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PRINCETON HYMNS.

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In the literary product of the sons of Princeton Seminary, there is naturally included a good deal of religious verse. Few varieties of religious verse—from epigrams to epics—have been wholly neglected. But, as was to be expected, a considerable part of it takes the form of hymns. A large number of these hymns have been occasional in their origin, have served their purpose, and have passed out of sight. A not inconsiderable number of them, however, have taken their places in the permanent hymnody of, at least, the Presbyterian Church. In this “centennial year,” when Princeton Seminary is reviewing its work of an hundred years and, as it were, “taking stock” of the services it has rendered the Church and the Churches, it is worth while, perhaps, to endeavor to estimate with some exactness the contribution it has made to the hymnody of the Church also.

The most natural way of doing this is to pass in review the Hymn Books which have been most widely in use in the Presbyterian churches for the last fifty years or so, and note the hymns of Princeton men which have found place in them. We have therefore examined, with this end in view, a series of Presbyterian Hymn Books and, in order to get a little wider view, have added to them a few other very

recent Books prepared for the use of sister Churches. We suppose ourselves to have acquired, thus, a fairly accurate conception of the contribution of Princeton Seminary to the praise-service of the Churches, during the first century of its existence.

The Books which we have examined for this inquiry include a complete series of the official Hymn Books published by the Presbyterian Church, since 1867; probably the chief of the Books published by private enterprise which have been largely in use in the Presbyterian churches during this period; and a few recent Books prepared for other denominations, including, of course, the recently published official Hymn Book for the Presbyterian Church, South. We enumerate them in chronological order, attaching a symbol to each, by which it may be conveniently cited in what follows. *Hymns of Praise*, compiled by Henry A. Boardman (1861), fourth edition 1867 (A). *Songs for the Sanctuary*, edited by Charles S. Robinson, 1865 (B). *The Hymnal* (Presbyterian), 1867 (C). *The Church Hymn Book*, edited by Edwin T. Hatfield (1872), edition of 1874 (D). *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, edited by Joseph T. Durvea, 1874 (E). *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, edited by Charles S. Robinson, 1875 (F). **The Church Praise Book*, New York, 1881 (G). *Carmina Sanctorum*, edited by Roswell D. Hitchcock, Zachary Eddy and Lewis W. Mudge, 1886 (H). *Laudes Domini*, edited by Charles S. Robinson (1884), edition of 1887 (I). *Songs of Praise*, edited by Lewis W. Mudge, 1889 (K). *The Hymnal*, edited by Louis F. Benson, 1895 (L). *Sursum Corda*, edited by E. H. Johnson and E. E. Ayres, 1898 (M). *Psalms and Hymns*, edited by J. W. Walden and others (the official Book of the Presbyterian Church, South), 1901 (N). *Hymns of the Ages*, edited by Robert P. Kerr (1891), new edition 1902 (O). *The Methodist Hymnal*, 1905 (P). *The Friends' Hymnal*, 1906 (Q). *The Hymnal (Revised)*, edited by Louis F. Benson, 1911 (R). The book marked with an asterisk is cited at second hand for a single hymn; the others have been looked through with some care by the writer himself.

One fact, in which Princeton may take some pride, may perhaps be noted at the outset. Whatever may be said of the authorship of the individual hymns, the Presbyterian Church has owed its Hymn Books very largely to Princeton-bred men. In a true sense, a serious attempt to provide itself with an adequate Hymn Book began for the Presbyterian Church with the *Presbyterian Hymnal* of 1874. Professor F. M. Bird tells us (in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, 1891, p. 57) with significant emphasis, "the *Presbyterian Hymnal* of 1874 is to be distinguished from the inferior *Hymnal of the Presbyterian Church* of 1867." Dr. Joseph T. Duryea, who edited the *Presbyterian Hymnal* of 1874, was a Princeton man, of the class of 1859. When his Book was superseded in 1895 by a Book of very much higher quality, it was another Princeton man who gave the better book to us, Dr. Louis F. Benson, of the class of 1887; and it is Dr. Benson who has succeeded himself with the new Book of 1911. Of the unofficial books probably no others have had anything like the circulation in the Church of those prepared by Dr. Charles S. Robinson—another Princeton man, of the class of 1855; and certainly none have been of higher excellence than the *Carmina Sanctorum*, one of whose editors was also a Princeton man—Dr. Lewis W. Mudge, of the class of 1865—who also gave us one of the smaller Books, the *Songs of Praise* of 1889. It has been the men of Princeton, therefore, who have supplied to the Presbyterian churches their manuals of praise.

