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Tendencies in the newer hymnody

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Thesis

TENDENCIES IN THE NEWER HYMNODY

Submitted by

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(A. B., Florida State College for Women, 1918)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts.
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There is at the present time a wide-spread interest in the subject of hymnology. The Church is awakening to a new sense of the importance of hymns. A fresh stimulus to congregational singing has been felt. Several excellent hymnals have been put on the market in the last few years. In perusing these more recent books, the writer has detected certain changes in time and style which seem to mark a distinction between the newer hymnody and that of the past generations.

There are changes in literary form, changes in subject matter, changes in the conception of God, of Christ, and of humanity.

These tendencies began as long ago as 1875, a few modern notes having been struck even before then. Realizing that it often takes a period of several years for a hymn to become established and to find its way into the hymn books, the writer has included the hymns of the past fifty years as being representative of the modern tendencies. Special emphasis, however, is laid on those written since 1900.

The following discussion is not a defense of hymns. There is no defense for some of the numbers which we use in church and religious meetings. On the other hand, many of them, both old and new, need no defense for they have stood the test of much singing and are impregnable. The discussion aims, by means of concrete illustrations, to suggest certain lines of thought in the hope of stimulating the present wholesome in-
terest in hymns, and possibly making to future hymnists a few suggestions concerning the needs and opportunities of the field.
CHAPTER I.
Introduction.

Persons who have not seriously considered the matter do not realize that the making of a brief but inclusive definition of a hymn is a very difficult task. There is much more difference of opinion as to what constitutes a real hymn than the layman would naturally suppose. The minister announces "Hymn number 209", and we sing number 209, taking it for granted that it is a hymn because it has a place in the hymn book. But why did the editor choose number 209 for his collection? And in so doing, did he run counter to previous traditions, or current usage? This is a matter for speculation.

A hymn in the broadest sense is a sacred song, or ode. St. Augustine defined a hymn as praise to God, and said that if it were not praise, then it was not a hymn. Garrett Horder, a modern writer and hymn editor, feels that it should be possible to preface the singing of every hymn with the old formula, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God", and he deplores the incongruity of worshippers exhorting one another as in "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus", or singing to the minister as in "Tell Me the Old, Old Story". Sacred songs in which God or Christ are not addressed in at least one of the stanzas in the way of praise, prayer, confession, or communion, are not properly called hymns, and their use should be the exception.

Mr. Horder's thesis sounds well, and it is quite true that in the majority of our first devotional songs God,
Christ, and the Holy Spirit are thus addressed. However, if we exclude those that are addressed to our fellow-worshippers, or to our own souls, or to the church, we will exclude some that have been an inspiration to countless worshippers, and have brought zest into numberless religious meetings. Some of us fail to find the incongruity which Mr. Horder mentions in such a hymn as "O Zion Haste", for instance, or that matchless lyric of inspiration "I Would Be True". We might also note that one of the earliest and most famous of hymns, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God", written by Martin Luther, that great apostle of congregational hymn singing, is in no portion addressed to the Deity.

It is the writer's opinion that we must broaden our definition to include sacred lyrics, those, of course, that are singable and appropriate to services of worship. We must insist on some standard of poetic quality and some unity of conception; otherwise, our hymnal would be a volume as large as a dictionary full of doggerel and cheap verse. In the realm of poetry and hymns as well as other forms of art, a sacred theme does not atone for faulty craftsmanship; it rather demands the more of the craftsman.

The congregational hymn is a child of the Reformation. The beautiful old hymns of the Middle Ages of which "Jesus the Very Thought of Thee", translated from the Latin by Edward Caswell, is a familiar example, were never sung in public, but were used merely for private devotions. In Germany, under Luther and his associates, congregational hymn singing became
very popular, but this was not the case in England until a half-century or more later. English Protestants sang Psalms and looked askance at extra-Biblical material of any kind. Metrical versions of the Psalms were made by Sternhold and Hopkins and later by Tate and Brady, but they were essentially clumsy and labored in style.

The English hymn developed from two sources. In the first place, attempts to render freer and more poetical translations of the Psalms and paraphrases of other portions of Scripture resulted in a better quality of congregational hymn. In the second place, there came a change in the aim and character of the devotional verse. It partook more of the hymn nature and gradually came to be used in public worship. The Psalms, of course, contained no reference to Christianity and Christians began to feel that they were failing to perform an obligation as well as neglecting a pleasant privilege in not singing praise to Christ.

Isaac Watts is the connecting link between the early psalmody and real hymnody, because his writings were partly Psalm versions and partly original. Dr. Watts occupied a unique place among writers of hymns. He wrote nearly 600 Psalm versions and hymns and for years his work comprised the only hymn material that was used. A book published by the A. S. Barnes Co. as late as 1872 contains 191 hymns by Dr. Watts. Recent books, however, have reduced the number to ten or fifteen.

Another voluminous hymn writer was Charles Wesley who
wrote six or seven thousand, 121 of which are still retained by
the Methodist hymnal. After this came a period of didacticism
which largely echoed the work of Watts and Wesley. Then came
a period of missionary and evangelistic hymn-writing in the lat-
ter 18th and early 19th centuries followed by the period, the
tendencies of which we are about to describe.

Church hymns have often been assailed as poor in
literary quality. James Montgomery in the preface to his Chris-
tian Psalmist, published in 1825 says, "Hymns, looking at the
multitude and mass of them, appear to have been written by all
kinds of persons except poets!" At this time Mr. Montgomery's
statement must have been painfully near the truth. Watts and
the Wesleys wrote far too much to have any large proportion of
their work measure up to poetic standards. In fact, early
hymn editors seem to have feared any flight of imagination or
figurative language as something affected and incompatible with
the plain, solemn, orthodox faith of the Church. They omitted
from their collections many fine lyrics that we now consider
our most precious heritage from the past. Hymns were didactic
and prosey, even in some cases highly ridiculous. Note the
following from the pen of Watts:-

2 "He spoke and straight our hearts and brains
    In all their motion rose,
    Let blood (said He) flow round the veins
    And round the veins it flows."

The early American Psalm versions were worse than the English.
The following rendering of Psalm XIX is taken from the Bay
Psalm Book, published in 1640.

1 Quoted from Horder's Hymn Lover page 492.

2 Quoted from Horder's Hymn Lover page 101.
"Day spake to day, knowledge
Night hath to night declared
There neither speech nor language is
Where their voice is not heard.
Through all the earth their line
Is gone forth and unto
The uttermost end of all the world
Their speeches reach also."

Some of the recent "Gospel Songs" are little, or no, better than doggerel.

Even excepting these attempts at hymnody that are obviously bad, there has been a vast amount of material, rarest portions of which rise above dull, hopeless mediocrity. This however is not the case at the present time. Any student of hymnology cannot fail to note a marked change for the better in the literary style of hymns. The object of the following discussion is to point out indications of improved literary quality as well as the embodiment of fuller and more satisfying theological conceptions.

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1 Cairn's History of American Literature. page 49.
CHAPTER II.
Literary Tendencies in the Newer Hymnody.

1. Rhythm and Rhyme.

One of the most noticeable indications of freedom in the newer hymnody is the variety of rhythm and meter. The early writers were handicapped by the limited number of meters, this being one cause of the dreary sameness which characterized much of their work. Long meter with eight syllables to a line; common meter with eight syllables in the first and third and six in the second and fourth lines; and short meter with six syllables in the first, second, and fourth lines and eight in the third were the only meters freely used. Variety in the length of lines and arrangement of accents came gradually.

In Songs for the Sanctuary, published in 1872, there are thirty-three kinds of meter for 1344 hymns. The Pilgrim Hymnal, published in 1912, has eighty-one kinds of meter for 667 hymns, while the Century Hymnal, published in 1921, has seventy-seven meters for only 422 hymns. This shows a large increase in the metrical freedom in the later hymns and accounts in some degree for their freshness and spontaneity.

These new hymns in unusual meters have necessitated the writing of new tunes to fit them. Some of these new tunes are a little difficult for the average congregation, but others are quite singable and tend to enliven the services of worship to a marked degree.
An example of a hymn with irregular meter and strong, bold rhythm is "God is Working His Purpose Out" by Arthur C. Ainger. A strikingly peculiar meter is found in Oscar E. Maurer's hymn, the first stanza of which runs as follows:

"Brother Man Awake!
Strength withers, of tomorrow dreaming;
Life's ripened grain today is gleaming;
Peer not ahead for duties new.
Awake! Be true!"

It is rendered perfectly singable however by John P. Marshall's virile tune called "Zeal" to which it is set.

