

and brightened many a cloud above life's pathway.

Closely interwoven with a history of the Christian Church would be a history of her hymns. The singing of them has been an inspiration to God's people in all times of persecution and trial. The Scottish Covenanters in their lonely glens, the Waldenses in their mountain fastnesses, the Huguenots of France, the early Protestants of Germany, the hunted Roman Christians in the catacombs, all had their faith kept alive and their devotion deepened by their stirring songs of praise. The Methodist movement in England also owed as much of its success to the hymns of the Wesleys, Olivers, Newton, etc., as to their preaching.

What a rich treasury the child of God has in his hymn-book! It should occupy a place in his heart and memory second only to the Word of God. It contains songs of hope to cheer when he is tempted to cry out like one of old, "All these things are against me"; songs of glory for his triumphant hours; songs that breathe a holy calm in times of worry and excitement; songs that have

"The power to quiet  
The restless pulse of care,  
And come like the benediction  
That follows after prayer";

songs that nerve him to face danger and temptation, and inspire him to deeds of valor for his Lord. Whatever his state of want or feeling, he can there find words that appear as though they had been specially written for his peculiar need. And as his soul goes out in hymns of petition or praise, he realizes the experience so beautifully described by the poet when he sings:

"The night shall be filled with music,  
And the cares which infest the day  
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away."

Then in the public services of the church, what enthusiasm we gather from the united voices of the congregation. How often we wend our way to God's house, feeling, it may be, cast down and heavy-hearted; but as we rise to sing, perhaps Perronet's "All hail the power of Jesus' name,"—which has been fittingly termed the Christian's national anthem—or Wesley's immortal "Jesus, Lover of my soul," or haply Bernard of Clugny's never-dying "Jerusalem, the golden," as voice joins with voice, and the trumpet tones of the organ break forth into joy, we catch the contagion of the hymn, our doubts disappear, the future beams bright with promise, and Beulah land seems almost at our feet.

Then, again, how often has the Gospel sung its way to the heart, and wakened the conscience of many an one untouched by the eloquent periods and impassioned appeals of the preacher! Many a prodigal has, out of curiosity or mischief perhaps, turned into an assembly of God's people, and, as he enters, the familiar air and words of some sweet old hymn fall on his ear, and straightway carry him back to his childhood days, with

a vision of a loving mother stooping over him to imprint the good-night kiss on his brow, or the memory of a godly father, long since gone home, his parting words, "Meet me in heaven, my boy"; and as these tender voices of the past plead with him, his icy heart melts, and angels rejoice over another wanderer returned to his Father's home.

As an English writer has said, how the hymns laugh to scorn the claim of any one sect to be the only true church of Christ. In our hymn-books, Roman Catholics—Faber, Newman, Bernard—stand side by side with such staunch Protestants as Luther and Gerhardt. Ritualists, as Keble and Neale, appear along with Lyte, Cowper, and Havergal, who were thorough evangelicals; and all these are compelled to associate with Baxter, the Puritan; Wesleys and Olivers, the Methodists; Watts and Doddridge, the Congregationalists; and Bonar and McCheyne, the Presbyterians. The Armenian Wesley and the Calvinist Toplady no longer dispute and wrangle, but dwell together in peace. Even the Unitarian Adams' yearning, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," is called into service along with Heber's grand Trinity hymn, "Holy, holy, holy." All this should tend to make bigots recall Christ's words, "Other sheep have I which are not of this fold."

The hymnology of to-day is richer and sweeter by far than that of any previous age. I recently came across a very old hymn-book, and in looking over its pages, was much struck with the quaint expressions found in many of its hymns. To modern readers, whose hymn-books contain many of the finest literary gems in the English language, some of these expressions seem exceedingly ludicrous, and we almost wonder how even the staid old Puritans could have sung them with unsmiling faces. I give you as a sample this verse from old-time hymnology, sung before the days of Watts and Wesley:

"Ye monsters of the bubbling deep,  
Your Maker's praises spout:  
Up from the sands, ye codlings, peep,  
And wag your tails about."

One of the most interesting of the old books of praise is the version of the Psalms, known as Sternhold and Hopkins', published in 1562, which was really the best book of praise then obtainable. While it contained many good things, some of the renderings seem very strange to us. Take, for instance, that of the tenth and eleventh verses of the seventy-fourth Psalm, where the Psalmist says, "O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? Why withdrawest Thou thy right hand? Pluck it out of thy bosom." It was paraphrased thus:

"Why dost withdraw thy hand aback  
And hide it in thy lappe?  
O pluck it out, and be not slack  
To give thy foes a rappe."

The verse, "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong," was thus arranged for singing: