 1869. Her sister was present at this noon meeting at the Free Assembly Hall, and later wrote to Mr. Sankey, thanking him for singing the hymn.

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Here is another story by Andrew Stewart in *The British Weekly* about these same meetings and how the hymn

“JESUS OF NAZARETH” MADE AN EXTRAORDINARY IMPRESSION

“I remember Mr. Sankey in Edinburgh in 1874. Mr. Moody and he were conducting meetings in Broughton Place Church. It was their first visit to Scotland, and Dr. Andrew Thomson had bravely opened the great church to the strangers. A small boy, sitting in our family pew, facing the pulpit, I can recall the effect of the great crowds and the intense impression. One of the hymns used was ‘Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By.’ My father told long afterwards how he met a commercial traveler one morning on the ferry steamer that crossed from Granton before the Forth Bridge was built. The traveler spoke of having attended the evangelistic services the previous night. He said: ‘I am not a religious man and not easily moved, but when that man sang “Jesus of Nazareth Has Passed By” it made an extraordinary impression on me.’ The fact is that the success of the evangelists had more connection with Sankey’s singing than most people realize. He had a powerful baritone voice and sang with deep feeling.”

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The first verse of the hymn is:

“What means this eager, anxious throng,
Which moves with busy haste along—
These wondrous gath’rings day by day,

What means this strange commotion, pray?

In accents hushed the throng reply,

‘Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.’”

From far-off China comes this striking incident in connection with

“ONE SWEETLY SOLEMN THOUGHT”

Dr. Russell H. Conwell was traveling in China and one day he entered a gambling house in a Chinese city. Two Americans were there, betting and drinking; the older one frequently using the filthiest profanity. The younger man had lost in two games and the third game had just begun. While the winner was shuffling the cards his companion sat lazily back in his chair. There was delay in dealing out the cards and while waiting, the other looked carelessly about the room and began to hum a tune and then to sing almost unconsciously. The words were:

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“One sweetly solemn thought

Comes to me o’er and o’er;

I am nearer home today

Than I ever have been before.”

While the young man sang, his fellow gambler stopped dealing out cards, stared at the singer and exclaimed: “Harry, where did you learn that song?” “What song?” “Why, the one you have been singing.”

He said he did not know what he had been singing. The other repeated the words, with tears in his eyes, and the younger man said he had learned them in the Sunday School in America.

“Come,” said the elder gambler, getting up; “come, Harry, here’s what I have won from you; go and use it for some good purpose. As for me, as God sees me, I have played my last game and drunk my last bottle. I have misled you, Harry, and I am sorry. Give me your hand, my boy, and say that for old America’s sake, if for no other, you will quit this infernal business.”

This hymn was written by Miss Phoebe Cary while visiting a friend. She had attended church and was deeply stirred, and on returning to her friend's house she retired to "the little back third-story bedroom" and wrote this expression of her experience. This incident in China gave her much happiness. After her death the older man in the above story wrote to Dr. Conwell saying that he was now a "hard working Christian" and that Harry had renounced his evil ways.

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CHAPTER IX

“The Old Rugged Cross”

The Cross is the triumphant symbol of a militant and puissant Christianity. It tells of “love divine, all loves excelling.” It sustains hope in the final victory of good. It establishes faith in the persistent reality of truth. The Gospel of the Cross proclaims redemption from sin, reconciliation with God, realization of goodwill to all people. There is absolutely nothing else to equal the appeal of the Cross in its power to produce the most desirable changes in the individual and in society. Wherever it has been preached with the conviction of experience and the constraint of passion, the Holy Christ has won trophies in lives recovered from the waste of sin, renewed by the power of grace, enriched by the practices of purity and peace.

Indeed, the only cure for our distracted age is found in the Atoning Christ. This is endorsed by the voices of redeemed multitudes of every age and land. The testimony from life is conclusive. It holds us by a resolute determination to announce its message of pardon and joy to everyone. In the words of John Oxenham,

“Love, with the lifted hands and thorn-crowned
head;

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Still conquers death, though life itself be fled,—

His Cross still stands!

Yes,—Love triumphant stands, and stands for more,

In our great need, than e’er it stood before!

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His Cross still stands!”

The Cross makes a universal appeal, as in this incident related by

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Miss Margaret Sangster when

ALL WANTED THE SAME SONG

“I was in a radio studio, the other night, listening to the broadcast of a program. Naturally I was interested. Interested in what the performers did and how they were handled and the precision with which the timing was accomplished. But the one thing that interested me more than the actual happenings in the studio, was something quite apart from the especial broadcast that was taking place. For, as I sat there, I was conscious of a great flurry going on in an outer office. I could see, as I sat there, a constant stream of messenger boys—and I was conscious of an equally constant answering of telephones. I couldn’t help feeling that some great event was taking place—or was about to take place.

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“And so the moment that the broadcast was over, I went into that outer office and began to ask questions. ‘Why the excitement?’ I asked of a pretty stenographer. ‘I’ve never seen such a bustling about.’ The girl smiled as she replied: ‘A very popular singer is going to broadcast tonight,’ she told me, ‘and people are sending in requests that he sing their favorite song. Curiously enough, with hardly an exception, it’s the same song!’

“‘What song is it?’ I asked. And I was both amazed and stirred to learn that the radio audience was asking for one of the splendid old revival hymns—‘The Old Rugged Cross!’”

“On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suff’ring and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.”

Thomas D. Whittles tells this story in his book, *The Parish of the*
[\[23\]](#)
Pines, about

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GOSPEL MUSIC IN THE LUMBER CAMPS

An upturned barrel serves for pulpit, and a horse blanket, bearing the manufacturer's name in large letters, is the embroidered altar cloth. No Genevan gown lends grace to the minister, but coatless he stands—a shirt-sleeved messenger of God.

The opening of a service conducted by Frank Higgins, the Sky Pilot, is thus described:

“Sing No. 31, boys; it's easy and it's a good one. Let her go!”

“Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?

And did my Sovereign die?”

“The hymn is old and the boys welcome it lustily. The music lacks in sweetness: in volume it abounds.

“You can do better. Hit it harder on the next verse.’

“They do; they shout it forth in full voice, pleased with the song, glad for the privilege of singing. Then the chorus: ‘At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light,’ shakes the bunkhouse and wanders over the far reaches of the night-bound forest. In our fashionable churches, trained voices blend in superb harmony; but this is the music of songless lives.”

However different may be our views on many questions of religion, most of us agree that

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THE CROSS REMAINS

Matthew Arnold was visiting his brother-in-law, Mr. Cropper, and went with him to a service at Seton Park Church, Liverpool, England. The minister, Dr. John Watson (“Ian Maclaren”), preached on “The Shadow of the Cross,” and the congregation afterwards sang the familiar hymn:

“When I survey the wondrous cross

On which the Prince of Glory died.”

At lunch that day Mr. Arnold referred to the hymn, which he said he considered the finest in the English language. Appreciative reference was also made to the sermon; and the poet mentioned especially an illustration which the preacher had drawn from a Riviera earthquake.

“In one village,” said Dr. Watson, “the huge crucifix above the altar, with a part of the chancel, remained unshaken amid the ruins, and round the cross the people sheltered.”

“Yes,” remarked Arnold in speaking of this, “the cross remains, and in the straits of the soul makes its ancient appeal.”

This recalls an incident mentioned in a lecture, when the speaker described a scene in Paris in which a number of men, when a cathedral was dedicated on a hill, attempted to blot out the illumination of the cross on the spire by raising large clouds of smoke with chemicals. “Instead of blotting it out,” said the lecturer, “the cross stood out in greater magnificence and splendor.”

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Never does the Cross fail men in their need; but

“His cross like a far-seen beacon stands

In the midst of a world of sin;

And stretched out are His bleeding hands

To gather the wanderers in.”

The truth of reliance upon the Christ of the Cross is well brought out in

“**ROCK OF AGES**”

The original title of this hymn was “A Living and Dying Prayer for the Holiest Believer in the World.” But, as a matter of fact, the hymn is a favorite of the best saint and the worst sinner. It can be used appropriately in every condition of life. In a shipwreck off the Bay of Biscay, the last man who left the ship said he heard the passengers singing,

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee!”

The glory of the Cross found an impressive testimony in

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HENRY DRUMMOND’S HYMN ON HIS LAST SUNDAY

Death called the brilliant Henry Drummond hence while he was still in the prime of life. On the afternoon of the last Sunday he spent on earth this noble Scotchman, with his scientific mind and evangelical spirit, heard his friend, Dr. Barbour, play to him the music of the hymn, “Art Thou Weary, Art Thou Languid?” and other hymn tunes. There was no response. Then he tried the old Scots melody of “Martyrdom,” to which Drummond beat time with his hand, and joined in the words:

“I’m not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause;
Maintain the honor of His word,
The glory of His cross.”

When they finished singing this hymn by Isaac Watts, Drummond said, “There’s nothing to beat that, Hugh.” The following Thursday he passed to greet his Lord of whom he had been a radiant follower.

The everlasting Gospel of the Cross is assuredly

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THE ONLY WORD FOR DISCORD AND DISTRESS

How truly it meets our needs is finely suggested in one of the best hymns, “My Faith Looks Up to Thee.” It was written by Dr. Ray Palmer at the age of twenty-two while still a theological student, suffering from poor health, laboring under many discouragements and realizing that God was his only help. During the Civil War some soldiers met in a tent for prayer before a great battle; they decided to draw up and sign a paper, expressing their trust in that stern hour. One of the men knew this hymn and he wrote it out and each man signed his name. Only one of them lived through the battle to tell of this death covenant and to send the precious document to the loved ones of those who fell. Well might each of them have prayed:

“My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine!
Now hear me while I pray,

Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine!”

