

HYMNS OF THE HIGHER LIFE

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Hymns of the Higher Life by Bradford Kinney Peirce

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BRADFORD KINNEY PEIRCE

**HYMNS OF THE
HIGHER LIFE**

H Y M N S

or

THE HIGHER LIFE

ed. by
Bradford Kinney Pierce.



Et tenet et tenetur

TROY, N.Y.
NIMS AND KNIGHT
1887

INTRODUCTION.

PERHAPS in nothing is the substantial unity of the Christian Church, with all her varying modes of worship and symbols of belief, more significantly seen than in her "hymns and spiritual songs." The theology of the intellect may be discordant; but the theology of the heart is harmonious. Hymns are the expressions of religious emotions, inspired by one eternal Spirit, in the contemplation of one divine Saviour, or in adoration of one heavenly Father. In the Psalms, saints of all ages, of all conditions in life, in all the varied experiences of joy and sorrow, find a common and ample utterance. Prayer and praise, desire and gratification, want and fulness, as the personal consciousness of individual men, never fail to find an adequate language for their expression in the inspired strains of the sweet singers of Israel.

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In like manner, in the "Hymns of the Ages,"—the rich inheritance which the consecrated psalmists in our Christian Israel have bestowed upon the Church,—although the singers themselves differed widely in the circumstances under which they sung, in their views of church order and government, and even in their utterances of the doctrines of their common gospel, still their collected psalmody forms but one mighty organ of a celestial tone. Every separate singer opens a different "stop" in the sublime instrument; but all unite in a divine harmony, forming together a glorious diapason, resounding down the ages.

Mr. Toplady and Mr. Wesley were widely separated from each other in their "systems" of grace; but the former expressed the experimental effect of his view as he sang, —

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee;"

and Mr. Wesley poured forth from his lyre, in the fulness of his heart, his confession of faith, in the memorable words, —

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly;"

and these two precious hymns, as any one can see and *feel* in their reading, are *one*.

Our hymn-books have been greatly enriched in later years, and have become the treasure-houses of the abundant offerings which gifted hearts have placed upon Christ's altar. Many sweet hymns have been shortened to meet the requisitions of the "service of song;" and many other hymns, old and new, while full of melody and rich in doctrine, are not adapted to the public devotions of the sanctuary. But Christian readers are not willing to permit any of these heavenly chords to cease their vibration. They have another office to perform. They meet a want of pious hearts, becoming the choice companions of hours of meditation and prayer. Volumes containing these unabridged hymns are multiplying. They are, however, generally limited in their subjects. Very naturally, hymns of patience, consolation, and of heaven, form the staple of these compilations.

The present volume is devoted to the expression of religious desires and experiences in seeking for the highest form of the divine life upon earth, and of the consequent activities and charities to which a holy heart, pervaded with the spirit of Christ, will prompt the devout believer.

It has been difficult to make a selection from the abundant materials near at hand. The writer has sought to secure as wide a confession as possible of the glorious faith of true believers in their one divine Lord.

He has selected hymns both new and old, most of them worthy of their place for their lyrical excellence, and all of them for the truths which they embody. He has desired, while seeking to preserve the unity of the work, to present as large a variety as possible in the measure and style of these "spiritual songs."

He trusts the pleasure and profit which has attended their selection will be enjoyed by the readers of these pages; and that they will find in them an aid to meet the inspired exhortation, to teach and admonish "one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

B. K. P

RIVERSIDE PARSONAGE, RANDALL'S ISLAND.

Thus, while I drop a tear or two
On the wild herd, a nobler few
Dare to stray upward, and pursue
 The unbeaten way to God.
They soar beyond my laboring sight,
And leave their loads of mortal care,
 But not their love, below :
On heaven, their home, they fix their eyes,
 The temple of their God ;
With morning incense up they rise
Sublime, and through the lower skies
 Spread the perfumes abroad.

WATTS.



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