A careful reading of many hymns reveals the fact that the art of rhyming has improved in the past fifty years. Compare the following by Thomas Birk with the "Bay Psalm Book" rendering of the same Psalm.

"The heavens declare thy glory,
The firmament thy power;
Day unto day the story
Repeats from hour to hour;
Night unto night replying,
Proclaims in every land,
O Lord, with voice undying,
The wonders of thy hand."

Unusual rhyme-schemes are quite common. Frequent rhyming in the past tended toward a jingling verse-form little better than doggerel. That this is not the case at present is amply testified by Maltbie D. Babcock's expressive lines:

"This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears,
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas
His hand the wonders wrought."

1. Century Hymnal, No. 348
2. Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 678
3. Hymns for American Youth, No. 48
4. "" "" "" No. 46
Rhymes are somewhat fresher and more spontaneous. Labored and unnatural constructions such as "did see" and "do go" are almost universally avoided. There is a tendency to avoid overworked combinations such as "mild" and "child", or "trod" and "God" and "furled" or "unfurled", though this is not a marked tendency. Hymnists of all time have been glad to find rhymes of any kind for certain difficult words that are forceful and therefore desirable for the ends of lines.

A tendency, however, that is very noticeable is the avoidance of near-rhymes so frequent in early hymnody. Examples of this can be found anywhere. One of Dr. Watts' best hymns begins:

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My dear Redeemer and my Lord,
I read my duty in the word.
But in thy life the law appears,
Drawn out in living characters.
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Such combinations as "crown" and "own", "love" and "move", "hope" and "up", "air" and "appear" are common. Modern hymn-writers have not ceased to use them altogether. In fact, differences of pronunciation in different sections of the country, or in this country and England, render it impossible to make perfect rhymes in all cases, but these combinations are much more rare than formerly and may in time be eliminated altogether. If rhyming is necessary at all,- and hymn writers seem to agree that it is-perfect rhymes are certainly more desirable from an artistic standpoint, than those limping lines whose terminations do not agree.

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1 Century Hymnal, No. 127
2. Imagery.

The chief characteristic which distinguishes poetry from prose is not rhyme and meter. One cannot turn prose into poetry by rhyming the lines, any more than we can turn an ordinary tramp into a gentleman by dressing him up in fine clothes. Many modern poets have discarded rhyme and meter altogether and are depending wholly on other factors for the poetic effect of their writing. Whether or not they are wise in so doing is a much mooted question which it is not in our province to discuss here. What, then, are these other factors which are so important? One of these is imagery.

The new hymns are full of imagery. They contain an unprecedented number of figures of speech. Metaphor and simile are most common. Frederick L. Hosmer writing of the prophet souls says:

1"Above the passing centuries
Like beacon lights they shine."

Here is another:

2"O God, while generations flee
Like leaves before thy face."

And again:

3"Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee."

and:

4"The bells like angel voices."

and:

5"O Holy Ghost, the Lord and the Life Giver,
Thine is the quickening power that gives increase;
From thee have flowed as from a pleasant river,
Our plenty, wealth, prosperity, and peace."

\[1\] Pilgrim Hymnal No. 448  \[2\] Hymns for American Youth No. 4
\[3\] " "  \[4\] " " No. 448  \[5\] " " No. 49
\[5\] The Century Hymnal No. 49
An unusually pleasing metaphor is found in John Oxenham's verses addressed to Christ:—

1"Thy service is the golden cord
Close binding all mankind."

Other metaphors are:—

2"Thou art our morning and our sun."

3"The drum beats of his army are the heart beats of our love."

and:—

4"The shores of thought and feeling know
The spirit's tidal ebb and flow".

The following lines from Washington Gladden contain a number of strong metaphors:—

5"Behold a Sower! from afar
He goeth forth with might;
The rolling years his furrows are
His seed, the growing light;
For all the Just his seed is sown,
It springeth up, alway;
The tender blade is hope's young dawn
The harvest, love's new day."

Onomatopoetic words and phrases are not as frequent as metaphors and similes but we occasionally meet with such passages. Take the stanzas from Ernest W. Shurtleff for instance:—

6"Lead on, O King Eternal,
Till sin's fierce war shall cease;
And holiness shall whisper
The sweet Amen of peace;
For not with swords, loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums,
With deeds of love and mercy,
The heavenly kingdom comes".

The s sounds in "swords loud clashing" suggests something of the fierceness of the battle, while the r's and the d in "roll of stirring drums" are suggestive of drums.

1The Century Hymnal No. 354
2Hymns for American Youth No. 4
3By Lucy Larcom
4Pilgrim Hymnal No. 123
5By F. L. Hosmer
6Hymnal for American Youth No. 230
7Hymnal for American Youth No. 138
Again in Washington Gladden's much loved hymn, "O Master, let me walk with Thee", there occurs this passage, "The strain of toil, the fret of care." The long a in "strain" suggests the duration of the struggle, while the short e and the t sound in "fret" suggest the briefer but nagging annoyances. Notice the abundance of consonants and the crowded, hurried effect of the first two lines of the following stanza by O. S. Davis in contrast to the calmness and repose of the last two:—

2"Through din of market, whirl of wheels
And thrust of driving trade,
We follow where the Master leads,
Serene and unafraid."

Alliteration is common in the new hymns; a few examples will suffice to illustrate the fact.

3"Pain't fall the footsteps in city and hamlet.
Safely the children are folded in sleep."

4"Not long on Hermon's holy height,
The heavenly vision fills our sight."

5"Dost thou bow beneath the burden
Of a crushing care?"

6"Wait and worship while the night, etc."  

7"The ships glide in at the harbor's mouth
And the ships sail out to sea.
And the wind that sweeps from the sunny South
Is sweet as sweet can be."

Cases of transferred epithet are found in the following:—

8"Its walls shall rise through patient years
To soaring spires of song."
(The author is here addressing America.)
and:

1"In the lonely midnight
   On the wintry hill."

and also:

2"In the glad morning of my day."

Parallelism and balanced phrases are occasionally met with. The following lines from David Thomas also contain several similes:

3"Show pity, Lord, for we are frail and faint;
   We fade away, O list to our complaint!
   We fade away, like flowers in the sun;
   We first begin, and then our work is done.

   Show pity, Lord, our souls are sore distressed;
   As troubled seas, our natures have no rest;
   As troubled seas, that surging beat the shore,
   We throb and heave, ever and evermore."

The hymn "Great and Fair is she, Our Land", written by William Watson in 1910, is poetical throughout. We quote the third, fourth and sixth stanzas. Note especially the parallelism in the second line of the third stanza and the fourth line of the sixth:

"Power unseen, before whose eyes
   Nations fall and nations rise,
   Grant she climb not to her goal
   All-forgetful of the soul.

   Firm in honor be she found,
   Justice-armed and mercy-crowned.
   Blest in labor, blest in ease,
   Blest in noiseless charities.

   Mightier still she then shall stand
   Moulded by thy secret hand,
   Power Eternal, at whose call
   Nations rise and nations fall."

The imagery of recent hymns is varied and expressive.

Note the beauty of the lines:

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1Hymnal for American Youth No. 75 author, Theodore C. Williams
2Hymnal for American Youth, No. 131 author, Marianne Hearn
3Pilgrim Hymnal No. 206
4Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 544
"I give Thee back the life I owe
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

Other examples of imagery from nature are:-

2"In the fading of the starlight
We may see the coming morn;
And the lights of men are paling
In the splendors of the dawn;
For the eastern skies are glowing
As with light of hidden fire,
And the hearts of men are stirring
With the throbs of deep desire."

and:

3"Lord, thy presence on the deep
Calms the pulses of the sea,
And the waters sink to sleep
In the rest of seeing Thee."

A daring bit of imagery which our solemn forbears would have unquestionably condemned is given us by the Rev. Stopford P. Brooks:

4"Now noon sits throned, her golden urn
Pours forth the sunshine! Laugh and burn
Cornland and meadow, lake and sea!
Lord of my life, pour love on me."

The last stanza of the same hymn is none the less poetical and seems to possess a more graceful simplicity.

"Now drops the dark, but worlds of light
Hidden by day, fulfill the night;
Infinite Stillness, Silent Sea
Of truth and power, flow over me."

Color imagery is quite frequently encountered. We find

5"purple mountain majesties" and 5"amber waves of grain",
6"skies of golden splendor", and "azure rolling sea", "the golden autumn"; "blue Galilee", "fair green hills of Galilee",
"America ---- its pillars red with wrong", "and from the ground there blossoms red, Life that shall endless be", "blue and clear

1Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 273 5Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 255
author, George Matheson
2Hymnal for American Youth, No. 230 4Century Hymnal, No. 12
author, Henry Burton
4"Henry Published, No. 12"
the immortal sky", "Praise him for his budding green", "O'er white expanses sparkling pure", and:

"We've seen thy glory like a mantle spread
O'er hill and dale in saffron flame and red."

The old Christian symbols, the Lamb, the Dove, the Cross, the Atoning Blood of Jesus,—these are not found with anything like the frequency that they once were.

Truly a change has come in the imagery of hymns. We could not say that in every case the change is for the better. There seems to be an occasional over-elaboration of phrase which makes one feel that the author was striving for effect, and strove a little too hard, but on the whole the new ornaments are very becoming and add to the beauty of the hymn without detracting from its dignity and devotional warmth.

3. Diction.

Next to imagery, the most important change in the newer hymnody is the change in diction. Words are such wonderful things! and recent hymnists have used so many of them and arranged them so well! Note the limpid, musical flow of words in these lines:

1"I may not bid the shadows flee;
They are the shadows of thy wing.
Give but the eye more power to see
The love behind their gathering."

and:

2"Hushed are the sheep-bells afar on the moorland;
O'er the still meadows the night breezes sweep."
Unusual words are introduced in hymns: - "Youth's arrowy thrill", "look up and laugh and love and lift", "reeking tube and iron shard", "paths where hide the lures of greed". The following compound words form an interesting list, - "angel-hymn", "ever-changing", "far-flung" and "far-called", "justice-crowned" and "mercy-crowned", "triumph-day and "triumph-song", "storm-vexed", and many others. Such diction is strong and forceful and renders it possible to pack much meaning in small compass. Frank Mason Worth's now famous hymn, "Where cross the crowded ways of Life" is a good example of compactness of recent hymns. Rudyard Kipling's "Recessional" is remarkable for the expressiveness of its diction.

The virility of the modern hymn is exemplified in William P. Merrill's:-

1

Rise up, O men of God! 
Have done with lesser things; 
Give heart and soul and mind and strength 
To serve the King of kings."

The language of the Bible is not used as much as formerly. The fact was mentioned in the introduction that the earliest hymns were paraphrases of the Psalms. Other portions of Scripture such as the 2 "Magnificat" and 3 "Nunc Dimitis" of the New Testament were paraphrased later, and then came the freer form of hymnody. Hymn writers have always been persons of devout nature and it is natural that they should quote freely from the sacred Book. The modern decrease in the use of Scripture does not seem to be due to a lack of devoutness, but merely to the desire for change and variety which is characteristic of our
modern life. Moreover, while actual quotations from the Bible are not so common, still there are numberless allusions very aptly used.

George Matheson refers more than once to the scriptural use of the rainbow. Here is one that also includes a reference to the still, small voice:

1"When at thy word the tempests form,  
When at thy breath the mists o'er shroud,  
Provide thy still voice for the storm  
Provide thy rainbow for the cloud."

An unexpected use of Scripture is found in this by Frank W. Cun- saulus:

2"I take thy promise to my heart:  
'Thy places waste I will restore';  
Never shall hope or joy depart  
If love so triumph evermore."

He then enumerates the waste places of the individual's life,- waste of power, of time, and the waste due to sin.

The greater number of Scripture allusions refer to the life and sayings of Jesus. In the following hymn, by J. A. Blaisdell, the gifts of the Wise Men become symbols of the gifts that we ourselves can bring:

3"Christians, lo. the star appeareth;  
Lo, 'tis yet Messiah's day;  
Still with tribute treasure laden  
Come the wise men on their way."

The life of service is compared to the myrrh. Sympathy is the frankincense, and the soothing of "earth's weary children" is the gift of gold. Mary Magdalene's gift is referred to in a

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1Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 305  
2American Hymnal, No. 341  
3Century Hymnal, No. 239
beautiful way by Edwin F. Parker:–

1"Master, no offering costly and sweet
May we, like Magdalene, lay at thy feet;
Yet may love's incense rise
Sweeter than sacrifice,
Dear Lord, to thee."

And Mr. North says:–

2"The cup of water given for thee
Still holds the freshness of thy grace."

Several writers refer to Christ upon the Sea of Galilee:–

3"Dear Lord who once upon the lake
Of stormy Galilee
Didst from thy weary pillow wake
To hush the wind and sea,
Come at our prayer and speak thy peace
Within each troubled breast;
Bid the loud winds of passion cease,
And waves of wild unrest."

The healing power of Christ's seamless robe is a favorite figure of Whittier's:–

4"The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain."

5"It yet shall touch his garment's fold."

and:–

6"One hope, one faith, one love restore
The seamless robe that Jesus wore."

Miss Mary Lathbury refers to the miracle of the loaves in the beautiful and well-known hymn, "Break Thou the Bread of Life". It is a mistake to use this hymn exclusively in connection with the Lord's Supper, for it is even more appropriate as a prayer for knowledge of God's Word.

A few new hymns not only allude to scriptural events but quote the words of the Bible after the manner of the earliest writers. Such a hymn is the one by Arthur C. Ainger,

1Century Hymnal, No. 277 2Century Hymnal, No. 120
2 " " 274 5The World's greatest Religious
3American Hymnal, No. 268 6Poetry", p. 140
author, Theodore C. Pease Century Hymnal, No. 358
"God is Working His Purpose Out". The refrain is taken almost word for word from Habakkuk 2:14, "For the earth shall be filled with a knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

The third stanza speaks of releasing the captives, a thought we often find in the words of Christ, notably in his quotation from Isaiah, "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." The fourth stanza beginning:

1 "All that we do is nothing worth
   Unless God blesses the deed"

reminds us of Psalm 127:1, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it".

A hymn by Laura S. Copenhaven contains the line, 2 "Make straight, make straight the highway of our King."

The refrain of 3 "Day is Dying in the West" is based on Isaiah 6:3: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of thy glory."

4.

POETIC CONCEPTION AS A WHOLE.

Many of the older hymns seemed to be lacking in unity and coherence. A great number of stanzas would be strung along without any particular sequence nor logical development of thought. This is not so much the case with the new hymns. There is more

1 Century Hymnal, No. 348  2 Century Hymnal, No. 349  3 Century Hymnal, No. 29
poetical conception as a whole. A hymn is a unit. It has something definite to say and says it in a forceful, coherent way. One of the new hymns that is perfect as a poem is, \(^1\) "All Beautiful the March of Days", by Frances Whitmarsh Wilie. It first describes in choice poetic diction the beauties of winter. The second stanza tells of its effect upon humans, while the third stanza is praise to the Creator of such loveliness:

\[ "O\] thou from whose unfathomed law
The year in beauty flows,
Thyself the vision passing by
In crystal and in rose,
Day unto day doth utter speech
And night to night proclaim,
In everlasting words of light,
The wonder of thy name." \(^2\)

A more familiar example is found in \(^2\) "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go". The first stanza is addressed to Love, divine, unfailing Love; the second to Light, the third to Joy, and the fourth to the Cross. There is withal a unity and a poetic touch about this hymn that have made it dear to thousands of hearts.

The modern practice of taking any religious poem that has the marks of a hymn and setting it to an appropriate tune has resulted in a number of hymn-poems of rare quality.

5.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF MODERN POETS AND MEN OF LETTERS.

Dr. Montgomery's dictum of a century ago that hymns seem to have been written by all kinds of persons except poets

\(^1\) Hymnal for American Youth, No. 55
\(^2\) Century Hymnal, No. 224
certainly does not hold true at the present time. The "Index of Authors" now includes a host of poets both old and new, and persons who are noted for literary achievement. As a matter of fact, the majority of hymns are written by ministers, but there is nothing incompatible in being a minister and a poet at the same time. Ministers as a class are men of good education, vision, and broad human sympathy, and what could be a better combination for a poet?

However, there have been a great number of hymns written by people who, by reason of their peculiar talents, are fitted to bring their message to the world in the form of literary production. The outstanding man of this class whose verse is included among the new hymns is Rudyard Kipling. Mr. Kipling has become famous in many lines of writing but I venture to state that there is nothing from his pen that is more widely known or more greatly admired than his "Recessional", beginning "God of our Fathers, known of old." It is now included in nearly all of the newer hymnals. This poem is powerful. It is big in thought. It swamps the ordinary hymn-tune like a Centaur in a canoe. It was, of course, written of England but Americans have appropriated it for their own patriotic collections and it certainly contains a message that America could well heed.