The voice of the true Christian is the same regardless of nationality or color, as is seen in this incident about

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WHAT FRANCES WANTED SUNG

Frances Phillips, a young girl of Alaska, was the first pupil to graduate in the eighth grade in the Training School at Sitka. Soon afterwards she married a young man named Sam Johnson. Both were Christians. Frances died in 1924, a few days after the death of her little son. Dr. Samuel Hall Young tells us that he had been going to see her daily for a week when, on Sunday morning, word was brought that she was dying. “The little church was not far distant, and Frances sent word to open the doors and windows and to sing:

‘My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.’

“The dying woman joined feebly, with an ecstatic smile on her wan face and soon passed away. Before her death she had started a subscription in Angoon to build a new church. Sam and his brothers took up this work, and a beautiful little building called ‘The Frances Johnson

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Memorial Church’ was erected, almost entirely by the Indians.”

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CHAPTER X

Hymns of Youth

The questioning attitude of youth is impelled by a desire for deeper reality. Some of their words and ways may scandalize the conventional, but back of it all we find eager sincerity and animated purposefulness to make life count for more. We need to show the patience of confidence towards skeptical young people. We must encourage them to work out their problems not by holding up danger signals, but by magnifying the ways of sure deliverance. We are not wedded to methods but are inspired by motives. So long as these latter are right we might well disagree about how they are to be expressed.

An interesting sidelight on the essential loyalty of young people was recently given when, at a summer institute attended exclusively by them, a popular vote was taken of the best ten hymns. The following were named: "Holy, Holy, Holy;" "Nearer, My God, to Thee;" "Rock of Ages;" "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross;" "Abide With Me;" "Sweet Hour of Prayer;" "Jesus, Lover of My Soul;" "O Love, That Wilt Not Let Me Go;" "Just As I Am;" "Lead Kindly Light."

This is certainly not the choice of erratic radicals, but of rational conservatives who desire to retain what is best in the past while going forward with characteristic adventuresomeness to new fields of activity and of achievement.

The new program of religious education is an attempt more satisfactorily to meet the needs of children and adolescents. Previous efforts had their limitations but all who grew up under the conditions of the former generation will appreciate this testimony from Sir Harry Lauder in *Roamin' in the Gloamin'* about

“I forget many of the hymns we sang at the Band of Hope, but such favorites as ‘Shall We Gather at the River?’, ‘Throw Out the Life Line,’ and similar haunting airs stand out in my memory. I loved every note of them and yelled them out most lustily. The old Scottish psalm tunes we occasionally sang at the Band of Hope, and also at the Sunday School I attended, likewise made an extraordinary appeal to me. ‘All People That On Earth Do Dwell,’ to the tune of the ‘Old Hundred;’ ‘O, God of Bethel by Whose Hand’ to the tune of ‘St. Kilda,’ were among my favorites. The last mentioned melody is in a most unusual minor key. It was written by a young Scottish musician named Bloomfield, who died early in life and whose body, I have been

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told, is lying in an ancient cemetery in Aberdeen.”

These words recall an experience of Captain John Lauder in France, which led him to declare he was

GLAD HE LEARNED THE HYMN IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

While convalescing in the hospital he went one day to the piano and began playing very softly. One of the nurses then came up to him and said a Captain Webster of the Gordon Highlanders who knew his father, Sir Harry, wanted to see him. What followed had best be stated in his

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own words, quoted in *A Minstrel in France* by Harry Lauder:

“This man had gone through ten operations in less than a week. I thought perhaps my playing had disturbed him, but when I went to his bedside, he grasped my hand, pressed it with what little strength he had left, and thanked me. He asked me if I could play a hymn. He said he would like to hear ‘Lead, Kindly Light.’ So I went back to the piano and played it as softly and as gently as I could. It was his last request. He died an hour later. I was very glad I was able to soothe his last moments a little. I am very glad that I learned the hymn at Sunday School as a boy.”

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Dr. R. J. Campbell tells a touching story about a mother and her only child whose request was

“SING, MUZZER, SING”

This young English mother made a living for herself and child by singing in the concert halls of London, and so at night she was compelled to leave him while meeting her engagements. One night she had a foreboding of evil but she had to keep her appointment. The rapture of the crowds and the encores were nothing to her as on this night she hurried back to the lad. She took him up in her arms and held him as if he could never slip away. But he was dying, and his broken words were, “Sing, muzzer, sing.” What an ordeal! But she responded. Her clear sweet voice broke upon the hush of that tenement room in the words of the matchless hymn of the children:

“I think when I read that sweet story of old,
When Jesus was here among men;
How He called little children like lambs to His fold,
I should like to have been with Him then.”

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Another hymn made a moving impression upon a large congregation when

CHILDREN SANG OF THE LOVE OF JESUS

A group of fresh-air children from New York City were being entertained at East Northfield, the home of the schools established by D. L. Moody. One Sunday, sitting in a body in the great auditorium, they were presented to the audience, and then invited to the platform to sing for the assembled company. The little folks marched to the front of the building, faced the many hundreds of people, and gleefully sang:

“I am so glad that our Father in heaven
Tells of His love in the Book He has given,
Wonderful things in the Bible I see;
This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me.”

Children of parents who came from many different nations across the Atlantic, living amid hard conditions in the great city of New York, life

had not afforded them much in the form of pleasure. But their faces fairly radiated happiness as they lustily sang:

“I am so glad that Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me,
I am so glad that Jesus loves me, Jesus loves even
me.”

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This incident is given in *Through Jade Gate*, by M. Cable and F. French, about

A YOUTHFUL DANIEL

In our city-visiting we soon discovered that the first difficult plowing of the ground was being done for us by the children. Everywhere we were welcomed, and mothers, whom we had never seen, repeated Scripture texts, hymns, and sentences of prayer with surprising accuracy. One little fellow, unconscious that he was being watched, walked down the street singing at the top of his voice, “Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone,” then coming to a stop before a peanut vendor and looking him in the face, said, “Did you *know* that there is only one God, and one Lord Jesus Christ?”

“Why, no,” said the man bewildered.

“Well, it is true,” answered the child, and passed on singing,
“Dare to have a purpose firm, dare to make it known.”

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Here is a suggestive story quoted from *The Sunday School Times* about

JAZZ AND SACRED MUSIC

A Christian mother recently found no little difficulty in leading her 'teen-age girls to overcome the habit of singing jazz. It is what they heard over the neighbor's radio, in school, on the street, everywhere. And in order to cure the habit there seemed to be need for something more than the negative command, “Don't sing such songs, girls!” At length she hit upon a solution to the problem. When the girls burst into “Carolina moon, keep shining,” the mother would begin, very quietly and with apparent lack of purpose,

“He leadeth me! oh! blessed thought!

Oh, words with heavenly comfort fraught.”

And it was not long until the singing voices began to follow her.

The central message of the Gospel is well illustrated in this

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SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE IN SONG

At a world’s convention of Christian Endeavor Societies, the various delegations went to their respective places in the tent, singing different hymns. The New Zealand deputation marched in singing,

“O for a thousand tongues to sing

My great Redeemer’s praise,

The glories of my God and King,

The triumph of His grace!”

They were listened to in silence, until they reached the stanza:

“He breaks the power of canceled sin,

He sets the prisoner free;

His blood can make the foulest clean;

His blood availed for me.”

Then the vast audience could no longer refrain from joining them, for the verse truthfully expressed the spiritual experience of all the company.

It was an impressive experience which strengthened the bond of unity when a group joined in this

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EVENING PRAYER OF YOUNG CAMPERS

The young people who had spent the evening together were about to separate and go to their several tents and cottages. “Why not a song-prayer together?” asked one. The suggestion was favorably received. These were the words they sang just before they retired:

“Glory to Thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light:
Keep me, O keep me, King of kings,
Beneath the shadow of Thy Wings.
Forgive me, Lord, for Thy dear Son,
The ill which I this day have done;
That with the world, myself, and Thee,
I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.

... ..

O let my soul on Thee repose,
And may sweet sleep mine eyelids close;
Sleep which shall me more vigorous make,
To serve my God, when I awake.”

The culminating moment at a missionary meeting was reached when the assembly sang a hymn,

ACKNOWLEDGING GOD’S CLAIMS

It was at one of the anniversaries of the London Missionary Society at Queen’s Hall, London. There were present a number of young men and women who were about to leave for their several mission fields. Instead of some modern hymns which are convicted of false sentiment, there was selected Doddridge’s hymn for this notable occasion. The first verse is:

“My gracious Lord, I own Thy right
To every service I can pay,
And call it my supreme delight
To hear Thy dictates and obey.”

One can imagine the enthusiasm of those prospective missionaries as they sang:

“’Tis to my Saviour I would live
To Him who for my ransom died;
Nor could all worldly honor give
Such bliss as crowns me at His side.”

The courage of conviction was strikingly exhibited in connection with a well-known chorus,

“CAN THE LORD DEPEND ON YOU?”

Three thousand people had gathered in a beautiful grove for the annual reunion of one of the State societies of Los Angeles. The musical program consisted of old sacred melodies with variations and they were received with enthusiasm. The president then announced that three young ladies would perform a special dance and he requested the pianist to play for the dancers. Much to his surprise and chagrin a polite negative reply was given. “But there is no one else here to play for the dance,” said the president.

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The pianist insisted on refusal, declaring that he had never used his talent in that connection and never so intended. The president then threatened to expose him to the vast audience, and no sooner had he done so than the pianist took the platform and said: “My reason for not playing for the dance is that my talent is not my own. It is dedicated to a far higher and nobler service. It is devoted wholly to the service of Christ.” The impression produced upon the gathering had an effect different from that of the president of this state society. On adjournment, several got into conversation with the pianist, which led to complete decisions for Christ.

The great heart of the nation was heard on a notable occasion when, in a spirit of unity,

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This took place during the sessions of the National Education Association at Dallas, Texas. It was on the last evening of the convention, which for five days had engaged in earnest discussion on the education of children in the United States.

Five thousand persons applauded when the curtain rose; and the spectators were thrilled when they saw on the stage eight hundred boys and girls dressed in pure white. These were the best singers in the Dallas elementary schools. For an hour they sang, never missing a word or a note, without a scrap of paper before their eyes. The last third of the program was the cantata of “Rip Van Winkle,” which was rendered with a sweetness possible only to the unspoiled voices of children who sing because they love to sing.

The curtain rose the second time, and the scene changed. The National High School Orchestra appeared for the first time in history before the National Education Association. Two hundred and sixty-six boys and girls from thirty-nine states sat there “with their handsome instruments.” They were selected from six hundred who were competent and anxious to attend. It was a thrilling sight to watch these young people who sat together regardless of the states from which they came, and whose faces had “the features of every nation under heaven.” The program was arranged to recreate the moods of life—of play, heroism, questioning, hope, despair, fantasy, and religious fervor. The musical selections were from the masters, and they were rendered with perfect harmony.

For two hours these young people stirred the depths of their vast audience. It was like a glimpse of the great scene described in the Bible, “of the company out of every nation and kindred and tribe before the throne of God, whose anthem of praise is like the sound of the sea.”

The closing number was most impressive. Led by the youthful orchestra, the audience sang the evening hymn of Sabine Baring Gould:

“Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh,
Shadows of the evening
Steal across the sky.”

So the music swept on until the closing stanza was reached:

“When the morning wakens,
Then may I arise
Pure, and fresh, and sinless
In Thy holy eyes.”

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This incident is fully described in *Yankee Notions*, by Henry T. Bailey. He concludes his account with an impressive sentence: “I heard the great heart of my country singing as never before, and the harmony was as rich and deep as human brotherhood itself.”

Here is a testimony to faith and hope suggested by

HYMNS USED AT THE DEDICATION OF A COLLEGE CHAPEL

Hendricks Memorial Chapel of Syracuse University was dedicated on June 8, 1930. It is the third in size of all college chapels in the United States and is to be the center for the religious guidance of the students.

The hymns used on this occasion were full of significance. The first had a national application and was written by a physician, Dr. Alfred A. Woodhull. Six thousand voices blended in singing:

“Great God of nations, now to Thee
Our hymn of gratitude we raise;
With humble heart and bending knee
We offer Thee our song of praise.”

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This was followed by “Faith of Our Fathers.” The closing hymn was written by Dr. M. W. Stryker, one of the distinguished presidents of Hamilton College:

“Almighty Lord, with one accord,
We offer Thee our youth.”

At the afternoon service of dedication the first hymn was

“Glorious things of Thee are spoken

Zion, City of our God.”

The next was Professor Caleb T. Winchester’s striking hymn:

“The Lord our God alone is strong,
His hands build not for one brief day;
His wondrous works, through ages long,
His wisdom and His power display.”

Deeply prayerful was the last stanza:

“And let those learn, who here shall meet,
True wisdom is with reverence crowned,
And science walks with humble feet
To seek the God that faith hath found.”

The hymn of dedication was most appropriate. It was written by William Cullen Bryant, who was a student in Williams College. And it was from occasional summer afternoons of meditation in the chapel of this college that Senator Francis Hendricks conceived the idea of providing this memorial chapel for Syracuse University. Here are two stanzas:

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“Thou, whose unmeasured temple stands,
Built over earth and sea,
Accept the walls that human hands
Have raised, O God, to Thee.
... ..
May faith grow firm, and love grow warm,
And pure devotion rise,
While round these hallowed walls the storm
Of earthborn passion dies.”

At night was held the installation service of the Dean of Hendricks Chapel. It began with the immortal hymn of Isaac Watts:

“O God, our help in ages past,

Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!”

The last hymn on that eventful day was one which came from Dr. Washington Gladden, a man who exercised a large influence in our national religious life. The desires and hopes of all were thus deeply expressed as they sang:

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“O Master, let me walk with Thee,
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

... ..

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future’s broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live.”

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CHAPTER XI

Hymns as Prayers

When our feelings are deeply stirred by a crisis it is the most natural thing to turn to God in prayer. Such an acknowledgment of the divine resourcefulness in the face of human helplessness advertises the inherent dignity of man, who finds that he is best able to overcome difficulties by reliance upon God. Any person who is able to make such a contact with the Source of Power through prayer is well equipped for the tasks of life.

It is the filial spirit which inspires the tone and quality of prayer, whereby we receive spiritual insight and moral strength for duty. It has been well said that “prayer is the discipline of desire in the light of the best consciousness of God that we can attain unto.” We must recover this practice of prayer for right living. It will reinforce us with virtue and vitality to keep true to our best selves and fit us to meet every demand. It is in actual experience and not by mere theorizing that we find out the real efficacy of prayer.

Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, in *The Pastor Looks at His Work*,
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reports some of his experiences to show that

HYMNS ARE PRAYERS

“A little while ago I was in a service where a minister of no little eminence was suddenly called on to pray. His response was simply the repeating of the entire hymn, whose first stanza reads:

‘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!’

If one man’s experience was typical, that individual hymn with its ‘I’ and ‘My’ brought scores of people into a spiritual aggregate and made a ‘common supplication.’

“Much of the same thing happened in the bishops’ meeting not so long ago. We were having a prayer service, only that, and it must have continued for two and a half hours. One bishop’s prayer that night was simply a repeating of Whittier’s hymn:

‘Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our feverish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.’

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As we were all on our knees we were led to treat that hymn as a public prayer; and it was at once an inspiring and exalting thing. Our services would be enriched beyond measure if only this spirit of prayer could be more definitely attached to the songs of our corporate worship.”

Here is a personal testimony from Fanny Crosby concerning

THE CONSTANT COMPANION OF THE PILGRIM JOURNEY

“Toward the close of a day in the year 1874, I was sitting in my room thinking of the nearness of God through Christ as the constant companion of the pilgrim journey, when my heart burst out with the words:

‘Thou my everlasting portion,
More than friend or life to me,
All along my pilgrim journey,
Saviour, let me walk with Thee.’”

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How prayer is the inevitable opening for guidance is finely illustrated in the circumstances which resulted in the writing of

“LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT”

This well-known hymn was written by John Henry Newman when, as a young clergyman of the Anglican Church, he lay sick and troubled in a vessel which was becalmed in the Gulf of Palermo. He was restless to return to England and perplexed concerning the future. His feelings were expressed on the afternoon of June 16, 1833, in this prayer for guidance. The well-known tune, “Lux Benigna,” to which it is usually sung, was composed in 1865 by Dr. J. B. Dykes as he walked through the crowded Strand in London. It was done in ten minutes in what might seem to have been an unfavorable place, and yet faith shows its power in overcoming distractions and difficulties, as was done by this musician.

The author of this hymn later entered the Roman Catholic Church. He is best known as Cardinal Newman but none of his writings, not even his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, has exercised the influence of this prayer hymn. To be sure, all who use it have not been guided as was the cardinal. A friend recently remarked to me: “I was in the habit of repeating these lines on board the ship which was bringing me a stranger to the United States. The assurance that the Light still will lead me on has remained with me during the years nor have I any reason to expect that it will be different in the days to come.”

Here is an experience about

AN EVENTIDE PRAYER

A minister of long service and extensive travel went into the church of a denomination other than that to which he belonged when away from home, for evening worship. He was deeply impressed when the pastor offered as the evening prayer some stanzas from a hymn:

“At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay;

O in what divers pain they met!
O with what joy they went away!
Once more 'tis eventide, and we,
Oppressed with various ills, draw near;
What if Thy form we cannot see?
We know and feel that Thou are here.
O Saviour Christ, our woes dispel;
For some are sick, and some are sad,
And some have never loved Thee well,
And some have lost the love they had.

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... ..

Thy touch has still its ancient power,
No word from Thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn evening hour,
And in Thy mercy heal us all.”

No words other than those of the hymn were spoken; but the visiting minister affirmed that he never heard a more appropriate or appealing prayer.

How calmness and poise are obtained are related in an experience

“THROUGH THE LONG NIGHT WATCHES”

A minister was once confined to bed by sickness. When Sunday came he could hear the hymns which the congregation sang, for the parsonage adjoined the church. Evening found him feverish and restless, but with soothing effect came the closing hymn. Through the open window came the prayerful lines:

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“Now the day is over,
Night is drawing nigh;
Shadows of the evening

Steal across the sky;
Jesus, grant the weary
Calm and sweet repose;
With Thy tenderest blessing
May our eyelids close.

... ..

Through the long night watches
May Thine angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.”

