

Hymns and
Hymn Writers.

ADESTE FIDELIS!

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
Come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of angels:
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God,
Light of Light eternal,
Our lowly nature He hath not abhorred:
Son of the Father,
Begotten, not created,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, choirs of angels,
Sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above,
Sing ye, All glory
To God in the Highest!
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we hail Thee,
Born this happy morning,
Jesus, to Thee be glory given,
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord. AMEN.

Christianity, modern civilization,
and the world's recognized reckoning
of the years all date from Christmas
Day. What is called New Year's Day
is the seventh day, the day of com-
pletion of the feast—the octave as it
is called, after Christmas Day. The
angels at Bethlehem formed the
choir, their song of praise to God
being: "Glory be to God on high, on
earth peace, good will towards men."
The reason for their hymning is the
reason why we too sing hymns, Jesus
Christ was born on earth—the ever-
lasting God and mortal man in one
person.

His mother, Mary the Blessed, had
composed a hymn some months pre-
viously, the one beginning "My soul
doth magnify the Lord," and no doubt
she sang that softly over her precious
Babe. But she, the first to know and
love Him, Her and our Saviour, would
do doubt repeat over and over again
the first angelic Christmas hymn,
"Glory to God in the highest." It
has always been a favorite Christian
hymn. In the English and in the
Roman branches of the church cath-
olic as in many of the scattered sec-
tions of Christianity, it is sung every
Sunday, or at least as often as the
feast of the Holy Communion is cele-
brated.

And soon, very early in the Church's
history "spiritual songs," as St. Paul
calls them, were written around the
Christmas story, or to be sung on
Christmas Day. "Of the Father's Love
begotten," for instance was written
about 400. "Christ is Born, Tell Porth
His Fame," in the 8th century. Prob-
ably few of the early hymn-writers
could avoid writing of the Christmas
miracle, which with the Resurrection
was marvelled at as the wonder of
the year into the hymn books.

The most popular and most widely
known of all our Christmas hymns,
"O Come All Ye Faithful" does not
rank among the very ancient hymns.
Its second verse reminds us that it
was written after what is known as
the Nicene Creed had become well-
known, and the Council of Nice was
held in the fourth century. It is gen-
erally thought to have been com-
posed in the seventeenth or eighteenth
century, although it may have been in
existence some centuries before that.

Perhaps it was written by some
British saint, or as some think by
some French or German writer.

It runs in its original Latin in the
same metre as in our translation, as
will be seen from the first verse in
the original:

"Adeste, fideles,
Lacti triumphantes
Venite, venite in Bethlehem;
Vatum videte
Rerum Angelorum:
Venite adoremus Dominum."

In this Latin form it was sung at
Christmas services at least as early
as about 1680 in England, for John
Reading, organist of Winchester Cath-
edral, composed the well-known tune
for it printed above at that time. And
in 1797 when the well-known Vincent
Bello was organist at the chapel of
the Portuguese Embassy in London,
he singing made a sensation and led
to its becoming very popular. It also
led to a curious mistake in some tune
books where the tune was dubbed "a
Portuguese melody," called "Portu-
guese" and sung not to its own hymn
text to "How Firm a Foundation, Ye
Saints of the Lord."

The hymn in its present transla-
tion is by the Rev. Canon F. Oakley,
member of Margaret Street Chapel,
London, and contains four of the
best verses of the original. It ap-
peared in 1862, and speedily found its
way into the hymnbooks.

All round the earth wherever the
English flag waves, and wherever
English-speaking missionaries have
penetrated, this hymn will form part
of next Sunday's Christmas Day's ser-
vices. For together with "Hark the
Herald Angels Sing," and "While
Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by
Night," this grand hymn is practical-
ly indispensable to an English-speak-
ing celebration of the great festival
of the Nativity of Our Lord and Sav-
ing Jesus Christ.

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tended to in the same reliable
way by Hickey at Spurrell's The
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and have your clothes at-
tended to for the holiday Ses-
sion—dec16, eod, 11

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