This is not the only hymn that Mr. Kipling has written. Several of the books include the one beginning "Father in Heaven who lovest all". This is a good hymn for youth,—sturdy, practical, and full of noble ideals.
Miss Marguerite Wilkinson in her volume, "New Voices, an Introduction to Contemporary Poetry", mentions only two contemporary poets whose names appear in the hymn book. The other besides Mr. Kipling is Katherine Lee Bates, Professor of English at Wellesley. Miss Bates has written a great deal of beautiful religious poetry but only one hymn. This one, however, is a hymn that could ill be spared, for though new, it has already been woven into the very fabric of our national life. "America the Beautiful" is sung in churches, Sunday Schools, public and private schools and colleges, civic and private gatherings of all kinds. Its popularity is well-deserved, for it is both poetical and full of worthy thought.

For some reason or other, Miss Wilkinson does not include Henry Van Dyke, former ambassador to the Netherlands and a noted author and lecturer as well as a minister. Perhaps she considers him more as a writer of tales than as a poet, or perhaps none of his poems were illustrations of her points. At any rate, he is enough of a poet to have written several very good hymns:—"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee", "Jesus, Thou Divine Companion", and "O Lord, Our God, Thy Mighty Hand". These hymns are forward-looking in tone, and abounding in joy and hope.

Felix Adler, Professor of Political and Social Ethics at Columbia University, is the author of a considerable number of books. His hymn, "Hail the Glorious Golden City", is quite well-known. It is a strongly-written hymn of social aspiration and progress.
John Oxenham, an English writer, is the author of a long list of published works, both poetry and prose. The lyric, "In Christ there is no East or West", taken from the "Pageant of Darkness and Light", has already been quoted. "Lord God of Hosts, Whose Mighty Hand" is a tender prayer for those who serve the nation. It closes with a prayer for peace.

There are several poets who are not now living in the flesh who have been authors of hymns. Rev. George Matheson of Glasgow, Scotland, has already been quoted freely in these pages. Although blind from his youth, he was nevertheless able to achieve much as a minister, lecturer, and man of letters. His hymn "O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go" has already been mentioned as among the loveliest of our collection. It is rich in tender pathos. The Pilgrim Hymnal includes four others, all remarkable for choice diction and warm faith: - "Jesus, Fountain of My Days", "Lord, Thou Hast All My Frailty Made", "There are Coming Changes Great", and "Come, Let Us Raise a Common Song".

"Hymns of the Kingdom" contains still another: -

1"Make me a captive, Lord,  
And then I shall be free;  
Force me to render up my sword  
And I shall conquer or be."

John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a great deal of sacred poetry. At first the trinitarian churches looked askance at it but now they realize that much of it has a universal appeal. Most of the poems were written more than fifty years ago, but are modern in tone. The more truly poetical a man is, the more

1 Hymns of the Kingdom, No. 243
he becomes a seer. "Immortal Love, forever Full" is a favorite with many people who have a taste for the finer class of hymn. It is taken from a long poem entitled "Our Master". The Pilgrim Hymnal has two more hymns from the same poem. "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind", another prime favorite, is taken from "The Brewing of soma". The poem, "The Eternal Goodness", is the source of two or three hymns. Sometimes the first stanza used is the one beginning "I bow my forehead to the dust", and sometimes "I see the wrong that round me lies" or "I know not what the future hath". "O Brother Man, Fold to thy Heart a Brother" is taken from the poem called "Worship". Two of his latest hymns are "I pray for Faith, I long to Trust", taken from the poem "Revelation", and "When on my Day of Life the Night is Falling", from the poem "At Last".

Several of his occasional poems are used, as for instance, the Centennial Hymn, "Our Father God, from out Whose Hand". The American Hymnal publishes "Thine Are the Gifts, O God", a hymn written for the anniversary of the Children's Mission, Boston, 1878. The Pilgrim Hymnal contains ten others selected here and there from his poetical works. His hymns are characterized by the beauty and expressiveness of the lines and the effective use of Scripture allusions. The religious thought which he conveys will be discussed later.

James Russell Lowell is the author of a Christmas hymn dated 1884, "What Means this Glory Round our Feet?"
One poem by Tennyson comes within our range. It is his last poem, "Crossing the Bar". This is not included in all the hymnals but the American Hymnal has it, and also Hymns of the Kingdom. A hymn written almost forty years earlier is nevertheless forward-looking and strong, "Ring out the Old, Ring in the New". Tennyson was quite a prophet anyway.

Recent anthologies and books about poetry contain considerable material of interest to the hymnologist. Miss Wilkinson in the volume already mentioned says, "Religion is in contemporary poetry then-- or, if you like, God is in it, as a spirit". To be sure, her collection does not include any hymns. The new religious poetry is virile and full of power but seems to have something of an uncouthness about it, aside from its unsingable meters, that renders it unsuitable as hymn material. Moreover, the religious poems in this collection, while fine in many respects, have a tendency toward opinions that are not quite "orthodox" and would probably be avoided by conservative hymn editors.

"The World's Greatest Religious Poetry", a very recent volume edited by Caroline Miles Hill, contains a goodly number of hymns. The following of our modern hymns are considered poetical enough to be included in this volume:

"Peace, Perfect Peace" -- Edward Bickersteth
"Day is Dying in the West" -- Mary Lathbury
"O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee" -- Claddien
"O Love that Wilt Not Let Me Go" -- Matheson
"Not in Dumb Resignation" -- John Hay
"One Holy Church of God Appears" -- Samuel Longfellow
May we not conclude then that most poets are hymn writers to some extent, and that many hymn writers are poets?

6.

THE HYMNALS THEMSELVES.

There remains now to be discussed something about the general characteristics of the recent collections as compared to the old. One very significant fact is the variety of authorship. Early hymn books were filled exclusively with hymns by Dr. Watts. The Methodist books contained hymns written only by the Wesleys. Gradually and with great opposition, other authors were added. In Songs for the Sanctuary published in 1872, there are a hundred fourteen authors for one thousand, three hundred forty-four hymns. The Pilgrim Hymnal has three hundred seven authors for six hundred sixty-seven hymns and the Century Hymnal has two hundred seventy-eight authors for four hundred twenty-two hymns. This shows an ever-decreasing number of hymns by any one writer. The number of sources has increased also. Translations and adaptations of ancient hymns as well as hymns from foreign lands have supplanted some of the less artistic
work by the familiar authors. Such democracy in the collection cannot fail to insure a higher literary quality. The best from the many must be better than the entire output of the few.

Another factor in the improvement of collections as a whole is the big increase in education. Educated congregations demand better literary standards. A person who reads Tennyson and Browning for pleasure does not get much inspiration from singing "Brighten the Corner Where You Are". One weakness of our Sunday School is the way they so often lag behind the church, even, in the quality of the material sung. Children in the public schools are learning poetry, but what of those in the Sunday Schools? There is, however, a recent but definite attempt to improve these conditions, and the outlook for the future is by no means devoid of hope.
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CHAPTER III.

RELIGION IN THE NEWER HYMNODY.

Whenever man has had deep convictions and strong emotions, he has been impelled to write of them in verse. Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh and the pen writeth as well. Authors have rarely written as powerfully when they wrote to please a clamorous public or an importunate editor as when they wrote to gratify their own souls' longings for expression. Hymnmakers have not written to please the public or the editor, but have written to express the deep convictions and earnest longings of their inmost selves. At a time like the eighteenth century when religious beliefs were unusually strong, it is not surprising that we find the doctrine in the hymns. Augustus Top-lady, an ardent Calvinist and therefore displeased at John Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul", set forth his theory of the atonement in "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me". It was an age of didacticism. Hymns were used to promulgate new beliefs and to defend old ones. This homiletic use of hymns has continued almost up to the present time.

The church today is not so dogmatic as formerly. She is not quite so sure she knows all about everything and that persons who see things differently are eternally and irrevocably lost. A great many times she is not as sure as she should be of what she stands for and may be in danger of becoming so
broad-minded that she has no depth. She has shifted her opinions somewhat concerning which tenets of faith are most essential. She has changed her conception of God, of Jesus Christ, of the individual, and of her own mission in the world. All these changes are reflected more or less clearly in the newer hymnody.

1. PRAISE, AND THE CONCEPT OF GOD.

Didacticism has largely given place to praise. The praise, too, is more joyful,—not vows paid to an awe-inspiring and avenging deity, but happy notes of appreciation to a gracious Father. Here are a few first lines from some praiseful hymns:—


Praise for the great, beautiful out-of-doors is a prominent feature of the new worship-song. Henry Van Dyke says:

7. "Field and forest, vale and mountain, Blooming meadow, flashing sea, Chanting bird and flowing fountain Call us to rejoice in thee."