The next Sunday morning the minister was back in his pulpit, and with a spirit of gratitude announced the hymn:

“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity.”

How there was a change for the better during a sickness is revealed in this account:

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“WHY, THAT’S FOR ME”

A minister’s wife with whom I am well acquainted has told of the time when her only sister lay on a bed of pain in a hospital in one of the suburbs of Chicago. Her father and mother, being sent for, reached the bedside at nightfall. A brief interview was permitted. The father, bending low above his girl, heard her faintly say, “Oh, Dad, I’ve lost my grip.” Great anxiety, therefore, was on his mind as he left the room.

Fearing the answer he might receive, yet hungering for news, the father telephoned as early the next morning as he dared. “How is the girl today?” was his agonized question.

“Holding her own. In fact, she has made slight progress through the night,” was the glad and astonishing answer. Father and mother, therefore, soon hastened to the hospital. There they learned that the daughter’s recovery was now a possibility.

Later the parents learned the cause of the happy change. A window had been opened by a nurse, and there came through it to the accompaniment of a piano a clear baritone voice singing: “What a Friend we have in Jesus!”

“Why, that’s for me,” whispered the sufferer, as she heard the words:

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“Are we weak and heavy laden,
Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Saviour, still our refuge,
Take it to the Lord in prayer.”

Restful assurance was expressed in the closing lines:

“In His arms He’ll take and shield thee,
Thou wilt find a solace there.”

Making the words her prayer, by asking Christ to take and shield her, she turned her face to the wall and the first natural sleep for weeks followed. From that hour her recovery began.

Harriet Beecher Stowe awoke one morning to find herself famous as the author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The excellent reception given this book was gratifying, but more than anything else was

THE SATISFYING CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD’S PRESENCE

She wrote her husband at this time, from the home of her brother, Henry Ward Beecher, that she felt a wonderful consciousness of God’s presence, which above all else quieted and comforted and satisfied her soul. Then she wrote out this experience in the beautiful hymn, “Still, still with Thee,” which first appeared in the Plymouth Hymnal. Set to Mendelssohn’s music, it is one of the richest recent additions to hymnology. This hymn-prayer was

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the response of her soul and voiced a deep experience of the peace that passeth all understanding. It tells most impressively what are some of the benefits of prayer:

“Still, still with Thee, when purple morning breaketh,
When the bird waketh, and the shadows flee;
Fairer than morning, lovelier than daylight,
Dawns the sweet consciousness, I am with Thee.

... ..

Still, still with Thee! As to each newborn morning
A fresh and solemn splendor still is given,
So does this blessed consciousness, awaking,
Breathe each day nearness unto Thee and heaven.”

What the divine presence means is strikingly seen where a man in danger was able to pray and to realize that he was

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NOT ALONE

Seven men were buried beneath thousands of tons of rocks which fell without a moment's warning in a Cornish tin mine early in the twentieth century. Willing hands immediately began the work of rescue, though all despaired of finding anyone alive. Their worst fears, however, were not realized. One man was found a little distance from his comrades, and was uninjured. The rocks had formed an arch over him.

Encouraged by finding this one miner, those who were engaged in the work of rescue called loudly to ascertain if any others were alive and able to speak. One man answered. He was an active Christian, and Sunday School superintendent. “Are you alone?” he was asked. The questioner, of course, was thinking of his fellow laborers. “No; Christ is with me,” was the reply. “Are you injured?” was the next question. “Yes,” answered the imprisoned man, “my legs are held fast by something.”

Those engaged in the conversation were then greatly surprised as they heard this man, who often sang when descending to and ascending

from his daily task, now begin to sing in a feeble voice:

“Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;

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The darkness deepens—Lord, with me abide!

When other helpers fail and comforts flee,

Help of the helpless, O abide with me.”

They heard no more from him. Two days later he was found with his legs crushed by a huge rock which rested on them. Both his life and his last words of song, however, gave the assurance that he had gone to be “forever with the Lord.”

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CHAPTER XII

Songs of the Negroes

Whatever else may be said about *The Green Pastures* by Marc Connelly, it obviously represents the naive and simple faith of thousands of untutored black Christians in the South. They accept the wonders of the Old Testament with crude literalness and they unhesitatingly believe that these marvels can be reproduced in their own lives.

One of the chief values of this play is the discerning use made of the unique spirituals which are a distinctive contribution of America to music. No one who has ever heard them sung can forget the impression of pathos at times rising to the heights of astonishing power. Without any regard for rhyme, rhythm or meter, these dialect songs express the long suppressed longings for freedom and happiness. The Negro furthermore firmly believes that these benefits are to be realized by means of religion alone. However sensuous may be some of the figures of speech, the emphasis is always on the supremacy of spiritual values.

There are other features in Negro singing especially connected with religious revivals which throw light on the characteristic traits of this people. Aggrey of Africa was a remarkable representative of the Negro race. His life, written by Edwin W. Smith, is one of the outstanding biographies of recent times. He once said, "I believe that the Negro has a great gift for the world; the gift of the idea of meeting injustice and ostracism and oppression by sunny light-hearted love and work. I believe he is going to teach that to Asia and the white folk." His attitude to life is best expressed in songs as indicated by a few illustrations in this chapter.

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Dr. Willis J. King, president of Samuel Houston College, Austin, Texas, in a recent article in *The Christian Advocate*, pointed out

“The peculiarity of both the melody and the dialect of the spirituals tends to make them difficult for people other than American Negroes to render. But these difficulties are being overcome. With increasing frequency they are being rendered by white American choirs and congregations. Some of them, like ‘Lord, I Want to be a Christian’ and ‘Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?’ are quite singable, after brief rehearsals, by the ordinary church group of any race or nationality. So it would seem not too much to expect that a number of these spirituals will ultimately find their place among the great hymns of the Church, and be sung down through the ages by Christians of every land.”

The ability to sing the spirituals depends upon

FINDING THE SOUL OF THE SONG

Dr. Bruce S. Wright tells of a well-known American-Italian tenor who said that he never sang a selection until he found out the soul of the number. For that reason he refrained from singing Negro spirituals until he had spent considerable time in the South living among the Negroes, listening to them sing. So today he sings “Steal Away” as he heard it sung at a Negro revival; and he sings “Goin’ Home” as he heard it sung at the dying bed of an aged Negro in a Negro’s cabin.

Here is a vivid description by Annemarie Ewing in *The Christian Herald*:

HOW THE NEGROES SING

“In the huge stadium, dropped like a bowl beneath the starlit sky, thousands of people sit waiting to hear the Hall Johnson Choir. Overhead the sky is indigo, dotted with twinkling stars, glorious with the cool silver of a full moon. A tender, capricious wind breathes softly over the semicircle of the waiting crowd.

“Now they come—a handful of Negroes, perhaps a dozen men and a half dozen women. So small a group looks lost on the big platform. At a signal from their leader they begin.

‘Wade in de water, chillun,
God’s a’goin’ to trouble de water...’

“Challenging as the voice of a delivered soul, the strong, clear bass gives out the words; others join in—a soprano acquiescence, a contralto surge of content, the ecstatic agreement of the tenor. Joy throbs through the singers’ throats, their cup of joy runneth over!

‘See dat band all dressed in white,
De leader looks like the Israelite...’

“How the leader draws them out—to send their message surging across the summer night into the hearts of thousands!

‘Wade in de water,
God’s a-goin’ to trouble de water...’

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“The last note swells and is still.

“In a moment they begin again. This time it is a joyous refrain, pulsing with the firmness of blessed assurance—assurance that warms the heart and moistens the eyes.

‘My God is so high you can’t get above Him,
My God is so low you can’t get below Him,
My God is so wide you can’t get around Him,
You must come in through de door...’

“Your soul thrills to the swinging certainty. Yes, He is so high, you can’t get above Him, so low you can’t get below Him; so wide you can’t get around Him! There is no way in but through the Gate!

“The music dies away, far above the stars gleam—detached, assured, eternal. From your eyes, quite unashamed, you brush away the tears.

“Thus do they worship our Lord!”

It was a memorable day in one man’s life when

BLACK UNCLE’S SONG MADE A MINISTER

A well-known white minister in the Middle West owed his conversion and his entrance into the ministry to an unexpected circumstance. He belonged to a company that was playing in Louisville. After the performance he left the theater at a late hour to take a turn around the streets of the city. He passed through a little park and saw a bent old Negro “uncle” sitting on a bench. As he approached the actor heard him singing softly to himself. And the song was “Jesus, Lovah uv Mah Soul.” The tenderness and feeling of the darky’s song and the clear tone of his aged voice held the listener spellbound.

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When the last verse was sung the youthful actor went up to the singer and pulling out a big bill said: “Uncle, you’re an old man, and it’s late for you to be out like this. If you have no home, this will help you a bit. Take it and go and be comfortable for a few days, anyway.”

The Negro took off his hat and said, “Dat’s pow’ful kind uv you, boss. Ah’s ol’, an’ Ah ain’t got no home, an’ ef hit’s jes’ de same to you Ah’ll take jes’ a bit uv dat money—’case somehow or udder de good Lawd he sen’s me a bit ev’y day. But Ah don’t need any mo’, ’case he allus loks arter me, ev’y day. An’ hit don’t matter, boss, ef an ol’ man’s ol’, an’ ain’t got no home, jes’ so’s he kin sing dat ’ere song uv mine. Ah’d like to sing hit again to yo’, jes’ case you done gib me dis. Hit’s a wunnerful song, boss. Hit’s called, ‘Jesus, Lovah uv Mah Soul!’”

