

Pastor and People.

OR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

A FAVOURITE HYMN.

BY REV. DUNCAN MORRISON, M.A. OWEN SOUND

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine;
Now hear me while I pray;
Take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly Thine.

May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart,
My zeal inspire;
As Thou hast died for me,
O may my love to Thee
Pure, warm and changeless be,
A living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my Guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,
Blest Saviour, then in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul.

LATIN TRANSLATION.

Fides venit ad Te,
O Agne Calvary,
O Lux mundi,
Audi me precantem,
Auferito mi labem
Ut pro Te unicum
Me fieri.

O sint opes tue
Labente me fuisse
Agentes me!
Es quia mortuus,
Mi amor perpetuus,
Divinus, mutui
Delectans Te.

Dum ambulans cecus
Vias, obnoxius,
Me regito
Fer luce tenebras,
Absterge lacrymas,
Et semper venias
Auxilio!

Quum finis omnium—
Quum vitæ somnium
Evauit;
Amore in tuo,
Salvator, abferito
Mi metus ituro
In gloriam.

Dr. Ray Palmer, son of the Hon. T. Palmer, Compton, Vermont, besides being a noted preacher for forty years, and a popular writer for about half that time, is a poet of no mean order. His is the gift in a remarkable degree of infusing a spirit of tenderness into his lines and clothing even his commonplaces with a solemn beauty which is itself poetic. We quote the following as characteristic:

My angel mother! Long, long years have gone
Since thou, yet young and fair, passed from my sight

E'er since I see thy gentle face each day
And in the silent night, and still there play,
In those soft eyes, the self-same smiles that made
Thy presence a deep joy in days of yore.

But though Dr. Palmer has written much both as a divine and a poet, we believe that this one hymn, struck out in a glorious hour of spiritual exaltation, will do more to preserve his name from sinking into oblivion than all his other writings put together—that when those will be laid upon the shelf as having served their day, this, like a crystal stream revealing itself by a green belt of vegetation amid the desert sands, will live and minister to the devotions of thousands yet unborn.

The same may be said of Charles Wesley's "Jesus Lover of My Soul," or Perronet's "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," or Toplady's "Rock of Ages." It is plain that Toplady regarded this, his great hymn, a mere trifle in comparison with his great controversial volumes on Calvinism; but where are all those controversial writings now? They have shrunk into small space, and to a great extent are for-

gotten, whereas this peerless hymn is heard in almost every Church, on the lonely sea, in the crowded mart, from many a cottage home and fisherman's boat, from the lips of childhood and the faltering accents of old age.

The same may be said, though not to the same extent, of the hymn under consideration. Dr. Palmer will hereafter be known—not by his books—"What is Truth?" "Remember Me, or the Holy Communion," "Closet Hours," "Doctrinal Text-Book," etc., but as the author of "My Faith Looks Up to Thee," God gave a great gift to the Church on the day (12th November, 1803, Rhode Island), when Ray Palmer was born; for if he had done no more than write this hymn, he has ministered to thousands that will rise up and call him blessed. He is still with us*, and though the snows of seventy seven winters are on his head, his eye is not dim and his tongue has lost nothing of the fluency and ease of former days.

Ray Palmer was a student of Andover, where he spent three years, and then entered New Haven 1826, and graduated in 1830—that is when about the age of twenty two. From a sketch of his life lying before me, I gather that, having graduated, he took to teaching in a famous school in New York, where he taught for three hours a day. There the young man had plenty of time on his hands, and many temptations to face; but by this time he had taken Christian ground and cast in his lot with the Lord Jesus; and so much of his spare time was given to Christian service and heavenly meditation. At this time he was in the habit of carrying about with him a little book, in which he jotted down short poems and single verses as expressive of his deepest emotions, and one day, alone in his chamber, with a deep feeling of his great need and a solemn sense of the great realities of the eternal world, he wrote this precious hymn—wrote it as the spontaneous expression of his experience, with no design of publication, with no design to say fine things or win the popularis aura; and when he had written the lines down he was so moved by the subject that he covered his face with his hands, and his heart, filled with emotion, found relief in many tears. These four verses are still to be seen in the old morocco-covered memorandum book as they were written more than sixty years ago. There in that little book they lay hidden for years. No eye saw them till they were shown to Dr. Mason, who had been inquiring for a contribution from him in a Boston street car. That was a memorable time in the city. A wave of deep religious feeling was sweeping over the country, and a new demand had risen for hymns. Dr. Mason, who was preparing a collection, took a copy of the verses and prepared a tune—Olivet—to suit the words—the tune to which it is still sung in every clime by tens of thousands.

