

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

NOTES ON THE GREAT POPULAR HYMN,

JERUSALEM MY HAPPY HOME.

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

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me;
When shall my labours have an end
In joy, and peace, and Thee?

When shall these eyes Thy heaven-built walls
And pearly gates behold?
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,
And streets of shining gold?

Oh when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end?

There happier bowers than Eden's bloom,
Nor sin nor sorrow know;
Blest seats I through rude and stormy scenes
I onward press to you.

Why should I shrink from pain and woe,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.

Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there
Around my Saviour stand;
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.

Jerusalem, my happy home!
My soul still pants for thee;
Then shall my labours have an end,
When I thy joys shall see.

The following is an admirable translation of the above by the Rev. Silas T. Rand, D.D., Hantsport, N. S.:

Jerusalem, O gloriosa domus mi,
O nomen semper mi carissimum,
O quando sint labores finiti,
In te, in pacem, et in gaudium.

O quando videbunt hi oculi,
Hæc portas gemmeas—tua moenia?
Et salutatem propugnaculi,
Et vias—aurea tua opera?

Urbs mei Dei, quando surgero
Cælestia tua in propatula?
Quò non sejungit congregatio,
Et sunt æterna sua Sabbata.

Umbracula, O vos faustissima,
Quò neque morietur sint, nec peccata,
Ad vc., O sedes felicissima,
Contendo, et eluctor strenue.

Cur nos mæiores, pænas formidem?
Vel dissolutionem horrerem?
Chanaanem cœlestem videam,
Æternam diem, felicissimam.

Apostoli, prophete, martyres,
Hic circum thronum Jesu Christi stent,
Et cito amici mi fideles,
Conjuncti nobis, illic congregent.

Jerusalem, O gloriosa domus mi,
Pro te nunc sitit mea anima;
Labores omnes tum sint finiti,
Quum tua videam sacra gaudia.

The original of this very popular hymn is obscure. It appears that one signing himself "F. B. P."—alias Francis Baker, priest, had for some offence been imprisoned in the town nearly three hundred years ago, and that he, whiling away the weary hours in his cell, prepared a MS. containing twenty-six verses—one hundred and four lines—beginning thus:

Hierusalem, my happy home!
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end,
Thy joyes when shall I see?

O happie harbour of the saints!
O sweete and pleasant soyle,
In thee noe sorrows may be found,
Noe griefs, noe care, noe toyle.

It is prefaced in these terms. A song by "F. B. P." to the tune of Diana. This MS. some years ago found its way to the British Museum, and Dr. Horatius Bonar, finding it there, and attracted by the splendour of its imagery and real excellence, copied it *verbatim et literatim*, and published it in 1852. In a monogram on the hymn he states that he found it in a MS. volume of religious songs without date, but apparently written in the early part of the seventeenth century, and that in this MS. volume of reli-

gious songs he found this, which is now known to be a copy of a portion of a longer hymn on the same subject by another hand.

Dr. Hatfield has shown on very fair grounds that this paper signed "F. B. P." is not an original—that the original is a long hymn of thirty-one double stanzas, consisting of two hundred and forty-eight lines; whereas that of "F. B. P.'s" contains only twenty-six verses, consisting of one hundred and four lines,—that there are many variations and transpositions,—that upon the whole there is reason to believe that "F. B. P." simply reproduced from memory such portions of the original as had cleaved to it, and had committed them to writing, and that this writing ultimately found its way to the MS. department of the British Museum, where, after the lapse of a couple of centuries, Dr. Horatius Bonar excavated it, and published it just as he had found it with the monogram referred to in 1851.

How, then, about the original? Who was the author? Can any satisfactory account be given of him and his claims? The answer is that Wodrow, the distinguished historian of the Church of Scotland, makes the author to be the Rev. David Dickson, D.D.,—a divine that filled a large space in the public eye from 1583—1662. He was the only child of John Dickson, a pious and wealthy merchant of Glasgow. He received a thorough education in the university of his native city, and soon rose to distinction. At the early age of twenty-seven he was appointed Regent or Professor of Philosophy in the same university, devoting himself, with his associates, Boyd and Blair, to the revival of godliness among the undergraduates. After some years we find him occupying the still higher office of Professor of Divinity in the same university, and in 1638 he was chosen to fill the highest seat in the gift of the Church—that of Moderator of the General Assembly. He took an active part in public affairs during the Commonwealth, and at the Restoration lost his professorship by refusing to take the oath of supremacy. It appears from Wodrow, the historian, that he ranked very high—ranked, indeed, among the ablest and most influential ministers of his day, and yet so modest that he never made use of his title D.D. He was, moreover, very conscientious, so much so that he suffered himself to be deposed from the ministry—parish of Irvine—the birthplace of James Montgomery, one hundred and fifty years afterwards—rather than comply with the obnoxious "Articles of Perth." He was, however, soon restored to his parish, where he laboured with great success till 1641, when he was appointed Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow.