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He then sang it again softly. The actor heard him through and then shaking hands with the Negro, to his surprise, said, “Good night, uncle. You’ve done a good night’s work with that song—better than ever I’ve done with my life. Because you’ve started me doing something—for I’m going to learn to sing that song, too!”

That was the beginning of an experience which resulted in a gifted man becoming a minister of Christ.

The characteristic gratitude of the dark race was illustrated when

A NEGRO FAMILY SANG AT JOHN BROWN’S FUNERAL

“John Brown’s Body Rests Amid the Mountains,” wrote Mary Lee in *The New York Times*, October, 1929, as she vividly told the story of the life of this dramatic figure in a fascinating manner. At that time, she affirmed, there was still living at North Elba one man who could remember John Brown. His name was Lyman Epps, “the son of one of those Negroes whom John Brown came to North Elba to help.” This writer adds: “The Epps family it was who sang as a quartet at John Brown’s funeral in 1859. Lyman Epps remembers it to this day—how he stood at the foot of the open casket singing bass, his father at the head, singing tenor, and his two sisters, Amelia and Evelyn, singing soprano and alto, at his side.” The hymn they sang was John Brown’s favorite:

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“Blow ye the trumpet, blow!
The gladly solemn sound
Let all the nations know,
To earth’s remotest bound,
The year of jubilee is come!
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home.”

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CHAPTER XIII

Christmas and Easter Melodies

These two great festivals of the Christian year fittingly celebrate the Incarnation and Resurrection of Christ. Just as hope came with the Saviour of the world, so hope was quickened when He won the signal victory over death. He is indeed the unspeakable gift of God, and the spirit of gratitude for this marvelous blessing is best celebrated in song.

The greatest hymns of the Church are inspired by these two events, which have liberated the human spirit and filled it with faith, joy, enthusiasm, loyalty. All the greatest poets, artists, musicians, were illuminated by the Christmas and Easter messages, and excelled themselves in setting forth the jubilant truths of redemption and eternal life through Christ the Lord of love and light. These productions have enriched the thought, excited the imagination and ennobled the lives of multitudes through all the Christian centuries. This they will continue to do to the end of time.

The fount of poetic and artistic inspiration still flows, and from time to time there are added new contributions to swell the jubilation of these two seasons and to spread peace and goodwill among men.

Bishop F. W. Warne recalls

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AN INCARNATION HYMN THAT FIRES THE IMAGINATION

“The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ for two thousand years, on the anniversary of the sinless Incarnation, has sung hymns of joy and praise. Here is a part of the hymn that, when a child, fired my heart and imagination, when I heard it sung on such anniversaries, and it fires them still:

‘Mortals, awake, with angels join,

And chant the solemn lay;
Joy, love, and gratitude combine,
To hail the auspicious day.

... ..

Hail, Prince of Life, forever hail!

Hail, Brother, Friend!

Though earth, and time, and life shall fail,

The praise shall never end.”

Carols have invariably been sung on Christmas Eve, and the following incident from the *Syracuse Post Standard* illustrates

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THE JOY OF CHRISTMAS

All members of the family were gathered in the cozy living room of a south side home. The lights were out, but the mellow glow from a cheery fireplace illuminated the room with the soft light which seems to symbolize peace and quiet. Children romped on the floor; a playful puppy bounded here and there, yipping joyously; the old cat blinked sleepily and purred with contentment. Father was reading the paper and mother was perusing a magazine.

In the windows hung red bells, and through the window the snow lay white and sparkling under the street lamps. A playful wind whipped up little swirling flurries of snow at intervals. Suddenly it came, clear through the night. Soft music, then a burst of song—“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.”

All within listened to the music in the night—Christmas music, carols. Then as it came nearer all rushed to the windows and saw a band of boys and men marching bravely by, blowing trumpets, horns—what not? The spirit of Christmas.

Carols are also a part of the celebration on Christmas Day, and how they cheered the patients in a hospital is described

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when

NURSES SANG CAROLS

The nurses enjoyed a breakfast served by candle light at 6:30 on Christmas morning at the Faxton Hospital in Utica, New York, and then exchanged greetings. After this, clad in their uniforms, including their blue capes, attractively red-lined, they formed in a procession and marched from floor to floor of the building singing the familiar Christmas songs. Young mothers and their little babies, in the maternity building, were not forgotten. The nurses marched from the main building in the cold morning and sang as they walked along the sidewalk until they reached the maternity department, where they continued their carols.

This self-appointed task conveyed pleasure beyond the power of words to express to the patients, some of whom were far away from loved ones. The act was one of those beautiful touches which unites the whole Christian world in a kindred feeling on Christmas Day.

The thoughtful hospitality of the Maier family in the village of Oberndorf, Germany, led one of the guests, the young priest Joseph Mohr, to write the well-known Christmas song,

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“SILENT NIGHT”

At this party a festival play was performed in view of the approaching Christmas. It so stirred the young priest that instead of returning home he climbed the Totenberg, Mountain of the Dead, overlooking the village. He stood there in quiet meditation. The silence of the night, the blinking of the stars, the murmur of the Salzach River, all inspired him. Quickly he returned to his parish house and late that night the words of “Stille Nacht” were written. The next day he hastened to his organist, Franz Gruber, and requested that he write the music for this song. He composed the well-known tune. On Christmas Eve of 1818 the priest and organist were ready to offer their contribution for the first time. The organ proved to be out of commission but Gruber was

ingenious. He hurried home and brought his guitar and to its accompaniment he and the priest sang “Stille Nacht” as a duet. It touched the congregation deeply and after the service the two friends, with tears of joy in their eyes, embraced on the steps of the church in gratitude for this impressive rendition. Since that evening the song has become one of the Christmas favorites all over the world.

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Bishop Phillips Brooks was the friend of children as well as adults. His popularity as rector of the Church of the Advent in Philadelphia was unbounded and it continued when he went to Trinity Church, Boston. It was during a year’s vacation that he had an experience which later resulted in his writing the well-known hymn,

“O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM”

In the course of his travels during this vacation he went to the Holy Land. On Christmas Eve he was in Bethlehem. He walked in the fields where the shepherds had heard the angelic chorus. He listened to the hymns of praise that kept ringing out upon the clear air. He saw the children of Bethlehem getting ready for Christmas. Two years later when he was back home his mind went back to his experiences in Bethlehem. He recalled the dark streets, the clear blue sky with stars, the quiet shepherds’ fields; and under the spell of these memories, in 1868, he wrote this Christmas hymn especially for the children of his Sunday School. His organist, Lewis H. Render, wrote the music for this much beloved song.

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This graphic description by Annemarie Ewing in *The Christian Herald* tells of

CAROLS SUNG BY CHILDREN

“I can’t think of any holier sound for Christmas Eve than that of young voices, clear and sweet in the cold, singing the simple, tuneful melodies that can’t grow old. Last year it was my pleasure and privilege to know a small group of youngsters who wanted to go caroling Christmas Eve. They didn’t mind the cold or the long walk or the wind and snow. They wanted to sing!

“I can see those bobbing little heads now, all sizes and shapes—from Rose Marie’s tall, smartly hatted elegance to Babe’s roly-poly woolen cap, just under my arm. How eager they were, and what stories I had to tell them to keep them quiet till we got to each place! We planned to sing under the windows of all our special friends.

“And how we did sing! I do not know whether it was sweeter to stand there holding my hand before Babe’s candle while her big blue eyes were lifted up to see the book (she had to stand on her very tip-toes!), or whether it would have been more exquisite pleasure to have been sitting in my warm living-room, when the shrilly sweet voices of the children began with their own enthusiasm:

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‘Joy to the world! the Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heav’n and Nature sing.
And Heav’n and Nature sing,
And Heav’n and Heav’n and Nature sing.’

“I know that there were tears in my own eyes when we reached ‘Silent Night,’ and that from the tight closed window of old Mr. Simmons, crotchety and bad-tempered, there fell a shower of walnuts and pecans! In the big house across the way where a little child lay ill the windows were softly raised, and I could not help but stoop and kiss chubby Babe, who pulled my arm to whisper that ‘she hoped Margaret-who-was-sick heard.’

“Christmas Carols! Whether they are sung aloud or whether they buzz and chime through your heart—it is the same. Let them ring out!”

One of the well-known celebrations is that on

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EASTER MORNING IN AMERICA’S BETHLEHEM

The Moravians celebrate Easter with impressive ceremonies in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Early in the morning the trombonists walk through the quiet streets of the city and awaken the people with their inspiring anthem. Soon lights appear in the windows of the homes and the people join the procession towards the old church, greeting each other with gladsome salutations. The Easter service in the church continues till sunrise when the congregation march out, led by the trombonists, to the ancient burying-ground.

At this place of sacred memories the people stand in a large semicircle looking towards the eastern hill, as a symbol of their devout faith. The ministers and trombone choir stand apart, and the service proceeds with song and responsive readings. The atmosphere of reverence and hope pervades this company on the chilly morning of early spring, as they confess their faith in the glorious resurrection and celebrate the triumph of their loved ones in Christ. The appearance of the sun over the hill is the signal for the outburst of a hymn of adoration and praise, to the accompaniment of the trombones. This Easter service, begun in the church and concluded in the cemetery, is a memorable occasion, attended by thousands from all parts of the country, as has been done for many years. It is a testimony to a virile and victorious Christianity which sings, “Christ the Lord is risen today, Hallelujah!”

