

A Hymn Is Born

BY CLINT BONNER

We're Marching to Zion

A boy raises the ire of his father

Deacon Enoch Watts picked up a stick. Every time he had told his scrawny little son to do something the boy had replied with a rhyme. Every time he asked Isaac a question, the boy came back with an answer all rhymed out.

That had been going on ever since the dwarf-like ugly youth wrote a 14-line poem when he was 7 years old. Now Isaac was in his teens and the Deacon had had enough. He was going to break the boy of rhyming his every day conversation or flail the daylight out of him.

Watts Sr advanced menacingly with his stick. Isaac raised his arm and shrugged away. The Deacon raised the stick, Isaac cried out, "O father do some pity take, and I will no more verses make!" History does not record what happened next. But whatever happened, Isaac Watts was still alive on a Sunday in 1692 when he attended a Non-Conformist Church in Southampton with his father. He was 18 then. Everybody sang the Psalms that Sunday... everybody, that is, except Isaac Watts. "Why didn't you sing the Psalms?" the old man demanded after the church service. "Because they don't rhyme, that's why," the rebellious youth replied.

Then write something that does rhyme if you think you're smarter than King David," the staid old deacon bellowed. Isaac Watts accepted the challenge. That afternoon he wrote:

"Behold the glories of the Lamb
Amidst his Father's throng;
Prepare new honors for his name,
And songs before unknown."
During the week he finished his first hymn. The following Sunday he gave it to the church clerk and the clerk read it line by line, while the congregation sang after him. Isaac Watts had to bring in a rhymed-out song every Sunday for two years.

In 1707 Watts collected his "Hymns and Spiritual Songs" into a book titled, "Hymns and Spiritual Songs." Other editions followed. In all, he wrote 650 hymns... mostly paraphrases of the Psalms. The die was cast. And Isaac Watts had gone down in history as "The Father of the English Hymn."

Thus we sing "Hymns of human composure" today. But we might still be singing the Psalms had not a scrawny little five-foot youth raised the ire of his father 2½ centuries ago. This is one of Watts' first hymns.

Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known,
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And thus surround the throne.

Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God;
But children of the heavenly King,
May speak their joys abroad.

The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets

Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.

Then let our songs abound,
And every year be dry,
We're marching thro' Immanuel's ground,
To fuller works on high.

(Chorus)
We're marching to Zion,
Beautiful, beautiful Zion,
We're marching onward to Zion,
The beautiful city of God.



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From The Book "A HYMN IS BORN" Copyright 1952

The Christian Viewpoint

Prepared by Department of Bible
PRESBYTERIAN JUNIOR COLLEGE
Maxton, N. C.

A farmer was telling me of the increase of mechanization. He once had some forty mules. Now he has only two horses on the place. Tractors do more quickly the work once done by horses. Tractors enabled fewer farmers to produce more food in America during the war.

The principle involved is an old one. Many centuries ago the wise man said, "Where there are no

decisions we make, Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." Someone has said, "A Christian is a mind, through which Christ loves, a voice through which Christ speaks, a hand through which Christ helps. The Apostle Paul gives this definition of the word Christian, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I know life in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.'

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

Carlton F. Hirsch
Secularism or Christianity
Who sets the standards in American life - Secularism or Christianity? After careful consideration we would have to agree Secularism sets the standards in America. "Secularism is the creed that holds that there is nothing for man but this world and this age, there is no God above us, no life beyond, no authority except our own desires, no good except material things." The people who believe in secularism measure success in terms of money and believe wealth as the highest good in life. These people are only interested in themselves and live for individual advantage. Christianity means Jesus Christ. Life is a gift from God. What we become in life depends upon the

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Let's Do Household Jobs The Safe Way

You don't really link danger with the many jobs you do around the house each day, but actually many of them may hide a risk that is very real, though invisible.

According to State College home management specialist Mamie Whisnant, this is a good point to bear in mind. Take washing clothes, for example. You don't ordinarily associate tragedy with this very common practice. Of course, if you work with the older wringer type machine, there's always the danger of catching your clothing, your hair, or little Susie's fingers.

But there is another hazard associated with washing clothes that strikes with even more tragic results. According to U. S. Department of Agriculture specialists, there is the possibility of being shocked if your electric appliances used with water or in damp places are not properly grounded. Without this very necessary protection, a stray current seeking the easiest way to the ground, may run through your

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International Union
for Christian Evangelism
BY DR. KENNETH J. FOREMAN

Scripture: John 17.
Devotional Reading: 1 Timothy 2: 1-8a.

Pray for Others

Lesson for April 4, 1954

WHAT Christ prayed for, we have a right to pray for.

It is not to say that we can, so to speak, simply quote his prayers after him and sign our name in place of his. He prayed for objects for which we need not now pray, as when he prayed for Simon Peter. But the kind of thing for which he prayed is the kind of thing for which his followers can boldly pray. For no one has ever known the mind of God so well as Jesus. To pray against the mind of God is to pray in vain; to pray with God's mind is to pray with success. One point is clear from all Jesus' prayers, but especially from the great prayer in John 17; it is that the blessing of God rests on sincere prayer for others.