Another remark may profitably be made in passing. There were Princeton hymns before there was a Princeton Theological Seminary. Samuel Davies, in particular, the eloquent young President of the College of New Jersey in the middle of the eighteenth century, left behind him at his death at the early age of thirty-seven hymns which still hold their place in the Books. His literary executor, Dr. Thomas Gibbons, of London, publishing in 1769 his *Hymns Adapted to Divine Worship: Partly collected from various authors, but principally composed by T. Gibbons, D.D.*, included in it sixteen hymns by Samuel Davies, with the explanatory note in the

preface: "The Pieces in the following Miscellany ascribed to the Rev. Dr. Davies were found in his manuscripts intrusted with the Editor." Of these the following are listed in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* as "still retained in common use":

Eternal Spirit, Source of light
Great God of wonders, all Thy ways
How great, how terrible that God
Jesus, how precious is Thy name
Lord, I am Thine, entirely Thine
What strange perplexities arise
While o'er our guilty land, O Lord.

We gather from Professor Bird's notes that he considers the sixth, fifth and first of these (in that order) the most popular. In our Books the order is (as we think it should be) rather, the fifth, first and sixth. The sixth is found in D, and in Spurgeon's *Our Own Hymn Book*, 1866. The first in D and O. But the fifth, that beautiful hymn,

Lord, I am Thine, entirely Thine
Purchased and saved by blood divine,

which we are surprised to learn is "almost unknown in England," appears in practically the whole series of our Books (B, C, D, E, F, H, I, K, L, M, O, P, R and also *In Excelsis* 1897), and its permanent place in evangelical hymnody seems assured. It was with such a fine hymnodic tradition behind it that the Seminary entered upon its work.

The first of the sons of the Seminary to take up this tradition was James Waddell Alexander of the class of 1824. Son of the first professor of the Seminary, he, a lad of eight years, accompanied his father to Princeton, when he came to open the Seminary in 1812; and he grew up under the inspiration of its spring-tide. His life was passed partly as a professor in Princeton,—in College and Seminary,—partly as a pastor in New York. A bookish man, of fine literary taste, he gave the Church a series of striking hymns translated from the German and Latin. His translations from the German, five in number, were collected shortly after his death,

in a little volume, called after the title of the first of them, *The Breaking Crucible* (New York, 1861). One of these translations from the German, and one or perhaps two of his translations from the Latin, have passed into general use. One of the latter,

Jesus, how sweet Thy memory is,

a version of part of the *Jesu dulcis memoria*, is found in our D. The other, which it has been generally customary to attribute to Dr. Alexander, though possibly on insufficient evidence (see Schaff, *Literature and Poetry*, p. 208, and for the actual version, Henry Hills, *Horæ Germanicæ*, 1856),

Near the cross was Mary weeping

from the *Stabat mater dolorosa*, appears in more or less purity in our A, H, I, M, P and also *In Excelsis*, 1897. It is, however, the

O Sacred Head, now wounded,

which James Mearns (Julian, p. 835) justly calls "a very beautiful translation" of Gerhardt's beautiful rendering of a part of the *Salve Caput cruentatum*, which has made the widest appeal. It is in our A, B, C, D, E, F, H, I, L, M, N, O, P, R and also *In Excelsis*, 1897. In its complete form it consists of ten stanzas (so in *The Breaking Crucible*, p. 7, and Schaff's *Christ in Song*, 1869, p. 178). In the Hymn Books it is variously abbreviated: in E, H and (with some alterations) F, only stanzas 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 are given; in I and M, 1, 4, 8, 10; in L and R, 1, 2, 4, 8, 10; while in O, the alteration is so great that it almost becomes another hymn.

Joseph Addison Alexander, a younger brother of James Waddell Alexander, was never a student in the Seminary, having been self-taught in theology. As, however, he grew up under its shadow and became one of its greatest ornaments as a professor, he may rightly be claimed as of its own. He deserves mention here as the author of what Dr. Samuel W. Duffield (*English Hymns*, 1886, p. 382) calls "the most powerful presentation of the doctrine of probation anywhere

in our collections." This is the poem published in 1837 under the title of *The Doomed Man*, and beginning

There is a time, we know not when,
A point we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men,
To glory or despair.

It is found with this opening in our G; and beginning with the second stanza,

There is a line by us unseen,

in our B. The whole poem may be read in Dr. S. W. Duffield's book as just cited.

George Washington Bethune, of the class of 1826, was a Seminary mate of James Waddell Alexander. He rose to great distinction in the ministry of the (Dutch) Reformed Church, and has given the Church a considerable number of hymns which have passed into extended use. The most of these are collected in his *Lays of Love and Faith, with other Fugitive Poems*, Philadelphia, 1847, and fourteen of them are inserted in the *Lyra Sacra Americana*. Professor Bird (in Julian, p. 139) instances nine as having attained the most repute. Three of these do not seem to appear in our Presbyterian Books, viz.:

Light of the immortal Father's glory
Farewell to thee, brother
When time seems short and death is near.