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Here is a fine Easter anthology from a sermon by Dr. George Elliott in *The Methodist Review*, which reminds us of what

HYMN WRITERS TELL OF HEAVEN

“Listen to Cardinal Newman, the Roman Catholic, as in the delicately beautiful poem, ‘Lead, Kindly Light,’ he dreams and speaks about the time when:

‘The night is gone

And in the morn those angel faces smile

Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.’

“And then Isaac Watts, the Nonconformist, has no gloomy view when he says:

‘Give me the wings of faith to rise
Within the veil and see
The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be.’

“And John Fawcett, the Baptist, who has written the very finest hymn of Christian fellowship, ‘Blest Be the Tie That Binds,’ sings for us:

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‘When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.
From sorrow, toil and pain,
And sin we shall be free;
And perfect love and friendship reign
Through all eternity.’

“And Muhlenberg, the Episcopalian, joins in the chorus that the poet-choir are singing, and lifts his gaze to that heavenly country, and exultantly sings:

‘Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to greet;
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the soul.’

“And Bonar, the Presbyterian, will not be left behind as he sings of the land

‘Where none shall beckon us away,
Nor bid our festival be done;
Our meeting time the eternal day,
Our meeting place the eternal throne.
Then, hand in hand, firm linked at last,

And heart to heart enfolded all,
We'll smile upon the troubled past
And wonder why we wept at all.'

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“And best of all, Charles Wesley, who doubtless has been appointed to lead the choirs of heaven when the angel chorister is tired, sings for us, and with us:

‘Come, let us join our friends above
That have obtained the prize,
And on the eagle wings of love
To joys celestial rise:

... ..

One family we dwell in Him,
One church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream, of death:
One army of the living God,
To His command we bow;
Part of His host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

... ..

O that we now might grasp our Guide!
O that the word were given!
Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,
And land us all in heaven!’”

It was a great open-air service when we were favored with

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SALVATION ARMY MUSIC ON EASTER MORNING

Brooklyn's Easter Dawn Service in 1930 found ten thousand people assembled at Prospect Park Plaza for a community gathering under the auspices of the Brooklyn Federation of Churches. The first in the order of worship was a selection by the Salvation Army Band.

“Low in the grave He lay—
Jesus, my Saviour!
Waiting the coming day—
Jesus, my Lord!
Up from the grave He arose,
With a mighty triumph o'er His foes;
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever with His saints to reign:
He arose! He arose!
Hallelujah! Christ arose!”

It was so appealingly appropriate that every listener seemed to be touched, and men quietly lifted their hats even though the morning was cool.

The band led the various hymns, the closing one of which was—

“All hail the power of Jesus' name!

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Let angels prostrate fall;

Bring forth the royal diadem,

And crown Him Lord of all.”

What proved to be the climax of this exhilarating service was reached when the Salvation Army band left the scene playing their favorite marching song of conquest, “Onward, Christian Soldiers!”

How the good we do comes back to us is seen in a familiar hymn,

SUNG BY AND FOR SANKEY

When lying in weakness and the darkness of blindness the musical genius of the evangelistic world, Ira D. Sankey, was visited by Dr. F. B. Meyer, of London, a long-time friend. “Would you like me to sing something for you?” asked Sankey as Meyer was about to leave. Then he began: “There’ll be no dark valley when Jesus comes.”

Though weak, he continued through all four stanzas, ending with

“There’ll be songs of greeting when Jesus comes,
There’ll be songs of greeting when Jesus comes;
And a joyful meeting when Jesus comes
To gather His loved ones home.”

On an Easter morning a group of young people went to the home of Sankey in Brooklyn, when he was in his last illness, and outside the window amid the morning sunshine sang the hymn which he had sung to thousands of others, and which he greatly cherished: “There’ll Be No Dark Valley When Jesus Comes.”

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The thoughtfulness of these young people was greatly appreciated by the great evangelistic singer. It was an inspiringly appropriate message for a sunrise song service on an Easter morning.

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CHAPTER XIV

Funeral Music

The Christian assurance of immortality brings its message of consolation most appropriately in life's darkest hours when death invades the family circle. No one has pierced the veil between the present and the future life, but there is a sense of the fitness of things which has convinced men of divers creeds that a life beyond is a reality. It is the desire for completion and not merely for continuance which quickens in our breast the hope of life everlasting. It is moreover certified to us by the fact of the living Christ through whom we commune with God. This experience convinces us that our earthly pilgrimage is the prelude to the heavenly life of spiritual attainment and satisfaction.

Thus when the physical remains of our loved ones are consigned to the earth, we have the assured confidence of a reunion in the land that is fairer than day. Since Jesus Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, we know that death does not sever the ties which bind us to those who have crossed the flood. We shall meet again when the day dawns and these shadows flee away. This is the outlook of faith which comforts and cheers us.

“For what e'er befalls, Love conquers all,
And Death shall not prevail.”

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The thought deepest in the soul often finds expression at a crisis. This fact is what led to the

HYMN OF MARTYRED PRESIDENT SUNG BY THE NATION

“Good-bye, good-bye, all,” said President William McKinley as he lay dying in Buffalo, a few days after he was shot on September 6, 1901. “It is God's way. His will, not ours, be done,” he added soon afterwards. Toward the end in the presence of his wife and intimate friends, his lips

moved again and with a light on his worn face, his inner soul expressed itself in the lines of his favorite hymn:

“Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!
E’en though it be a cross—”

A moment of silence followed and then in a whisper he said, “That has been my inextinguishable prayer.”

The funeral services at the Capitol began with “Lead, Kindly Light,” sung by the choir, and concluded with “Nearer, My God, to Thee.” The final service was held in the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Canton, Ohio, of which he was a member. 190

During those days of sadness the nation sang this familiar hymn which profoundly moved the popular heart. Possibly in all the history of the United States, the nation has never so unitedly joined in singing a particular hymn as during those days. It was a national tribute to a fallen leader.

In the City of Utica, New York, the home of Vice-President James S. Sherman, as soon as word was received of his death, October 30, 1912, the leader of the orchestra in the chief hotel asked the company in the dining room to stand, while “Nearer, My God, to Thee” was played. Thus the song which was sung for a fallen President was likewise rendered in his home town when a Vice-President passed thence.

It is a hallowed custom to sing a person’s favorite hymn at his funeral. Thus it was that there was sung at his funeral,

PRESIDENT WILSON’S FAVORITE HYMN

Visitors at the Chautauqua Assembly, especially in the days of its founder, Bishop J. H. Vincent, can never forget the Sunday evening vesper services. One hymn in particular was always sung: “Day is Dying in the West,” written by Mary A. Lathbury, at Bishop Vincent’s request. 191

This happened to be President Wilson’s favorite hymn. His remains were carried to Bethlehem Chapel on the cathedral grounds in

Washington, D. C. Over the outer door of this chapel the inscription in the stone work is “The Way of Peace.” During the service the men’s voices of the choir led by a clear tenor gave the favorite hymn an infinitely sweet appeal, especially the lines:

“Gather us who seek Thy face
To the fold of Thy embrace,
For Thou art nigh.”

It has been well said that some tunes and hymns are so closely united that one recalls the other. Thus it was that

BELLS PLAYED HYMNS WHEN TAFT WAS BURIED

The service was held in the quaint little Unitarian Church in Washington, D. C. Floral wreaths and sprays abounded, representing the deep affection and high respect for a former President of the United States and later the Chief Justice. The dirge notes of Chopin’s Funeral March, a flourish of trumpets saluting a President, and the tolling of the great bell of All Souls’ Church, as has been the practice since 1822 at the passing of Presidents, constituted parts of this impressive service. No hymns were sung but there was the soft music of the bells which pealed forth the strains of “Abide With Me.” The words were not spoken but the familiar verses ran through the minds of the congregation:

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“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, O, abide with me.”

Few hymns have had so many remarkable associations as, “Peace, Perfect Peace,” written by Bishop Edward H. Bickersteth. It has brought comfort to many and on one occasion, as stated below, the author himself was

COMFORTED BY HIS OWN HYMN

An informed contributor to *The Churchman* writes as follows of this hymn's vogue: "It has been sung at the obsequies of princes and statesmen as well as at the funerals of the poor. It has afforded consolation to the mourner in the palace as well as to the grief-stricken peasant in the cottage. It was a favorite hymn with the good old Queen of England, and it was sung in her death chamber at Osborne. It has sustained the lonely soul of Bishop Hannington when he was a caged prisoner in Central Africa awaiting execution from the hand of a heathen king. They were the sweet stanzas that bound up the broken heart of General Roberts when his only son was placed in a soldier's grave in South Africa. It has been sung at the interment of authors, actors and statesmen in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's. When in the cemetery of the village of Chislebon, Wiltshire, England, the early harvest was being gathered and shepherds were folding their flocks, the venerable prelate stood at the head of his eldest son's open grave as this hymn, so often quoted in the hour of death and sung on the day of burial, struck a note of Christian hope to the bereaved spirit of its author. On this side of the Atlantic the hymn is sung at almost every funeral service conducted in church, and Mr. Coldbeck's appropriate tune, 'Pax Tecum,' is singularly adapted to its soothing and inspiring strains."