William C. Garnet is the writer of these lines:

8. "Bring, O morn, thy music, Bring, O night, thy silence,

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Ocean, chant the rapture to the storm wind coursing free;
Sun and stars are singing -- Thou art our Creator
Who wert, art, and shall evermore be."
The following bit of pure poetry from the pen of Frances Whitemarsh Wile is as refreshing as a breath from the great outdoors itself:

1"All beautiful the march of days
As seasons come and go.
The hand that shaped the rose hath wrought
The crystal of the snow;
Hath sent the hoary frost of heaven
The flowing water sealed
And laid a silent loveliness
On hill and wood and field."

These do not remind us very strongly of the once-popular

"How vain are all things here below"
or the more recent

"This world's a wilderness of woe,
This world is not my home."

The imminence of God is brought out in a number of hymns. We are not worshipping an "absentee God", but One who is still working in His world and whose created works are manifestations of Himself.

1"This is my Father's world;
He shines in all that's fair.
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass;
He speaks to me everywhere."

2"How near to us, O God, thou art!
Felt in the movement of the heart
Nearer than self thou art to each,
The truth of thine indwelling teach."

Whittier almost becomes dogmatic in his revolt against Dogma.

1 Hymnal for American Youth, No. 58
2 Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 64
The following lines do not show him at his best, but aptly illustrate certain prevalent ideas about the imminence of God:

"No picture to my aid I call
I shape no image in my prayer;
I only know in Him is all
Of life, light, beauty everywhere,
Eternal Goodness, here and there."

2.

THE CONCEPT OF CHRIST.

The early Protestant church took a step forward when it began singing hymns to Christ. How strange that the Christian church could have been satisfied at all not to sing of the Master! Since those days, countless hymns have been written about Christ and the Christian life. A strange fact, however, is that such a large proportion of them have been written about his birth, death, and resurrection, and such a small proportion about his life and ministry. George Albert Coe, in "The Spiritual Life", makes a psychological analysis of the hymns in the Methodist Hymnal. He discovers the surprising fact that there are eighty-one hymns about Christ and that only one in ten deals with his life and character. The church was appalled at the thought of the cross and Christ's sacrificial death, and seemed to forget at times that he ever lived and worked and taught. "Love so amazing, so divine" was more than they could understand. It is well that the church should attach

1Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 66
importance to the Lord's death, but it is not well that his life
and ministry should be neglected. Human beings are not often
called upon nowadays to die for a cause, but a life of service
can be lived right here and now, and Christ's example can be fol-
lowed.

Modern Christians are laying more emphasis upon Christ's
life and teachings, and are finding therein an example which they
are striving to copy. They are writing more hymns about the
brief but precious facts of Christ's youth and manhood, his work,
his teaching, his acts of healing. Seventy hymns out of the
four hundred in the Century Hymnal are about Christ. Twenty-
one of these deal with his life and ministry. One third is
much better than one tenth.

A parallel to all this is found in the realm of art.
Artists through the centuries have painted innumerable Nativi-
ties, Holy Families, Crucifixions, and Piétas, but until the
nineteenth century the worth-while pictures illustrating his
life and teachings were very few and far between.

Some of the best verses dealing with the earthly life
and ministry of our Lord are quoted below. The first of these
illustrations was evidently suggested by the fanciful, unlovely
tales in the apocryphal gospels about miracles which Jesus was
said to have performed when a boy.

1 We saw no glory round his head
As childhood ripened into youth;

1 Hymnal for American Youth, No. 96
No angels on his errands sped,  
He wrought no sign; but meekness, truth,  
And duty marked each step he trod;  
And love to man and love to God."

Here he is as a teacher:-

1"We would see Jesus, on the mountain teaching,  
With all the listening people gathered round;  
While birds and flowers and sky above are preaching  
The blessedness which simple trust has found."

and:-

2"When he walked the fields, he drew  
From the flowers and birds and dew  
Farables of God."

The following is one of the best of those that show him as a worker:-

3"Of Carpenter of Nazareth,  
Builder of life divine,  
Who shapeth man to God's own law,  
Thyself the fair design,  
Build us a tower of Christ-like height  
That we the land may view,  
And see like thee our noblest work  
Our Father's work to do."

Here he is as a ruler of the sea:-

4"Wild the night on Galilee;  
Loudly roared the angry sea  
When upon the tossing wave  
Jesus walked, his own to save;  
Calmed the tumult by his will  
Only saying, 'Peace, be still.'"

The ministry of healing is frequently mentioned, as in the following:-

5"Thou whose touch could heal the leper,  
Make the blind to see;  
Touch our hearts and turn the sinning  
Into purity."

There are very few new Christmas hymns and the few that we do find are no better than the grand old hymns of two

1Hymnal for American Youth, No. 95  
3 Century Hymnal, No. 121  
5 Century Hymnal, No. 116
centuries ago: "While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night", written by Nahum Tate in 1703, "Joy to the World" by Isaac Watts in 1719, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing", by Charles Wesley in 1739, and "O Come All Ye Faithful", a Latin hymn of the 17th century. The most recent outstanding Christmas Hymn is "O Little Town of Bethlehem", by Phillips Brooks, which was written a few years too early for it to belong properly to this discussion. James Russell Lowell has a good one, "What Means This Glory Round Our Feet?" but it is hardly as distinctive as we might expect from his pen. A good new Christmas hymn, already mentioned in the section dealing with Scripture allusions, is "Christians, Lo, the Star Appeareth", by James A. Blaisdell. It is also a good social service hymn.

The number of hymns about Christ's death and resurrection has received few additions in the past fifty years. Rev. Stoppford Brooke has written a rather unusual one entitled "It Is Finished", and Shepherd Knapp has an impressive Easter hymn beginning "Three days He lay in death". A few modern hymns whose inner verses have been quoted as illustrations of Christ's earthly life, begin with the nativity and end with the Victorious Christ. Such a comprehensive hymn is "O Child of Lowly Manger Birth", by Ferdinand Q. Blanchard.

Christ as Prince of Peace and founder of a World Kingdom has been the inspiration of a number of recent hymnists. The thought of world peace has been prominent in human conscious-
ness for some years. The horror of the World War made us all the more sure that Peace must come, and that the Church must labor more earnestly to usher it in. The best of the peace hymns, however, those at least that have found their way into the hymnals, were written before the war. Frederick L. Hosmer wrote the following in 1905:

1"Thy Kingdom come, O Lord,
Wide-circling as the sun,
Fulfill of old thy word
And make the nations one,-
One in the bond of peace,
The service glad and free,
Of truth and righteousness,
Of love and equity."

Another by the same author was written in 1891. The last stanza runs thus:

2"When knowledge hand in hand with peace
Shall walk the earth abroad,
The day of perfect righteousness,
The promised day of God."

Felix Adler, singing of the Golden City of our hopes, gives us an encouraging thought:

3"And the work that we have builded,
Oft with bleeding hands and tears,
Oft in error, oft in anguish,
Will not perish with our years.
It will last and shine transfigured,
In the final reign of right;
It will pass into the splendors
Of the City of the Light."

John Addington Symonds, with prophetic vision, looks far beyond our present-day sordidness and strife in the following:

4"These things shall be, - a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.
They shall be gentle, brave and strong
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant men's lordship firm
On earth and fire and sea and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity."

The concept of world peace blends with that of world-wide missions in the following by John Oxenham:

1"In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North;
But on great fellowship of Love
Throughout the whole wide earth."

When we become discouraged at the slowness of social progress and get to fretting ourselves because of evil-doers, it is wholesome for us to be reminded by some seer that 2"There's a light upon the mountain", and that 3"God is working His purpose out as year succeeds to year."

America's destiny in helping to usher in the new day of peace and brotherhood has been amply dealt with by modern American hymn writers. The prophecy has not yet been fulfilled, but there is yet hope that our country may awake and come to herself, realizing her sacred trust and opportunity. These stirring notes sung by Rosamond Kimball in 1918 remind us sadly how good it would have been if America could have gone into the League of Nations and the dream could have come true without all this wretched aftermath of war that now holds us down:

4"Hark to the sound, it rings from sea to sea!
Hark to the call, the call of Liberty!
Deep thundrous notes of Freedom's mighty voice!
Rise, sons of earth! America, rejoice!