-Go To Church Sunday-

The Genuine Article

BY REV. C. HERMAN TRUEBLOOD

TEXT: "Sirs, we would see Jesus." John 12:21
The soul of man seeks for something to satisfy its deepest longings.

This fact is strikingly set forth in the short text at the head of this little message. The teachings and miracles of Jesus had stirred up a sensation throughout the country; all sorts of opinions and arguments were being expressed. Some disputed the power and authority of Jesus, some believed upon Him, while others not yet settled in their convictions concerning Jesus, determined to go directly to Jesus - "Sirs, we would see Jesus" - in order to satisfy the hunger of their souls for the "True Bread of Life."

These searchers for Christ had heard a great deal about Christ. Many theories, and ideas concerning the Messias had been advanced. But these Greeks (referred to in the text) were seeking first-hand knowledge of Jesus. They were not satisfied with second-hand reports, or hear-say information, passed up and down and round-about. They wanted to SEE JESUS for themselves. Spiritually, they sought "The Genuine Article."

Their search was but the echo of Job, who, long years before, had cried from the depths of a longing soul: "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" This cry of man for a God supreme is one of the distinguishing characteristics of man - it distinguishes him from the dumb brute animals of the forest - "For God hath set eternity in the heart of man."

I. CHRISTIANITY IS A RELIGION OF INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE. We cannot be Christians by proxy. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again," He meant that religion was a personal, individual matter. (1). Christianity is based upon great historical facts, such as the Virgin birth, sinless life, sacrificial death, and conquering resurrection of Jesus. (2). Institutional - the historical facts were embodied in a great monumental institution, the church. (3). Symbolical and Doctrinal - through doctrines and symbols, the church has been teaching the three great fundamentals of Christianity, namely, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. But it was not the purpose of Christ that His religion should be merely Historical, or Doctrinal, or Formal, or Institutional, or Symbolical, but, rather, that it should become EXPERIMENTAL.

II. INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCE IS THE TEST OF CHRISTIANITY. In other words, the one primary essential to being a Christian, is to know Christ through a real heart experience. Such is what blind Bartemaeus had, when he exclaimed: "One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see." The sincere soul, the seeker after true religion, with Paul, will aspire to "KNOW HIM, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." Phil. 3:10

III. KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST HINGES UPON CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. If Christianity is an individual experience, and if our experience is the final test of Christianity, then it is supremely important that our practice of religion measure to our profession - for the only way the world can "See Jesus," is through those who profess to "Know Him."

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They Should Know It

Let us hope it is not impertinent to pass on a few thoughts suggested by this prayer of Christ, especially with regard to praying for other people. Intercessory prayer in the true sense is always unselfish, though one may literally pray for other persons with a selfish motive. For instance, if a woman whose husband is a candidate for office prays for his election, that is praying for some one else, right enough; but maybe she is saying one word for him and two for herself. So an ambitious mother might pray that her child would make good in Hollywood. (—and bring home the bacon.) This is not intercessory prayer in the Christian sense. Christ's prayer for others shows that he deeply and completely desired their highest good. But he does not offer this prayer in silence and solitude. He prays in their hearing, they knew they were on his heart. We cannot always pray in the presence of those for whom we pray; but it does them great good to know we are carrying them on our hearts before God. No service of friend or loved one is more cherished than the simple yet sublime service of intercessory prayer.

It Should Be for the Best

Prayer for others should be for the best—and this in two senses. It should be in line with God's best purposes, and it should be for the best things. When Christ prayed in Gethsemane that the cup might pass from him, the prayer was not granted, because what God willed would not be possible, or would not have been possible, if Christ had not been willing to drink that bitter cup to the dregs. God will not grant requests that upset his plans, no matter how earnest and apparently right the requests may be. But prayer for others ought to be for the best things. Not that we should not pray for lesser things, it surely is not wrong to pray that mother may find her wedding ring that got lost in the laundry, or that Uncle Harry may get over his cold. But surely as we grow more mature in the Christian life we can begin to appreciate the kind of prayer that Christ offered for his friends. He did not pray there at the Last Supper for their health, long life or "prosperity." He prayed for their inner spirits, he prayed for their unity of heart, for their vision of God. How often we pray for something to happen to our loved ones, how seldom do we pray for them! When a child lay dying of rabies, hundreds of prayers went up for his recovery. These were not granted. But other prayers were offered for his parents' faith; and these were granted.

Nothing You Ask—?

"Nothing you ask will be denied," a popular hymn says. But the Bible does not promise that. Jesus never promised it. What is promised, and what is true, is that the more our prayers harmonize with the will of the God of Love, the more surely they will find answer. Now we often pray for our friends, as we do for ourselves, that God will help them do what they want to do, or get what they want to have, or get rid of what depresses or pains them. Give them what they want is our cry. (Many of us are too selfish even to get that far in praying for others.) But there is no guarantee that God will give all men, or any man, exactly what he wants. This poor world would be in a much worse mess than it is, if God simply acted at everybody's dictation. The best we can ask for those we love is that they may learn to desire what God himself desires.