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"A good hymn is the most difficult thing to write," said Alfred, Lord Tennyson. It was not until his eighty-first year that he succeeded in writing his single great hymn, "Crossing the Bar," although stanzas from his *In Memoriam* are sung as hymns. It was, therefore, most fitting that its first public use was as an anthem at the poet's funeral in Westminster Abbey on October 12, 1892. The description of the scene, written by the daughter of the Dean of Westminster, is here quoted in part of the singing of

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TENNYSON'S HYMN AT HIS FUNERAL

"In the intense and solemn silence which followed the reading of the lesson were heard the voices of the choir singing in subdued and tender tones Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar'—those beautiful words in which the poet, as it were, prophetically foretold his calm and peaceful deathbed. In the second line the clear, thrilling notes of a boy's voice sounded like a

silver trumpet call amongst the arches, and it was only at intervals that one distinguished Dr. Bridge's beautiful organ accompaniment, which swelled gradually from a subdued murmur as of the morning tide into a triumphant burst from the voices, so blended together were words and music."

One of the best hymns of fervent devotion is

195

"Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

Illness and suffering had been the lot of its author. She worked under difficulties and might well have said with the Apostle Paul, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Her characteristic confidence was, however, expressed in the

TEXT SELECTED BY MISS HAVERGAL FOR HER TOMBSTONE

Her last days found her at Caswell Bay, Swansea, Wales, where she had gone for a rest. When informed that she was approaching the end of her sufferings, she is said to have answered, "If I am going, it is too good to be true." Death came on June 3, 1879, in the forty-third year of her age; and she was laid to rest in the Astley churchyard beside her father, and close to the church and home of her childhood. By her own desire her favorite text was carved on her tombstone: "The Blood of Jesus Christ His Son Cleanseth Us From All Sin."

It was an unusual scene, according to *The Standard*, that comforted the bereaved mother as well as the few persons present

196

WHEN PAREPA SANG AT ANNIE'S FUNERAL

This famous singer, through a friend, attended the funeral of Annie, the only daughter of a poor widowed mother, in the East End of London. This friend's description is worth quoting:

"The undertaker came and bustled about. He looked at myself and Parepa, as if to say, 'It's time to go. The wretched funeral service is

over.’

“Without a word, Parepa rose and walked to the head of the coffin. She laid her white scarf on an empty chair, threw her cloak back from her shoulders, where it fell in long, soft, black lines from her noble figure like the drapery of mourning. She laid her soft, fair hand on the cold forehead, passed it tenderly over the wasted, delicate face, looked down at the dead girl a moment, and moved my flowers from the stained box to the thin fingers, then lifted up her head, and, with illumined eyes, sang the glorious melody:

“Angels ever bright and fair,
Take, oh, take me to thy care.’

“Her magnificent voice rose and fell in all its richness and power and pity and beauty. She looked above the dingy room and the tired faces of the men and women, the hard hands and the struggling hearts. She threw back her head and sang till the choirs of paradise must have paused to listen to the music of that day. She passed her hand caressingly over the girl’s soft, dark hair, sang on and on; ‘Take, oh, *take her* to Thy care.’

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“The mother’s face grew rapt and white. I held her hands and watched her eyes. Suddenly she threw my hands off and knelt at Parepa’s feet, close to the wooden trestles. She locked her fingers together, tears and sobs breaking forth. She prayed aloud that God would bless the angel singing for Annie. A patient smile settled about her lips, and the light came back into her poor, dulled eyes, and she kissed her daughter’s face with a love beyond all interpretation of human speech. I led her back to her seat as the last glorious notes of Parepa’s voice rose triumphant over all earthly pain and sorrow.

“And I thought that no queen ever went to her grave with a greater ceremony than this young daughter of poverty and toil, committed to the care of angels.”

An unusual funeral service was held when, instead of the family sitting in silence,

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EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY SANG A VERSE

The description must be quoted in full as it appeared in *The Christian Advocate*:

“When I was in Rome a friend came to me asking if I would be a pallbearer at the funeral of a young American girl. Her family wished only Americans present at the little service. I went to the room where the casket stood and presently the family entered—a noble lady, evidently the mother, a daughter and two sons, the eldest leading a little girl. They surrounded the casket and softly repeated the Apostles’ Creed. Then the mother’s voice, uncertain and trembling, began:

“‘Shall we gather at the river
Where bright angel feet have trod,
With its crystal tide forever
Flowing by the throne of God?’

“All joined her in the chorus. Then the eldest son, a grown man, sang:

‘On the margin of the river,
Washing up its silver spray,
We will walk and worship ever,
All the happy golden day.’

“After the chorus there was silence—a choking silence that benumbed me. Then my friend whispered, ‘It is their family prayer service and it is her verse.’ Then the little girl was lifted in her father’s arms, and sweet and clear and wonderingly came:

199

‘Ere we reach the shining river
Lay we every burden down,
Grace our spirits will deliver
And provide a robe and crown.’

“I do not know how I endured it, the emotion of that moment. In a broken manner they sobbed through the chorus and then the younger brother, a lad of fourteen, sang:

‘At the smiling of the river,

Mirror of the Saviour's face
Saints whom death will never sever
Lift their songs of saving grace.'

"His voice was so confident that it steadied all present and the chorus rang out clearly. Then all together they sang:

'Soon we'll reach the silver river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease,
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace.'

"And the chorus was strong, clear and almost exultant. After repeating the Lord's Prayer, the minister read the service and we went to the grave. On the way my friend told me of the many times he had been present at this same little family service in the Michigan home when each sang his verse in the old hymn. 'The last verse was father's, and after his death they all sang it for him, and now the little granddaughter had picked up the broken thread of song for her sweet young auntie.'

200

'What a wonderful glorification of a poor little hymn!'

"'Truly so,' he agreed. 'I never before had much respect for that piece.'"

The faith and loyalty of a noble Christian were remembered when his daughter

PLAYED HER FATHER'S FAVORITE HYMN AT A MEMORIAL SERVICE

This service conducted by the North Dakota Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church for Judge Charles S. Pollock was impressively beautiful. Held for a layman, it yet followed the ordination of young men for the ministry. Judge Pollock, a faithful follower of Jesus Christ and a courageous advocate of civic righteousness, had dutifully carried heavy responsibilities at the session of the General Conference in May, 1928, and not long thereafter was summoned into the courts of

heaven. On that autumn day at this service the judge's daughter played on the organ her father's favorite hymn:

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“O Master, let me walk with Thee
In lowly paths of service free;
Tell me Thy secret; help me bear
The strain of toil, the fret of care.

... ..

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broadening way;
In peace that only Thou canst give,
With Thee, O Master, let me live.”

The assurance of reunion was well advertised by

SONGS AT A MISSIONARY'S GRAVE

The great missionary, James Gilmour, of Mongolia, lost his beloved wife at Peking. In a letter to his children's uncle in Scotland, to whom Mr. Gilmour had decided to entrust the two boys after their mother's death, he wrote: “Oh, it is hard to think of them going off over the world in that motherless fashion! We were at mamma's grave yesterday for the first time since September 21. We sang ‘There's a Land That Is Fairer Than Day,’ in Chinese, and also a Chinese hymn we have here with a chorus, which says, ‘We'll soon go and see them in our heavenly home,’ and in English, ‘There is a happy land.’ The children and I have no reluctance in speaking of mamma, and we don't think of her as here or buried, but as in a fine place, happy and well.”

202

As the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse approached the end of his great career as minister and author he said to a brother minister concerning his funeral service: “There must be no mourning, no tears, no misery, no gloom. I go not into the gloom but into the dawn. Start the service with ‘Praise God.’ Take all the stops out of the organ and let everybody thunder it out.” Thus it was that there were sung the

HALLELUJAH CHORUS AND DOXOLOGY AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE

His wishes were met, and the memorial service at Kingsway Hall, the headquarters of the West London Mission, was unusual. The organist played “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth” as the people assembled. Then came, “Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow.” The triumphant “Hallelujah Chorus” pealed forth at the close.

203

The hymns were:

“Come let us join our cheerful songs
With angels around the throne.”

“Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.”

“For all the saints, who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!”

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

The last lines of the fourth hymn were a powerful wish which the saint had realized:

“Jesus, in mercy bring us
To that dear land of rest;
Who art, with God the Father,
And Spirit, ever blest.”

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CHAPTER XV

Hymns on Patriotic Occasions

The impelling motives of patriotism are best expressed in the national anthems of the nations and in songs which breathe the spirit of loyalty to country. Devotion to the ideals and institutions of the land of one's birth or adoption is the indispensable qualification for the intelligent appreciation of what other peoples hold sacred among their national possessions. Such patriotism is neither of the hoot owl or spread eagle type. It faces all the facts without evasion and frankly acknowledges errors and omissions, with the determination to improve conditions. The patriot thus has no occasion to apologize or defend because he shows reason for his faith in the nation to which he has consecrated his best powers.

The greatness of any nation is evidenced in the quality of its citizenship. So judged, we have cause for gratitude because the hymns which voice our sentiment impressively advertise the idealism which has inspired our activities. The same test can be satisfactorily met by other nations. It is, therefore, quite fitting that reference should be made to their use of hymns on those special occasions when the heart is stirred with gratitude and thanksgiving.

205

Indeed, the incidents related in this volume are taken from the annals of different nations. The chief interest is their testimony from experience to what hymns have meant to them in the varied crises of life. Such a consideration disregards racial barriers and denominational differences. Hymns speak the universal language of the heart, which penetrates deeper and travels farther than the formalities of customs peculiar to various peoples.

