

# A Hymn Is Born

BY CLINT SONNER

## Home Of The Soul

A father reads a story to his son

"Now I saw in my dream that these two men went in at the gate; and lo, as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had faces that shone like gold. The streets also were paved with gold, and in their midst many angels wished myself among them." So read a young boy, Philip Phillips, to his small son.

"I wished myself among them," Phillips mused. He read the lines again. In that paragraph of John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" lay the theme for a hymn. Phillips made no claim to being a poet, so he copied the lines and sent them to Postess Ellen Huntington Gates, in New York, with the suggestion she write some verses he might set to music.

Born on a farm in Chautauque County, New York, in 1834, Philip Phillips began singing in public when he was 3 years old. At 16 he led a church choir. At 19 he taught music. At 21 he was publishing his own songs, going from house to house singing and selling his wares. When the Gospel Song made its debut, during the 1850s, Phillips took his melodion to New York City and sang the gospel on street corners to any who would listen.

MORE THAN to any other individual, the Gospel Song owes its early popularity to Philip Phillips. Before he was 40, "The Singing Pilgrim" as he became known—literally sang his way around the world. He introduced the Gospel Song and sold his song books all over America, Europe, Australia and Asia and blazed the way for such greats as Philip Bliss and Ira Sankey.

As the "Singing Pilgrim," Phillips gave 4000 "song services" for charity alone and filled 100 engagements for the London Sunday School Convention. On Feb. 23, 1855, he sang Ellen Gates' "Your Mission" in the U. S. Senate chamber. Abraham Lincoln was so overcome he requested Phillips to sing the hymn again. And, of his thousands of engagements, it is said that he never missed one.

When Philip Phillips received the poem from Mrs. Gates, he took his son back on his knee and read again that part of Bunyan's classic where Christian and Hopeful enter the city of gold. The poetess had caught the sentiment exactly and, "with pencil in hand," Phillips turned to his organ and set the words to music.

THUS, IN 1855, was born one of the most widely used hymns of hope ever written. One minister alone states having used it at no less than 129 funerals services. And the grief-stricken Phillips himself wrote, "It was sung at the funeral of my own dear boy, who had sat on my knee when I wrote the tune."

On June 25, 1885, Ira Sankey went from his home in Brooklyn to Delaware, Ohio, to sing "Home of the Soul" as tribute to "The Singing Pilgrim," for, on that date, Philip Phillips went to "that beautiful land" where loved ones "meet one another again."

I will sing you a song of that beautiful land,  
The far-away home of the soul,  
Whose no storms ever beat on the glittering strand,  
While the years of eternity roll.

Oh, that home of the soul in my visions and dreams  
Its hazy, Jasper walls I can see;  
Till I fancy but thin the veil intervenes  
Between the fair city and me.

That unchangeable home is for you and for me,  
Where Jesus of Nazareth stands;  
The King of all kingdoms forever is He,  
And He holdeth our crowns in His hands.

Oh, how sweet it will be in that beautiful land,  
So free from all sorrow and pain,  
With songs on our lips and with harps in our hands,  
To meet one another again.

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## The Christian Viewpoint

Prepared By Department of Bible  
PRESBYTERIAN JUNIOR COLLEGE  
Kenansville, N. C.

"Fast Falls The Eventide" is the title of a painting by B. W. Leader, R. A., which is owned by the city of Liverpool, England. A reproduction hangs in the college reception room. It is an English sunset scene giving the impression of quietness and peace. As I looked at it this morning I was thinking of the great hymn written in 1847 by Henry F. Lyte:—"Fast falls the eventide; The darkness depends; Lord, with me abide!"

"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;— Changes and decay in all around I see;— O Thou who changest not abide with me!"

In the whirl and bustle of our atomic age, enmeshed in our many tasks and duties, we are sometimes over-wrought by the pressure of present events. Our souls need something steady to stay us up. O, Thou who changest not abide with me!"