But may not this Rev. David Dickson, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, be the copyist and plagiarist? "F. B. P." and he were evidently cotemporaries. "F. B. P." was a prisoner in the Tower, probably died in the Tower, and what more easy than to perpetrate the literary theft? Is it not possible that he took this MS., which found its way into the British Museum and is still lying in the British Museum, and made use of it, extending and amplifying his one hundred and four lines into two hundred and forty-eight? Who was there to stand up in defence of the obscure—the unknown "F. B. P." lying in prison or in his grave? That is the position which Dr. J. M. Neale and others have taken, but it is not a position which is at all tenable. The MS. which "F. B. P." left behind him shows, from internal evidence, that it was written about 1616 or 1617, and it is clear from Wodrow, the historian of the Church of Scotland, whose accuracy in matters of detail has never been questioned, that David Dickson by this time had risen to great eminence as a scholar—as a Christian labouring for the conversion of souls, and as an author both in poetry and prose. He was then,—the date or supposed date of the MS., 1617 (according to King, Anglican Hymns),—about thirty-four years of age, and had been for seven years Professor of Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, winning for himself the fairest name. And if he was guilty of this literary theft, "impudently appropriating to himself what belonged to another," he must have done it after this time—after the MS. of "F. B. P." made its way to the British Museum, or at least after "F. B. P." had any power over it, i.e., that David Dickson, so modest as to refuse to use his title of D.D.—so conscientious that he suffered himself to be deposed from the ministry rather than act contrary to

his convictions, was guilty of doing the meanest—the dirtiest deed of his time. Is such a supposition tenable? Does it consist with the dignity, the conscientiousness, the high character of one of the greatest men of his day? The testimony of Wodrow is this (having enumerated some of Dickson's works): "Besides these he wrote . . . some short poems on pious and serious subjects which, I am told, have been very useful when printed and spread among country people and servants, such as, 'O Mother, Dear Jerusalem!' and one somewhat larger, 8 vo., 1649, entitled 'Christian Love,' to be sung with the common tune of the Psalms." In a marginal note, the Rev. W. K. Tweedie, editor of the "Wodrow Publications," further says: "There is, also, a poem ascribed to Dickson, entitled, 'Honey Drops or Crystal Streams,' and sometimes printed along with the others."

Still there is considerable obscurity about the authorship of this poem of thirty-one double stanzas consisting of 248 lines. Dickson, if he did write it, did not put his name to it, but this is not unlike the man. One thing is clear, the poem belongs to his day and it would appear, took kindly to the version of "F. B. P." when it was published, all the more probably, from the fact that the original was too long—that a shorter hymn presenting the same truths was better adapted to the purpose he had in view. The latest information, Duffield tells us, on the subject comes from the Rev. James King's "Anglican Hymnology." He makes out that Dickson expurgated this hymn of "F. B. P." and offered his own in "O mother, dear Jerusalem." Thirty years later the Rev. William Burkitt, vicar of Dedham, reprinted "F. B. P.'s" pieces with changes of his own; and finally it has come down to us in the form here presented.

Still, though the present form of the hymn may be the more acceptable, it was under the old form, "O mother, dear Jerusalem!" that it made its way to the popular heart and became such a favourite with both young and old. Many a lonely cell, many a dark home, many a pale face has been lighted up by its revelations. Snatches of it used to be heard among the hills and glens of Scotland—in the fishing boats along the coast—among the harvesters in the barn after the labours of the day—from the children on the Sabbath evenings after their questionings were over for with the children this hymn has always been a favourite, and in many a child's heart the hymn lived long after he had left the parental roof and blossomed in other scenes and in other circumstances, where it might be thought everything was given to salt—given up to the curse of perpetual barrenness. A young Scotch lad who was on his deathbed at New Orleans, says Dr. Belcher, was visited by a Presbyterian minister, but the dying man wanted no minister to speak to him. He shut himself up against all the efforts of the good man to reach his heart. Somewhat discouraged the minister turned away, and scarcely knowing why,—without anything like design or aim, but guided by that good Spirit that leads into, all truth,—he began to sing:

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name ever dear to me.

That was enough! a tender cord had been touched a flood of early recollections burst in upon his soul! days of innocence when he, a free and happy child, went out and in, with no stain upon his name and no cloud upon his heart. With bursting tears he said to the minister: "My dear mother used to sing to me that hymn." He was now open to the truth, open to the consolation of the Gospel. God gave the penitent peace, the blessed peace that passeth all understanding, and now both mother and son are rejoicing in the eternal light, delighting themselves in the glories of the New Jerusalem concerning which we read: "And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," etc.

We must not close our comments on this hymn without noting some features of its great excellence: its Scriptural character, its simplicity and freshness, its easy graceful rhythm. The fact that it and its predecessors have for over two hundred years stood the test of every form of criticism and held their high place in spite of their quaintness and great length and almost juvenile simplicity, together with the fact that so many gifted pens have been employed in condensing, changing, and embellishing the original thirty