

# **HYMNS THAT HAVE HELPED**

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Hymns that Have Helped by W. T. Stead

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**W. T. STEAD**

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Being a Collection of Hymns  
which have been found most  
useful to the Children of Men

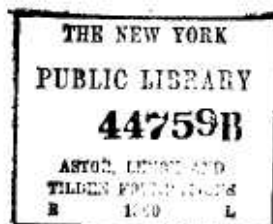
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W. T. Stead



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PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN  
EDITION.

THE success which has attended the publication of the English edition of this little collection of "Hymns that have Helped," encourages the hope that it may be found equally acceptable to the American public.

The Service of Song is part of the Service of Man that is universal. It has hitherto been fortunate to escape the sectarian limitations of territorial and political divisions. According to an analysis made of the hymns contained in the most widely-used American hymn-books down to the year 1880, the average number of hymns of a purely American origin was not quite one in seven. There is probably no hymn-book in general use in any part of the British empire which does not count many American hymns among those which are most popular and helpful. Custom-houses may divide the producers and consumers of other manufactures. No Chinese wall of protective tariffs will ever prevent the two great English-speaking nations practising free trade in hymns. The English-speaking race has presumably no difficulty in recognising its unity when praising its Maker.

The principle upon which this collection has been compiled is more American than English. For the basic idea of the book is that of appealing directly to the experience of the individual; that of applying the test not of the standard of excellence of the literary expert, or of orthodoxy as defined by the authority of churches, but that of its helpfulness to men and women.

10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20.



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I claim nothing for the collection beyond what its name implies. The hymns which it contains are hymns which have helped all sorts and conditions of men to do their work in this world and to face with composure or exultation the coming of the Messenger which summons them to the next. In its compilation I have naturally given the foremost place to those hymns which have helped those who have helped their fellows most. Some hymns are like jewelled chalices from which generation after generation has drunk of the water of life. Others are but as the rusty dipper from which the wayworn traveller cools his thirst. The workmanship of the vessel has weighed little compared with the authentic evidence that it was the means whereby the thirsty soul of man was able to drink and live.

In appealing to the American public I do not feel as if I were venturing upon ground that was more strange to me than that of my native land. For the English Nonconformist has always been more in fellowship with the churches of America than with the Anglican Church that is established and endowed in his own country. The men of the "Mayflower," who founded New England, and their descendants after them, have always been more of our kith and kin than the representatives of the church of Laud and the Stuarts. The children of the Puritans in the Old World and in the New form one family, in a much more real and vital sense than those who are outside the circle are able to realise. And within that circle there is no language of the household so familiar as sacred song.

It would be difficult to overestimate the extent to which the religious life of the English-speaking world has been quickened and gladdened by the Songs and Solos of Mr. Sankey. And before Mr. Sankey, the "American Sacred Songster" of Mr. Phillips had done much to enliven our Service of Song. To this day the American hymns and spiritual songs are more popular among our masses than any others. When mission

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services are held, or a revival is under way, in the majority of cases the American hymns are used as a matter of course. This is not the case with the high Anglican services, but even there it would not be impossible to trace the influence of the inspiring strains of the American Sacred Song.

When we know the favourite hymns of a man we have gained a glimpse into his inner life. When we know the hymns which have most helped the English of the Motherland, we gain more insight into the real trend of the aspirations and the deepest emotions of the nation than can be gained from the perusal of the entire British press. Hence, I hope it may be possible that in the United States this collection may be of some slight service in helping to a better understanding between the two nations. These hymns have been most helpful to us. What are the hymns which have been most helpful to you?

I want to publish as a sequel or supplement to this volume a second series of "Hymns that have Helped," based on the recorded experience of Americans. I do not know whether it may be possible to elicit an adequate response, but "nothing venture, nothing win."

The attempt to interrogate the foremost men and women in the States and Territories as to the hymns which have most helped them may possibly be less difficult where the Interviewer is indigenous than it is elsewhere. The experiment is well worth trying, but the experience gained in preparing the English edition suggested the expediency of slightly varying the form of interrogation.

I originally appealed to those who were willing to help in the work of compilation: first, for the personal experience of the individual addressed; second, for note or reference to record of instances where hymns had influenced those whose lives had greatly influenced the history of mankind; thirdly, for brief note of instances in which hymns had altered human lives, — even of the most obscure; and, fourthly, for reference to incidents

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where hymns had figured conspicuously in some notable episode in human history.

To these four I would add in making my appeal to the American public a fifth request; namely, that I should be furnished with the name of the living American whose life experience as to the helpful value of hymns my correspondent thinks would be most interesting and valuable to his countrymen.

May I ask all readers who are disposed to co-operate with me in preparing such an American sequel to the present volume to address their communications to me, care of the publishers of this volume, Doubleday & McClure Co., 141-155 East Twenty-fifth Street, New York, U. S. A.

W. T. STEAD.