1Century Hymnal, No. 354    4 Hymnal for American Youth,
2Hymnal for American Youth, No. 230
3Hymnal for American Youth, No. 236    5 No. 247
America! Beneath thy wings we stand,  
Thy sons and daughters, born in this free land.  
Thee will we serve, lift Freedom's torch divine,  
America, through us thy light shall shine!"

Allen Eastman Cross, also writing in 1918, said:-

"America, America, the shouts of war shall cease  
The glory dawns! the day is come of victory and peace!  
And now upon the larger plan we'll build the common good,  
The temple of the love of man, the House of Brotherhood."

Stirring new patriotic numbers are found in all the books. The following hymns written since 1875 are all published in the Century Hymnal: - "In Loving Adoration", "O Lord, Our God, Thy Mighty Hand", "America Triumphant", "O Beautiful, My Country", "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies", "God of Our Fathers, Known of Old", "God of Our Fathers, whose Almighty Hand", "More Light Shall Break from out Thy Word for Pilgrim Followers of the Gleam. " "O King of Kings, O Lord of Hosts!", and "God Save America!". Even this collection, complete as it seems, omits the one by William Watson, already quoted, "Great and Fair is She Our Land". All these hymns express a warm love for our country, a loyalty to the high ideals of its original founders, and the earnest longing for rich spiritual blessings. America's real patriots covet for her the best gifts and the more excellent way.

There are a few hymns on the subject of the Community Church. George Matheson has one:-

2"Come let us raise a common song!  
Day's beams are breaking;  
Shadows part our hearts too long,  
Light in the east is dawning."

1Century Hymnal, No. 306  2Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 526
The following is composite, based on the writings of Whittier:

"Thy Grace impart! In time to be
Shall one great temple rise to Thee,-
Thy church one broad humanity.
Alleluia!"

Most of them, however, are indistinguishable from those that deal with the coming of the Kingdom.

3.

THE INDIVIDUAL.

The attitude of the individual toward himself and his fellows has likewise undergone a change. Less emphasis is placed upon inward experience and more upon activity. Mr. Coe, in the volume previously quoted, says that out of three hundred forty-five hymns on the topic of the Christian in the Methodist Hymnal, less than one in seven treats of Christian activity. Of one hundred eighty-nine hymns on the church, less than one-half dealt with church work and only eight were objective. In the entire collection, only one and one-half percent took up practical problems of everyday activities of adult Christians in the objective spirit. Perhaps one reason why the editors of the Methodist Hymnal omitted the objective lyrics is because they did not consider that they properly belonged to a hymn collection. Another reason is, of course, that there were not many written. Mr. Coe does not discount the beauty and worthwhileness of many of the introspective, meditative hymns but thinks that they express the attitude of only a limited number of people.

1 Century Hymnal, No. 359
The Century Hymnal shows far better balance in this respect. There are seventy-three hymns in this collection that deal with doing things,—almost, if not quite, as many as those that deal with inward experience. They speak of various activities—teaching, missionary work, social service, the giving of money and talents, and the doing of one's daily tasks in the right spirit. Some are rather general but others are specific. I have included in this number the prayers for guidance in these various forms of activity. Washington Gladden's beautiful and well-known hymn, "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee", speaks of a teaching ministry in its second stanza:

1"Help me the slow of heart to move
   By some clear winning word of love."

Frances R. Havergal's writings care just before the somewhat arbitrary date that I have set for this discussion, but the lines are so fitting at this point that I cannot refrain from quoting them:

2"O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
   The precious things thou dost impart,
   And wing my words that they may reach
   The hidden depths of many a heart."

Here is one dealing with missionary activity:

3"Heralds of Christ who bear the King's commands,
   Immortal tidings in your mortal hands,
   Pass on and carry swift the news ye bring,
   Make straight, make straight the highway of the King."

This one is about giving:

4"When thy harvest sheaves ingathered
   Fill thy barn with store,
   To thy God and to thy brother
   Give the more."

1Century Hymnal, No. 276  2Century Hymnal, No. 271  3Century Hymnal, No. 349  4Century Hymnal, No. 278
This is concerned with the giving of talents:—

1"Our tongues were fashioned for thy word,
    Our hands - to do thy will divine;
Our bodies are thy temple, Lord,
The mind's immortal powers are thine."

The doing of one's daily tasks in the proper spirit is most fittingly expressed in Milton S. Littlefield's hymn:—

2"O Son of Man, thou madest known,
    Through quiet work in shop and home,
The sacredness of common things,
The chance of life that each day brings.

And thus we pray in deed and word,
Thy Kingdom come on earth, O Lord;
In work that gives effect to prayer,
Thy purpose for thy world we share."

A hymn already quoted because of its alliteration is an admirable example of the modern contrast between activity and inward experience:—

3"Not long on Hermon's holy height
    The heavenly vision fills our sight;
We may not breathe that purer air,
Nor build our tabernacles there.

If with the Master we would go,
Our feet must thread the vale below,
Where dark the lonely pathways wind,
The golden glory left behind.

There patient bending in His task,
No raiment white our eyes shall ask,
Content while through each cloud we trace
The glory of the Master's face."

The same thought is also expressed in Frederick L. Hosmer's hymn:—

4"Not always on the mount may we
    Rapt in the heavenly vision be."

1Century Hymnal, No. 226  2Century Hymnal, No. 263
3Century Hymnal, No.
4Filgrim Hymnal, No. 123
Mr. Littlefield has expressed for us the idea of work giving effect to prayer. Some others would seem to substitute it for prayer and other forms of worship. John Greenleaf Whittier says:

1"To worship rightly is to love each other, Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer."

The extreme of this position is reached perhaps by F. A. Rollo Russell in the lines:

2"Christian, rise and cot thy creed, Let thy prayer be in thy deed; Seek the right, perform the true, Raise thy work and life anew.

Let thine alms be hope and joy, And thy worship God's employ; Give Him thanks in humble zeal, Learning all His will to feel."

This shows a wholesome revolt against mere Sabbath piety that does not follow a man across the threshold of his place of business. But on the other hand, it shows the all-too-prevalent tendency to neglect the services of the church and to discount the value of the inspiration to be gained therefrom. The church is by no means perfect, but neither is she as bad as some novelists and playwrights and even some of her own ministers would attempt to show.

The voices that present the claims of this other side are not dumb. George T. Coster says:

3"Thou callest from the strain of care And from the battle strife, To win in quietude of prayer Abundant life."

The conflict between the two attitudes will go on as long as human nature remains as it is. Some of us will have visions and

1Century Hymnal, No. 279  2Century Hymnal, No. 261  3Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 465
dream dreams and others of us will go out and smite and delve, putting the dreams into effect. There have always been Martha's who were cumbered about much serving, and Mary's who sat at Jesus' feet drinking in the words of life. The fact that Jesus commended Mary at this time must not make us overlook his other words, "Go thou and do."

One specific form of activity that is greatly stressed in the newer hymnody is that of social service. The modern passion for service finds ample expression. From kindly smiles and neighborly thoughtfulness up to the most sacrificial acts—all are dealt with in some form or another. The concept of the brotherhood of mankind is one which is often linked with that of the improvement of social conditions. If all men are brothers and man is his brother's keeper, then it follows that he must help his brother in time of need, and must be alert to do his share toward righting the wrongs of society which may be holding his brother down. This latter thought is brought out forcefully in the hymn "God of the Strong, God of the Weak."

Many of the best social service hymns have already been mentioned in the preceding pages, since they are among the strongest and most poetical of our hymns and most representative of modern religious thought. The best known are perhaps:- "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life" and "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee." Others are:- "O God of Mercy, Hearken Now", "Master, No Offering, Costly and Sweet", "When Thy Heart with Joy O'erflowing", "O Brother Man, Fold to Thy Heart a Brother", "..."
and "Christian, Lo the Star Appeareth," and

1"We thank thee, Lord, thy paths of service lead
   To blazoned heights and down the slopes of need."

This new idea of service is really not new at all. It is as old as Isaiah or older. The words of Christ, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister", express it most fully and beautifully. Francis of Assisi attempted earnestly to put it into practice in the thirteenth century, and so have faithful souls all along the way. How strange that the church as a whole should be so slow to recognize this mighty principle and make it effective in everyday life! May we not reasonably hope that the singing of these sturdy, earnest hymns will make the church awaken more fully to its new opportunity in society? The mere sending of Christmas dinners to the hungry, or the passing out of second-hand clothing to the ragged and poorly-clad are not sufficient. The church must aim at the root of things and stamp out the social evils that are the cause of suffering.