When Dr. Ray Palmer was asked for the origin of this hymn—his first and best—he replied: "It was written because it was born in my heart and demanded expression. I simply gave form to what I felt by writing with little effort those verses, I wrote them with tender feeling and ended the last lines with tears." "You may live many years, Mr. Palmer," said Dr. Mason, on meeting the author a few days afterwards, "and do many good things, but I think you will be best known to posterity as the author of this hymn." That prediction is verified. In 1840, the hymn was introduced into England, and since that time it has been received with great favour, and translated into over twenty languages, among which are the Arabic, Marathi, and the Syriac. Mrs. Layyath, Baraket, a native Syrian woman, educated in the mission schools of Beirut, and sent out as a teacher to Egypt, made large use of this hymn in her work. She and her husband, driven out in 1882 by the insurrection of Arabi Pasha came to the United States and soon found friends. While in this country, Mr. Duffield states that she addressed some large audiences to whom her earnestness and broken piquant English, proved unusually attractive. Among other incidents, she told how she had seen her whole family Maronites of Mount Lebanon—among whom

* Since writing the above, we have heard of Dr. Palmer's death. He died 29th November, 1887, Newark, N. J., United States. He had had two strokes of paralysis under the effects of which he gradually sank till the close—his last audible words were:

Jesus, these eyes have never seen
Thy glorious form divine,
The veil of flesh hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.

was her mother, aged seventy-two, converted. In this case it was the child that was the teacher, and this hymn was the chief lesson. She told how the two would often sit together on the roof of the house, after the manner of the orientals, to repeat it to one another in the Arabic; and when the news came back to Syria that this woman was safe in the United States, the aged mother could send her no better proof of her abiding faith than that contained in the words of this hymn.

Many interesting incidents in which this hymn has figured have been related. One of the most affecting is an incident of the late war in the United States. In one of the tents eight Christian young men were gathered. They knew well that the coming dawn would be the signal for a sanguinary conflict, from which they could not all hope to escape. In that hour they came together for prayer. Before they parted they spoke freely of the improbability of their surviving the morrow, and one of the number suggested that they should draw up a paper expressing the feelings with which they went to stand face to face with death, and all sign it, and that the same should be left as a testimony to the friends of such of them as might fall. The suggestion was unanimously adopted, and after consultation it was decided that a copy of "My faith looks up to Thee, etc.," should be written out and subscribed by all present, so that father, mother and friends should know in what spirit they had laid down their lives. They did not all meet again, but one of the survivors saw the arrangement carried out.

A multitude of instances are also on record of souls seeking the light, who have found it in the same hymn, and of Christians in circumstances of trial and heart-breaking sorrow who have gained strength by its perusal.

Dr. Palmer has had the happiness of seeing his hymn owned and honoured of God to a wonderful extent—an extent of which he had no thought on that day when sitting in his chamber he penned the lines with many tears. It is not given to every earnest worker to see the seed that he sows ripen so fast. Many a one at the close of a long life can see nothing but leaves. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons which God has put in his own power. Still every true worker will have a reaping time—a glorious reward. And it is good for us to look away from ourselves and to cease from man, hearing only the words of the Master, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

YOU MUST GIVE ACCOUNT.

It is not by depreciating others that we increase in value, except perhaps in our own eyes. Nor is it by holding up the sins of others that we escape the judgment of God against our own. Every man will have to give an account of himself—not of his neighbour—to God. Are you reader, prepared for this? Are you conscious of what it will be to be summoned before that Judge who will bring before you every detail of your life, even the most secret? No need of witness, no pleading, no place to hide from that Light that will manifest every work of darkness, and then execute upon it speedy judgment.

Would that men ceased to be fools and considered their latter end!

But if one indeed ceases to be a fool—if indeed he does, with an honest heart, consider his latter end, what is the inevitable conclusion he comes to? At first, perhaps, feeling uncomfortable, he begins to "try and do better." Does this settle his trouble? It only increases it, because God is with him, and shines on him, and is letting him prove by experience what it is to be a guilty, lost sinner in His sight. The sense of sin becomes intolerable, the heart cries out, "Lord have mercy on me!"

Here deliverance comes, for God laid our iniquities on Christ, and visited them with judgment on Him at the cross that all who repent and believe on Him might be saved. The soul receives this blessed news, and the burden rolls off. I have taken my place as a lost sinner, given Christ His place as my Saviour, and in God my Judge I have found my Father. No wonder that mighty preacher of the Gospel exclaimed, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," Romans i. 16.