Hold Thou Thy cross before my busy eyes

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Shine through the smog, and point me to the skies,  
From raucous din and static, set me free:

Let Thy still whisper, Lord, abide with me (adapted)

As we face 1954, "Blessed is the man - (Whose) heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." (Psalms 112: 1, 7 A.V.)

Let Thy still whisper, Lord, abide with me (adapted)

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## PASTOR'S COLUMN

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FACES

It is interesting to look at the faces of people and to note the expressions the faces reveal. Expressions of guilt, sorrow, and happiness are to be found on our faces. Shakespeare in "Much Ado about Nothing" says "You have such a febrish face, so full of frost, of storm of cloudiness." Someone has rightly said, "The face you wear at twenty is the face that God gave you, but the face you wear at forty is the face you gave yourself." Our faces are molded by our thoughts, our emotions, and our experiences. The great thoughts that molded the life of Jesus were, first, God the Father of each individual; and second, goodness must be the inner quality of one's life. The experience of Jesus left their mark upon his face.

I will never forget the remarks made by Dr. Clovis Chappel at a preaching mission in Norfolk, Va., when he said, "I sometimes wonder which gives the greatest grief to the

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## -Go To Church Sunday-

### The Kingdom Within

BY REV. C. HERMAN TRUEBLOOD

TEXT: "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:21.

The word, "Kingdom," appears over and over again in the New Testament. The question arises, what is the Kingdom of God, and where is this Kingdom? First of all we must not confuse the Kingdom of God with earthly Kingdoms. At the trial of Jesus, Pilate tried to engage Jesus in an argument about His Kingdom; Jesus answered emphatically, "My kingdom is not of this world." John 18:33-36.

The Kingdom of God is spiritual; it is the rule of God in the hearts of men. This rule, however, calls for certain conditions to be met, and a definite program to be enacted. The program of God's kingdom requires that harmful misconceptions be avoided, and that proper emphasis be placed upon the vital things of the spirit. God is a God of "law and order," and in His Holy Word He has indicated, and prescribed, certain spiritual laws that are binding upon every one who counts himself a child of God. Let us, therefore, pause and carefully consider God's threefold program for the operation of His kingdom, and for his government of His people:

1. THE AVOIDANCE OF HARMFUL MISCONCEPTIONS. Study the 14th and 15th chapters of Romans, and distinguish between the harmful and helpful things concerning God's kingdom. (1) "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." Rom. 14:17 Food fastidies were in the world long before those of the present day. Rom. 14:1-4, 13-21. (2) There is nothing vitally important about observing certain days, unless by so doing the Lord is truly honored. Rom. 14:5-6. (3) No one is permitted to place a stumbling block in his brother's pathway - even if one himself is unharmed by so doing. Rom. 14:14-15. And no one has the right to set his brother at naught - even when that brother is in error. Rom. 14:3-4, 10-11.
2. THE ADHERANCE TO MAJOR THINGS IN GOD'S KINGDOM. Righteousness, Peace, Joy in the Holy Spirit. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Rom. 14:17-19.
3. THE OBSERVANCE OF THE KINGDOM'S SPIRITUAL LAWS. (1) CHRISTIAN TOLERANCE toward those weak in the faith. Rom. 14:1 (2) PATIENCE with those who differ with us in matters of diet and observance of certain days. Rom. 14:1-6. (3) THE ABANDONMENT of harsh criticism and un-Christian fault-finding. Rom. 14:10-11. (4) SEEK THE PLEASURE of others, and not self alone. Rom. 15:2. (5) STRIVE FOR PEACE, and for the edification of all members of the church. Rom. 14:19. (6) THE STRONG should use their strength to strengthen the weak. (7) UNITELY glorifying God is the guiding motive in the Kingdom-Building work of God. The Kingdom of God is internal - "The kingdom of God is within you." Outward expressions issue from inwards conditions.

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pressions on our faces that we have a joy and a happiness which is eternal because we know the Lord.