Another modern shifting of opinion is found in the change of emphasis from the future life to the present. Most of us are in sympathy with the little Sunday-school lad who did not join in the song, "I want to be an angel." On being asked is he really did not want to be an angel, he replied, "Not yet." The children do not want to be angels: it is too much fun to

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1Century Hymnal, No. 272
live. And grown-ups seem to feel the same way.

The older hymnody represented this world as a vale of tears where unfortunate man was compelled to spend a few years while waiting for life in the next world. This idea found fullest expression in the lives of the ascetics of the Middle Ages who tortured and abused their bodies, thinking that thereby they might in some way be rendered more fit for the life to come. The idea that "I am a pilgrim and a stranger" and that "Heaven is my home" has persisted almost down to our own time, but the tendency in the other direction is now quite noticeable. A very recent and beautifully-worded hymn treats the matter as follows:

1"More dear to me the homely earth
Beloved by those I love,
Than all the poets dream of heaven,
Too radiant above.

More dear to me the lilac time,
The common grass, the rain,
The changing seasons and the joy
That mingles with our pair.

O unimagined paradise,
in thee I could not trust,
But for the heavenly deeds of earth,
The glory in our dust.

And heaven is strange, but not so strange
As Jesus' love for me;
I know that there is paradise,
For there is Calvary."

Henry Van Dyke's exuberant "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" addresses God as the "Wellspring of the joy of living."

The scores of hymns quoted which deal with the beauty of the

1Century Hymnal, No. 77
earth and the joy of life and service, without the least reference, even in the last stanza to heaven or a future life, are an eloquent testimony to the change in thought.

Some hymn-writers, however, are still singing of heaven and dear ones who have gone. There is a little group of such hymns in the Pilgrim Hymnal. They are sweet and graceful and full of hope for those in sorrow. Ella S. Armitage's thought is a connecting link between the old idea and the new:

1

"Though here be dear and life be sweet,
And thankful hearts God's bounty greet,
Yet rings at times the message clear,
"Our soul's true city is not here."

Frederick L. Hosmer has written two:

2

"I cannot think of them as dead
Who walk with me no more."

and:

3

"O Lord of life where'er they be
Safe in thine own eternity."

John W. Chadwick has one beginning:

4

"It singeth low in every heart."

and Edward H. Bickersteth writes:

5

"Thus heaven is gathering one by one,
In its capacious breast,
All that is pure and permanent,
And beautiful and blest."

In the hymn by Felix Adler already quoted, "Sing We of the Golden City", the thought of heaven and life eternal blends with that of the ideal society which we are to help build. It is also expressed in the following lines:

1Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 561  2Pilgrim Hymnal, No. 557
3" " " 558  4 " " "  559  6 " " "  560
7 " " " 528
"O Holy City seen of John
Where Christ, the Lamb, doth reign,
Within whose foursquare walls shall core
No night, nor need, nor pain."

Several lines are thus addressed to the Holy City and the hymn closes:

Give us, O God, the strength to build
The city that hath stood
Too long a dream, whose laws are love,
Whose ways are brotherhood,
And where the sun that shineth is
God’s grace for human good."

A hymn which shows the modern worker’s joy in his strength and his ability to live unselfishly is this, by Robert Davis:

"I thank thee, Lord, for strength of arm
To win my bread,
And that beyond my bread is meat
For friend unfed;
I thank thee much for bread to live,
I thank thee more for bread to give."

In fact, there has been a radical change in the concept of work. Work is no longer a curse imposed upon man because of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden, but is a blessed boon and a joyous privilege. Overworked though we may feel at times, none of us consider idleness in any sense synonymous with bliss. Modern democracy has little use for lily-white hands. It prefers hands that are sun-browned and hard with honest toil. Thomas W. Freckleton expresses it thus:

"O God, who workest hitherto,
Working in all we see,
Fain would we be and bear and do,
As best it pleaseth Thee.

Toil is no thorny crown of pain,
Bound round man’s brow for sin,
True souls from it all strength may gain,
All manliness may win.

1Hymns of the Kingdom, No. 187  2 Century Hymnal,
Our skill of hand and strength of limb
Are not our own, but Thine;
We link them to the work of Him
Who made all life divine."

The concept of heaven is colored by this new attitude toward work. A heaven in which one rests for eternity, or does nothing but sing psalms and play the harp, is no heaven at all for most of us. A perpetual garden party such as Fra Angelico painted so gracefully and tenderly in his "Last Judgment" would be very nice for a while, but would become woefully tiresome after a few thousand years. In several of Browning's poems we find the idea of continued work and progress after death - the triumphant attainments of heights never accessible to us upon earth. Kipling in his "I'Envoi" speaks of the time when "The Master of all good workmen shall set us to work anew" and "No one shall work for money and no one shall work for fame, but each for the joy of the working", etc.

There seems to be no exact counterpart of this thought in the hymn books. The nearest approach to it is found in the hymns of social progress and the Kingdom of God upon earth which have already been quoted. The late Dr. Mary Alice Emerson, beloved of Boston University, wrote:-

"The Holy City will appear
Apocalyptic from above,
When we raise towers in godly fear
On Truth and Faith and Hope and Love."

But are we to enter into this Kingdom immediately after death, or is it to be enjoyed only by our great-great-great (ad libitum) grand children? It is all very puzzling to mortal minds, and
speculation is tantalizingly futile. John Greenleaf Whittier
reaches quite a satisfying conclusion in these lines:-

1"I know not what the future bath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air.
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care."

The third change in the attitude of the individual is
his evaluation of himself. Man used to speak of himself as a
"worm of the dust" and, no doubt, was rather proud of his humi-

lity. Isaac Watts wrote:-

"Alas, and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?

Popular gospel songs present a remarkable mixture of abject
self-abasement and presumptuous egotism. The worshipper sings
lustily "Thou art the Potter; I am the clay", and in almost the
next breath is proclaiming:-

"He walks with me and he talks with me,
And he tells me I am his own,
And the joys we share as we tarry there
None other has ever known."

To some people there seems to be a decided incongruity in such
a procedure.

The better class of hymns, however, do not leave the
individual cowering in the dust, nor, on the other hand, appro-
priating to himself the entire blessings of redemption; but

1 Century Hymnal, No. 400
shows him conscious of his power and his sonship of the Father, and of his own responsibility. John Hay writes:

1"Not in dumb resignation
We lift our hands on high;
Not like the nerveless fatalist,
Content to do and die,
Our faith springs like the eagle's
Who soars to meet the sun
And cries exulting unto Thee,
'O Lord, Thy will be done!""

Marianne Hearn's hymn of consecration does not attempt to impress the youth with a sense of his own wileness, blindness, and wretchedness. The last stanza runs:

2"Just as I am, young, strong, and free,
To be the best that I can be
For truth and righteousness and Thee,
Lord of my life, I come."

Such a hymn has a better psychological effect upon wholesome red-blooded young people. Mr. Aaron R. Wolfe considers a man the greatest of God's created works:

3"Thou maker of our immortal frame -
Of all thy works the noblest far,
We bow before thy righteous claim
To all we have and all we are."

The modern church-goer does not consider himself perfect by any means, but instead of singing about how awfully bad he is, he prefers to sing about how remarkably good he would like to be. Mr. Percy Dearmer, in "The Art of Public Worship", calls attention to certain undesirable features in the frequent confession of sins. No matter how earnestly a person may have striven for perfection during the week, he knows that on the Sabbath he will have to confess to the same

1American Hymnal, No. 458
2Hymnal for American Youth, No. 151
3Century Hymnal, No. 226
most grievous faults. Is it not better to forget those things that are behind and concentrate on the noble, worthy ideals toward which we are striving? One of the finest of the new hymns on purity, courage, and self-control is this, by Howard A. Walter:

1"I would be true, for there are those who trust me; I would be pure, for there are those who care; I would be strong, for there is much to suffer; I would be brave, for there is much to dare."

Another good one is by Adelaide M. Plumpter:

2"Keep thyself pure! Christ's soldier, hear. Through life's loud strife the call rings clear. Thy Captain speaks: His word obey; So shall thy strength be as thy day.

Keep thyself pure! Thrice blessed he Whose heart from taint of sin is free. His feet shall stand where saints have trod, He with rapt eyes shall see his God."

Mr. Kipling's hymn, 3"Father in Heaven, Who Lovest All", is a prayer for the noble attributes of body, mind, and heart that an earnest youth craves for himself. Mr. Dearmer, who objects to the confession in the Church of England has written this:

4"Give pure happiness in leisure, Temperance in every pleasure, Holy use of earthly treasure, Bodies clean and spirits bright."