The second of these is said, however, to be somewhat used in England, and the last is found not only in some English Books, but also in our P. On the other hand our Books contain at least six of Dr. Bethune's hymns. The most popular of these is an excellent version (from the French, despite what is erroneously said in Julian, p. 810) of Cæsar Malan's famous *Non, ce n'est pas mourir*, beginning

It is not death to die.

It is found in our B, D, E, F, I, L, M, N, O, P, R and also

In Excelsis, 1897. In Dr. Benson's revised *Hymnal* it is printed on the same page with R. P. Dunn's version of the same hymn, made from the German translation of A. Knapp, which is hereafter to be mentioned. Next in popularity stands

O for the happy hour

which in our Books is found in A, B, D, F, I;

Come let us sing of Jesus

although a Sunday-school hymn and widely used as such, is nevertheless found in D, E, M, Q;

O Jesus, when I think of Thee

is found in K, M, and also *In Excelsis*, 1897;

O Thou who in Jordan didst bow Thy meek head

in M, and

Tossed upon life's raging billow

in B, H, Q. Besides these the very popular hymn

There is no name so sweet on earth

(E, H, R) which is still marked as anonymous by Dr. Benson, is attributed to Dr. Bethune by the editors of the *Carmina Sanctorum* and by Professor Bird (in Julian, p. 139, on the authority of H. P. Main).

Another somewhat voluminous hymn writer from the early classes of the Seminary was Edward Henry Nevin, of the class of 1837. Seven of his hymns are cited by Professor Bird (Julian, p. 799) as "the most important." Five of these do not seem to appear in our Books (except the first, which is in B), viz.:

Come up hither, come away
O heaven, sweet heaven
Live on the field of battle
I have read of a world of beauty
Mount up on high! as if on eagles' wing.

The remaining two have enjoyed a considerable popularity among us, though they are not included in Dr. Benson's *Hymnal*. These are :

Always with us, always with us

which is found, more or less abridged, in B, D, H, I, K, M, and

Saviour, happy would I be

which is found in A, H, I, K, Q.

The Books prepared especially for the use of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (commonly called the Southern Presbyterian Church) have incorporated a hymn of invocation, addressed to the Trinity, by Thomas Verner Moore, of the class of 1842, whose fruitful ministry was passed chiefly in Richmond, Va., and Nashville, Tenn. (N, O). As the hymn is not widely known we reproduce it here in its entirety, from the text in the *Hymns of the Ages*.

Father, let thy smiling face
Here within this holy place,
Sweetly shining on my heart,
Bid all sinful thoughts depart.

Jesus, thou whose ceaseless love
Intercedes for us above,
Bend to me Thy listening ear,
Make my wayward heart sincere.

Comforter of all the saints,
Gently heal my soul's complaints,
May a foretaste now be given
Of the Sabbath day of heaven.

Alexander Ramsay Thompson, of the class of 1845, spent his ministry in the (Dutch) Reformed Church, and became in it one of the leaders of its service of praise. He was joint editor of the *Hymns of the Church*, 1869, and of *Hymns of Prayer and Praise*, 1871, prepared especially for the Dutch Church; and he contributed to both collections both original

and translated hymns. Of his original hymns two are found in Dr. Hatfield's *Church Hymn Book* (1872), 1874, our D,

O thou whose filmed and fading eye,
Wayfarers in the wilderness.

Two of his translations from the Latin have had a more extended use.

Zion, to thy Saviour singing

which is a rendering of the *Lauda Sion Salvatorem* (Julian, p. 663) is found in both of Dr. Benson's *Hymnals* (L and R); and as well in *Laudes Domini* (I), in two parts, the second hymn made from it beginning

Here the King hath spread His table.

Dr. Benson, in his first *Hymnal*, prints also Dr. Thompson's rendering of the *Aurora coelum purpurat* (Julian, p. 95):

The morning purples all the sky.

Robinson Potter Dunn, of the class of 1848, who from 1851 to his death in 1867 filled the chair of Rhetoric and English Literature in Brown University, brought a skilled hand and correct literary taste to the task of rendering hymns from other languages, and has given the Church some excellent versions. Perhaps the best known of these is the beautiful rendering of J. Scheffler's *Jesu, komm' doch selbst zu mir*, beginning

Jesus, Jesus visit me.

It is found in the Baptist *Service of Song*, 1871, and in our D, E, I, O, Q. His

Jesus, our fainting spirits cry

has been made into two hymns, the second of which commences,

We sinners, Lord, with earnest hearts.