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### THE BIBLE SPEAKS

DR. KENNETH FOREMAN

Scriptures: John 2, 11  
Prophetic Reading: II Corinthians 4:17-21

### The New Birth

Lesson for January 17, 1954

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CARLTON'S  
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MOUNT OLIVE CIRCUIT  
Paul R. Mannes  
Bethel—Fourth Sunday morning and Second Sunday night  
Calypto—Second Sunday morning and Fourth Sunday night  
Rone's Chapel—Second and Fourth Sundays at 10:00 a. m.

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D. C. Boone, Minister—Tel. 2756  
Woodland—First Sunday Morning and Third Sunday night  
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### THE BIBLE SPEAKS

DR. KENNETH FOREMAN

Scriptures: John 2, 11  
Prophetic Reading: II Corinthians 4:17-21

### The New Birth

Lesson for January 17, 1954

There are many doctrines which unite all Christian churches. The doctrine of the New Birth is one of these. Some churches talk about it all the time. Some do not, but that does not mean they do not believe in it. If you are going to put churches on a black-list because they do not keep talking about the New Birth, you will have to rule out a good many writers in the Bible, because it is seldom mentioned on the pages of Scripture. However, the fact back of the words is there.

### Not a Command

There is a common misunderstanding about the New Birth which is based on a mis-reading of the English translation of John 3:7. "You must be born anew." You can hear sermons on this text, preached as if this were a command, an imperative. Go and be born again! As the big reason for the original plainly shows, Dr. Foreman Jesus did not mean this as a command. He was stating it as a necessity. Nothing can be commanded which cannot be willed; and no man can decide to be, or will to be, born again. It is an act of God, not of man. The word "must" in John 3:7 is like the word "must" when you tell a gardener, "In order to raise tomatoes you must have a certain amount of rainfall during the spring." It is like the word "must" used by an art teacher saying to a pupil, "If you want to be an artist, first of all you must have artistic talent." A gardener cannot go out and make it rain. A young man cannot make up his mind to have talent. Still, rain is necessary for tomatoes, and talent is necessary for art. In the same way, although the New Birth is necessary to the Christian life, no one can say, "I have decided to be born again," for

this is not something we can do ourselves.

### Not a New Leaf

Again, the New Birth is not simply a new start, a new leaf, a new stage in life. Every moment is a fresh start, every day turns a new leaf, every week marks a new stage in life. But no matter how many times he weighs in, no matter how many changes come as the child grows to boyhood and manhood, that child is born only once. Life has many new leaves, but only one new birth. The New Birth is not even conversion. In conversion the Christian does something; in the New Birth something happens to him. One is perfectly conscious of conversion, in fact it is not possible to be converted unconsciously. But the New Birth is not anything visible, observable at all, it is not even conscious. Let us put it as simply as possible. Take the case of some bad person who is converted. If you say to that person before his conversion, "Be good" (or anything that means that), he will not be good. The big reason why not, is that he does not want to. If you were to say, "Don't you even want to be good?" he might well reply, "No I don't, and what's more, I don't even want to want to." But one day or night, perhaps suddenly, perhaps slowly, the man realizes that for the first time he does want to be good. Perhaps he does not go so far at first. All he could say is that he wishes he did want to be good. If that is the truth about him, then he is already born again.

### God's New Life

Without this first desire, faint though it may be, no progress can be made. Turning over new leaves in the wrong book never gets you anywhere. God has to put the right book into your hands. What the New Birth means, is God enabling you to desire what is truly good; in more personal language, it is the touch of the Holy Spirit on your dead and indifferent spirit, waking you so as to desire Him. It is an act of God, not of man. It is not something God does about man, but in man. The Old Testament calls it exchanging a heart of stone for a heart of flesh. The New Testament sometimes calls it the "New Birth," sometimes "passing from death to life," sometimes regeneration, which means the same thing. The New Birth cannot be seen, because it is the beginning of life. You cannot see life in the maple trees now, but you will know it is there, one spring day, because you will see the maple buds. So it is in the soul's spring-time.

(Based on outlines copyrighted by the Board of Christian Education of the General Council of the Churches of the United States and prepared by Committee on Bible Studies.)