Walter C. Smith writes:

5"Yea, only as the heart is clean May larger vision yet be mine, For mirrored in its depths are seen The things divine."

It is thus by keeping before our minds the lofty Christian ideals of daily conduct that we hope some day to attain to Christ's command, "Be ye therefore perfect."

1Century Hymnal, No. 222  2Century Hymnal, No. 304  3Hymnal for American Youth, No. 178  5Hymns of the Kingdom, No. 210
4.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE HYMNISTS.

There are a few tendencies in modern religious thought that have not adequately been covered by the newer hymnody. The whole movement of Religious Education that has lately taken such a firm hold upon the Christian world has not yet found sufficient expression in song. It must sing itself into the hearts of people by means of great and vital hymns. We have a few prayers for teachers that are good, such as "Lord of Life and King of Glory", by Christian Burke, and "My Lord, I Do Not Ask to Stand", by Dr. Norman E. Richardson and Florence I. Judson-Bradley, but the possibilities of the field have by no means been exhausted.

We need some good hymns for the newly-added festivals of the modern church year, such as Mother's Day, Rally Day, and the like. Many of the Mother's Day songs are so extremely sentimental! Why should we tear to shreds the emotions of those who have mothers in Heaven and leave wholly untouched the great number who have mothers upon earth to whom they might do honor?

Another spot where we are weak is the number of hymns on the consecration of talents, music, art, literary gifts, and so forth - not "Perish every fond ambition", but the building of loftier, nobler ambitions based upon the ideals of Christian service, the consecration to God's use of the soul's most precious gifts. This is so joyous that it need not be
considered a great sacrifice only in the etymological sense of the term - a "sacra facio", I make sacred. Closely connected with this are dedication hymns. What are you going to sing at the dedication of the new organ or the new stained glass window? There is almost nothing that is appropriate.

We need more hymns about Christianity, the religion of whole-mindedness - a religion that ministers to every phase of human life. We need hymns that show the joy of worship and service, and the holiness of play. We need more hymns about Christ as a teacher and the crying need of his message in modern life. Some hymns about the parables would not come amiss. We have not yet too many hymns of social goodness - what Mr. Coe calls the dynamic of a poetry of active love. We need some social hymns, simple and easily sung yet beautiful and worthwhile, in which all classes of people could unite. Hymnologists have noted the fact that many denominations are met in the hymn book and talk feelingly about a united Christendom lifting its voice in song. This is good - very, very good. But there seems to be some danger of class division within the church itself. The writer has a feeling that the situation is not to be relieved by singing hymns about helping the poor. The sleek, well-to-do church-goer is singing "In haunts of wretchedness and need", while his poorer brother down in the little back-street Mission is probably singing "I'm dwelling in Beulah Land"! Poor people do not want to be "helped", they want genuine friendliness and social justice. A few good social hymns that the poor and rich could both sing might prove a valuable aid. How
glorious if we might have a sanctified Labor and a sanctified Capital united in the praise of the Father of all!

Now while we are waiting for these new hymns to be written, an excellent plan would be to learn more of the ones we have. Comparatively few of the hymns discussed in the preceding pages have attained to any very wide use. We do not enjoy having new material thrust upon us unexpectedly; we are quite sure that we do not like it. On the other hand, if some measures are taken to teach it to us and to point out its beauties, we become enthusiastic at once. We should learn more of the beautiful hymns, should teach them to the children in the Sunday Schools instead of the rubbish which they now learn in many places. We should sing hymns more understandingly, with more thought about what we are singing. The only reason why we have tolerated some of the poorer efforts at sacred song is because we race through them heedlessly without realizing the meaning of the words.

A fuller appreciation of that which we now have will not tend to make us complaisant and self-satisfied but will lead us on and up to greater achievement. As society grows more and more perfect, as we trust it will, we shall have more noble and soul-satisfying conceptions of God, of Christ, and of the individual. We shall receive fuller and more complete revelation from God. Our hymns will reflect our larger thoughts and express our nobler feelings, - the outreach of the human toward the Divine.
"New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,  
And mightier music thrill the skies,  
And every life shall be a song  
When all the earth is Paradise."
SUMMARY

I.

The making of a brief but comprehensive definition of a hymn is more difficult than it appears to the average layman because of the differences of opinion concerning it. St. Augustine defined it as praise to God. Garret Horder broadens that definition to include prayer, confession or communion, but thinks that songs which do not address the Deity should be the exception. We have broadened the term still further to include sacred lyrics that do not address the Deity but nevertheless offer inspiration to the worshippers. They must be singable and have some poetic quality.

The congregational hymn is a child of the Reformation but did not develop in England as early as in Germany. The English hymn developed from two sources: (1) the metrical versions of the Psalms and paraphrases of other portions of Scripture, and (2) the devotional verse which became more hymn-like in character. Isaac Watts was the connecting link between the early psalmody and the early hymnody and remained the supreme hymn writer for many years. Charles Wesley came later and was even more voluminous than Watts. There are three periods of hymn-writing: (1) didactic, (2) missionary and evangelistic, (3) modern.

Church hymns have often been assailed as poor in
literary quality. The point was well taken in the past. Many of the hymns by Watts and his successors were prosaic, the Psalm versions were stiff and badly worded, some so-called "Gospel Songs" are little better than doggerel. There is now, however, a strong tendency toward improved literary quality as well as fuller and more satisfying theological conceptions.

II.

The newer hymnody shows much variety in rhythm and meter. The new books contain at least six times as many kinds of meter as those of only half a century ago. Some of the unusual meters have required the writing of new tunes. The art of rhyming has improved also, the rhymes being fresher, less strained and more perfect.

There is a much freer use of imagery and many figures of speech. Simile and metaphor are most common, but onomatopoea, alliteration, transferred epithet, and parallelism are also found. The imagery is largely drawn from nature. Color imagery is quite common. The old Christian symbols are not stressed as much as formerly. The diction of hymns has undergone a marked change. Some new hymns have a beautiful limpid flow of diction while others are compact and virile. Unusual words are often introduced now including interesting compound words. There are not as many quotations from Scripture as formerly, but there are many apt allusions in which the language of Scripture is used.
Many of the hymns show more poetic conception as a whole, more unity, coherence, and logical development of thought. The practice of setting religious lyrics to music has resulted in a more poetic type of hymn.

Modern poets and men of letters have made large contributions to the hymn book. The greatest contemporary poets whose work appears in the hymn book are Rudyard Kipling, Katherine Lee Bates, and Henry Van Dyke. Other writers are Felix Adler and John Oxenham. Poets not now living whose work came partly within the past fifty years are: George Matheson, Whittier, Lowell, and Tennyson. Recent anthologies and books about poetry contain some matters interesting to a student of hymns. "New Voices", by Marguerite Wilkinson, contains no hymns but a very recent volume, "The World's Greatest Religious Poetry", contains quite a considerable list. There has been a great increase in the number of authors which has made for better quality in hymn-collections. Also, the great increase in education has made necessary a higher literary standard.

III.

The religious thought in the newer hymnody is quite different from the old. The hymns are less didactic and more praiseful. Many of the hymns sing the praise of the God of Nature. God is conceived as imminent in Nature as well as imminent in the soul itself.
When we come to the concept of Christ, we find that much more emphasis is now placed upon His life and ministry than formerly. There are only a few new hymns for Christmas and Easter. Christ as Prince of Peace and founder of a world Kingdom has been the inspiration of many hymn writers. Peace among the nations is a favorite theme, and America's destiny in bringing peace is not at all neglected. There are some very good patriotic numbers and a few on the subject of the Community Church.

There is a change, too, in the concept of the individual. Emphasis is now put upon activity rather than inward experience. All kinds of activity are treated in the new hymns but the most important is social service. The individual is thinking more of the present than of the future life and is not longing for death. The new opinion concerning work has colored the concept of Heaven - we do not think of it so much as a place of idle ease. The thought of Heaven blends with that of the Kingdom on earth, so that they become almost indistinguishable in some hymns.

The individual evaluates himself higher than formerly, - the "worm of the dust" type having disappeared. We do not concentrate on how bad we are as much as on how good we would like to be. There are some excellent hymns on purity, courage and self-control.

In spite of the ground covered by the new hymnody,
there is still opportunity for many more. Some of the weak spots are hymns for Mother's Day, Rally Day, Religious Education, the consecration of talents, Christianity, the religion of whole-mindedness, and hymns of social goodness.

We need to learn the ones we have and to reach out to greater achievement. As society advances, the hymns too will become more perfect and more expressive of fuller and more noble conceptions.
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