Another hymn of his,

Attend, O Lord, my daily toil

is found in Dr. Boardman's *Hymns of Praise* (1861), 1867, our A. And his translation of Cæsar Malan's *Non, ce n'est pas mourir*, through the mediation of A. Knapp's German version,

No, no, it is not dying,

rivals in attractiveness and is in use side by side with Dr. Bethune's rendering of the French original (B, L, R).

Charles S. Robinson, of the class of 1855, besides his very great service to the Churches as a Hymn-Book maker, has contributed two hymns of his own to the treasury of praise, one of which has achieved a real popularity. This is his

Saviour, I follow on

which is found in his *Songs of the Church*, 1862, as well as in our B, D, E, F, I, O, Q. The other is his

Isles of the South, your redemption is nearing

which is found in our B, F; and in our D in the form of

Lands long benighted, your redemption is nearing.

These all have fallen asleep, and only their works live after them. There remain with us, however, living sons of Princeton who are wise-hearted in the great work of leading the people's praise. Hymns of two of these have already found a place in our Books. A hymn by Henry van Dyke of the class of 1877,

Jesus, Thou divine Companion,

has been included in H. S. Coffin's *Hymns of the Kingdom of God*, 1910; and in the last edition of Dr. Benson's *Hymnal* (R), there has been included another hymn by the same author,

Joyful, joyful we adore Thee

which may be read also in *The Poems of Henry van Dyke*, New York, 1911, p. 332. By its side in the *Poems* there may be read also a number of other pieces, more or fewer, which may possibly come into use as hymns later:

Lord Jesus Thou hast known
 What shall I give for Thee
 Just to give up and trust
 March on, my soul, nor like a laggard stay.

The other one of our living hymn-writers whose hymns may already be found in our Books is Louis Fitzgerald Benson himself, of the class of 1887, to whom we owe by far the best *Hymnal* the Presbyterian Church has ever had. In 1897 Dr. Benson published a slender volume called *Hymns and Verses* (16mo., pp. 126), in which were included twenty original hymns and nine versions of Latin hymns. Two of these original hymns he had already incorporated into his first *Hymnal*, 1895, our L:

O risen Christ who from Thy throne
 O Christ who didst our tasks fulfil.

From that *Hymnal* both passed into *Sursum Corda*, 1898 (our M), and the former of the two into *Psalms and Hymns*, 1901, of the Southern Presbyterian Church (our N). Both of them have been retained in Dr. Benson's second *Hymnal*, 1911 (our R), in the slightly altered forms of

O risen Lord upon the throne
 O Thou whose feet have climbed life's hill.

And three new hymns have been added to them in this new *Hymnal*,

The light of God is falling
 From hands that would our land deflower
 Happy town of Salem:

and still further, one of his translations from the Latin, included in his *Hymns and Verses* (p. 64):

Our praises, Lord, Thou dost not need

and four other translated hymns, in which he has had greater or less part :

O Splendor of God's glory bright
Near the cross her vigil keeping
Come, O Creator Spirit blest
Something every heart is loving.

The second of these, it will be noted, takes the place of the version of the *Stabat mater dolorosa*, generally attributed to James W. Alexander; and the fourth is a rendering of a hymn of Tersteegen's.

Should we pass beyond the Books which we have made the basis of our investigation, we should have to note that a hymn by Dr. Benson is found in the *Westminster Hymnal*, and that two are to be found in the (English) *S. S. Hymnary*, one of which has passed thence into the (English) *Methodist School Hymnal*, and the other into Dr. Jowett's Book. We should have to note also that seven hymns of his have been included in *The School Hymnal* which he gave us in 1899 :

O sing a song of Bethlehem
A glory hid the wintry sky
Brightly shine, ye heavens
Now the winter days are o'er
Open the door to the Saviour
Who will teach us how to pray
Out of the skies, like angel eyes.

We have now passed in review half a score of hymn-writers, sons of Princeton Seminary, from whose pens perhaps two scores of hymns have come which have entered into the general praise of the Churches. It would not be difficult to add other writers, and other hymns, which fall but little short of these. It is a record of which Princeton Seminary may well be proud, and even a slight consideration of it may help us to realize the width of the service, and the variety of the services, which the sons of Princeton are rendering to the Churches. God fulfills Himself in many ways: and the servants of God find many channels in which their service flows. It is only by a comprehensive survey of the variety of the services rendered by her sons that anything like an

adequate estimate of the work of an institution of sacred learning can be arrived at. It would not be a bad thing if some competent person would edit a little volume of "Princeton Hymns." It might well contain a hundred hymns—one for each year of the century that has passed. And certainly no more delightful monument of Princeton's centennial year could be erected.