In these days of international appreciation and co-operation it is well to remind ourselves that the higher unity of all peoples is practicable only through Jesus Christ. There is truly no stronger reminder than hymns of the unity of faith, the stability of hope, the harmony of love.

“For all are one in Thee
And all are Thine.”

Since it was first published on July 4, 1895, in *The*
[30]
Congregationalist, multitudes of people have sung

206

AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL

One hundred thousand persons, it has been estimated, each day sing the patriotic poem of Miss Katherine Lee Bates, who was a teacher of English literature in Wellesley College. Some schools make it a practice to have the children sing it daily. At the commencement of Syracuse University in 1930, a strange thrill swept the company of over one thousand young men and women who were assembled to receive their degrees, and the four thousand persons who were present to witness the graduation exercises, as they sang this hymn. Mighty was the volume of song as the words were reached:

“America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.”

The source of the inspiration of this poem was related by Beatrice York Houghton. In an interview Miss Bates said that she and some friends had gone up Pike’s Peak and the vision from that great height exalted her soul into poetic fervor. The wide reaches of country—her country—the dizzy height which set her above it all, gave her a god-like inspiration, and the lines which came into her mind were remembered, afterwards to be set down.

The origin of a nation’s life was strikingly evidenced in

207

A PRAISE SERVICE

St. Paul's Cathedral, London, is "the Parish Church of the British Empire." When the repairs were completed after seventeen years in 1930, a memorable thanksgiving service was held under the renovated dome which was Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece. This famous architect was the son of a clergyman and such was his consuming devotion to his work that he could have said with Michael Angelo: "It is enough to have bread and to live in the faith of Christ."

The Thanksgiving service was attended by one hundred and sixty bishops of the Anglican Church, assembled from all parts of the Empire. It was broadcast to New York, Melbourne, Calcutta, Toronto and other cities. Dean Inge, of St. Paul's, standing on the chancel steps, exhorted everyone to "give praise to God that he hath called us to take part in the joy and adventure of his glorious Kingdom." The feelings of the occasion were voiced by seven thousand people through Henry Lyte's hymn:

“Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven!
To His feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who, like me, His Praise should sing?
Praise Him! praise Him! praise Him! praise Him!
Praise the Everlasting King!”

[31]

In *The War Romance of the Salvation Army*, by Hill and Booth, there is a reference to what was

SUNG ON MEMORIAL DAY IN FRANCE

“The girls went down to decorate the two hundred American graves at Mandres, and even while they bent over the flaming blossoms and laid them on the mounds, an air battle was going on over their heads. Close at hand was the American artillery being moved to the front on a little narrow-gauge railroad that ran near to the graveyard, and the Germans were firing and trying to get them. But the girls went steadily on with their work, scattering flowers and setting flags until their service of love was over. Then they stood aside for the prayer and a song. One of the Salvation Army captains with a fine voice began to sing:

‘For loved ones in the Homeland

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Are waiting me to come

Where neither death nor sorrow

Invades their holy home:

O dear, dear native country!

O rest and peace above!

Christ, bring us all to the Homeland

Of His eternal love.’

“Into the midst of the song came the engine on the little narrow track straight toward where he stood, and he had to step aside on to a pile of

dirt to finish his song. The same captain went on ahead to the Homeland not long after when the epidemic of influenza swept over the world; and he was given the honor of a military funeral.”

Edward Marshall had an article in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1898 which is here abbreviated, about the unique conditions under which the boys sang

“AMERICA” AFTER THE BATTLE

“There is one incident of the day which shines out in my memory above all others now as I lie in a New York hospital writing. It occurred at the field hospital. About a dozen of us were lying there. The surgeons, with hands and bared arms dripping, and clothes literally saturated with blood, were straining every nerve to prepare the wounded for the journey down to Siboney. It was a doleful group. Amputation and death stared its members in their gloomy faces. Suddenly a voice started softly,

210

‘My country, ’tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing.’

“Other voices took it up:

‘Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims’ pride—’

“The quivering, quavering chorus, punctuated by groans and made spasmodic by pain, trembled up from that little group of wounded Americans in the midst of the Cuban solitude—the pluckiest, most heartfelt song that human beings ever sang. There was one voice that did not quite keep up with the others. It was so weak that I did not hear it until all the rest had finished with the line, ‘Let freedom ring.’ Then halting, struggling, faint, it repeated slowly:

‘Land—of—the—pilgrims’—pride,
Let—freedom—’

“The last word was a woeful cry. One more son had died as
died the fathers.”

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Under different circumstances but in the same spirit of loyalty the
tune of “America” was played in France as “our boys” promptly obeyed
the order,

“SALUTE AMERICA!”

Exercises were held on Memorial Day at Menil-la-Tour when the
World War was raging in France. Two regimental bands took up their
positions in opposite corners of the cemetery. The commanding general
placed a flag on each of the eighty-one graves. He and the soldiers then
saluted the large flag, while battle was still being waged about a mile
away.

The general then faced the west, and pointed in that direction as he
addressed the soldiers. He said: “Out there are Washington and the
President, and all the people of the United States, who are looking to
you.... Over there are the mothers who bade you good-bye with tears and
sent you forth, and are waiting at home and praying for you, trusting in
you. Out there are the fathers and the sisters and the sweethearts you
have left behind, all depending on you to do your best. Now,” said he in a
clear ringing voice, “turn and salute America!” All turned and
saluted toward the west, while the flags fluttered on the breeze
and the band played softly,

212

“My country, ’tis of thee,

Sweet land of liberty,

Of thee I sing:

Land where my fathers died,

Land of the pilgrims’ pride,

From every mountain side

Let freedom ring.”

A distinction with a difference was clearly evidenced when Britishers
sang a German’s hymn,

“NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD”

I quote from *The Christian Advocate*:

“At the dedication of the British War memorial at the Menin Gate of Ypres, where its arch spans the main street, three great hymns were sung: ‘O God, Our Help in Ages Past,’ by Isaac Watts; ‘For All the Saints Who From Their Labors Rest,’ by Bishop How, and ‘Now Thank We All Our God,’ which is a translation by Catherine Winkworth from the German of Martin Rinkart! Time heals wounds. Who would have believed it, had he been told soon after the Armistice that this hymn—noble and beautiful as it is—would be selected and sung by British soldiers at the dedication of a monument erected to the memory of those who fell in a war against Germans? Yet no one raised a word of protest or remarked upon any incongruity, for the instincts of the human heart are deeper than the traditional and conventional differences which separate nations.”

213

The New York Times for August 18, 1929, had an article, “Georgia Lower House Opens Day with Song.” [\[32\]](#) It is interesting to note this reference to

A SINGING LEGISLATURE

“The Rev. W. D. Hammack, ‘Uncle Billie,’ has been the chaplain of the Lower House for several years. He is a great believer in the power of song. He likes to ‘raise a tune,’ and he doesn’t care whether the Governor of Georgia and the Legislature are at loggerheads or at peace; he thinks a legislator should be made to sing whether he can sing or not. So every morning for ten minutes he lines up the early arrivals just before the House opens for the day and starts on some of the old-time religious vocal numbers.

“Richard Russell Jr., Speaker of the House, gives Mr. Hammack carte blanche to lead his flock of lawmakers just as far in the harmony line as he can, and ‘Uncle Billie’ has made good. He pitches the tune every morning and the House sings. Sometimes it is ‘Jesus, Lover of My Soul’ and the next morning it is ‘Nearer, My God, to

214

Thee.’ Another favorite is ‘All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.’ Once or twice they have tackled ‘Gimme the Old-Time Religion’ with much success.

“Many years ago a philosopher said, ‘Let me but write the songs of a nation and I care not who makes its laws.’ And the Rev. Mr. Hammack, although he had written none of them, has done a lot with his songs during the dog days of the legislative session. Georgia has probably the only singing legislature in captivity.”

No better song could have expressed the feelings of our nation, and so it was that we sang

THE DOXOLOGY ON ARMISTICE DAY

New York City, in common with other parts of the United States, was wild with excitement on Armistice Day, 1918. The fighting was over, and men, women and children gave expression to their happiness in various ways. City, village and hamlet alike had some kind of wild demonstration. Seeing the excited crowd, a young woman, an officer of the Salvation Army, as reported in the newspapers at that time, stood on the steps of the great Public Library in New York and began to sing the old Doxology. Instantly the crowd took up the strain, and in a moment, as though by magic, thousands of voices blended in the noble words of thanksgiving:

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“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.”

Men reverently removed their hats, and the eyes of women filled with tears. The words of Thomas Ken that day expressed the gratitude of a great multitude. Among the many things done through that entire day, perhaps there was none more appropriate or beautiful than that which the Salvation Army lassie did.

And with this reference to the Doxology we conclude our story of the influence of hymns in the experience of “all peoples that on earth do

dwell.”

FOOTNOTES

[1]

Published by the J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia.

[2]

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[3]

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[4]

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[\[23\]](#)

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[24]

This incident is found in *Hall Young of Alaska*, published by The Fleming H. Revell Company, New York.

[25]

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[26]

Published by The Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, New York. Used by permission.

[27]

Published by Washburn and Thomas, Cambridge, Mass.

[28]

Published in pamphlet form by The Commission on Courses of Study of the Methodist Episcopal Church, New York.

[29]

For further stories of the use of this hymn, which was one of Mr. Sankey's favorites, see *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns*, by Ira D. Sankey.

[30]

Boston.

[31]

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[32]

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