

**ADVENT SONGS. A  
REVISION OF OLD HYMNS  
TO MEET MODERN NEEDS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649424436

Advent Songs. A Revision of Old Hymns to Meet Modern Needs by Simon N. Patten

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**SIMON N. PATTEN**

**ADVENT SONGS. A  
REVISION OF OLD HYMNS  
TO MEET MODERN NEEDS**



More battles are won by singing hymns than by firing cannon.

## **Advent Songs**

---

**OLD HYMNS REVISED**

*for*

**NEW NEEDS**

# Advent Songs

A REVISION  
OF OLD  
HYMNS  
TO MEET  
MODERN  
NEEDS



By SIMON N. PATTEN  
NEW YORK B. W. HUEBSCH MCMXVI

Copyright, 1916, by Simon N. Patten

## INDEX TO TITLES

	NUMBER
*A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD.....	2
*ALL HAIL THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME.....	5
*ATLANTIC .....	26
AWAKE FROM DREAMING.....	35
AWAKE, MY SOUL AND LIVE.....	50
BLIGHT OF RUM (THE).....	27
COME, SOCIAL SPIRIT.....	43
COME, THOU ALMIGHTY KING.....	41
COURAGE, BROTHER.....	34
CROSS OF CHRIST, (THE).....	49
FOUNT OF LIFE, (THE).....	36
FORWARD LOOK, (THE).....	32
*FROM GREENLAND'S ICY MOUNTAIN.....	3
GOD AND NATION.....	22
GOD OF OUR FATHERS.....	29
HAIL AMERICA.....	13
HAIL! WOMAN TRIUMPHANT.....	23
*HOLY TRINITY, (THE).....	1
JESUS COME AGAIN.....	37
*JESUS, LOVER OF MY SOUL.....	8
*LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT.....	4
LORD'S MY SHEPHERD, (THE).....	47
*LOVE DIVINE.....	10
MISSIONARY AMERICA.....	16
MORNING STAR (THE).....	55
MY COUNTRY FIRST OF ALL.....	14
MY NEW VIRGINAL HOME.....	44
MY FATHERLAND.....	15
*NATIVITY, (THE).....	7
NEW ZION, (THE).....	45
*O GOD, OUR HELP IN AGES PAST.....	11
*OLD HUNDRED.....	9
*ONWARD, CHOSEN PEOPLE.....	6
PEACE OF JESUS, (THE).....	31
*PROMISED DAY, (THE).....	21
PROMISED LAND, (THE).....	52
RISE, MY SOUL.....	46
RESOLUTION.....	54
SCARLET TAINT, (THE).....	39
SOCIAL AMERICA.....	18
SOCIAL CALL (THE).....	25
SOCIAL FAITH.....	33
SOCIAL SPIRIT.....	38
STARRY FLAG (THE).....	17
SUN AND SHADOW.....	30
SUN OF MY SOUL.....	40
SWEET ALICE.....	56
TOMORROW.....	51
VOICE OF PROGRESS, (THE).....	48
VOLUNTEER, (THE).....	25
VOTING MAID, (THE).....	24
WATCHERS, (THE).....	42
WHAT IS AMERICA TO BE?.....	28
WHAT WE FORGET.....	19
WHO FOLLOWS IN HIS TRAIN.....	20
WONDROUS CROSS (THE).....	53

[Hymns marked \* have alternate words.]

SEP 22 1916

HARVARD  
DIVINITY SCHOOL.

H44, 213

MODERNIZING THE SONG

S. N. PATTEN

WONDER is often expressed that the American people sing so little, yet this wonder would cease if more attention were given to the nature and history of the songs we use. The thought content of the English-speaking races is of comparatively recent origin, and in the epoch we have passed through attention has been devoted to the restatement in English of ideas that had their rise in other lands and ages. We have translated what others have written rather than created new thought for ourselves. This is especially true of America, where we think in terms of the places from which our ancestors came, or have made a crude blending of many antiquated philosophies. In this sense the real American is yet to come, for our emotions and sentiments are aroused not by home happenings, but by foreign events. In no field is this fact more apparent than in poetry. A firm literary tradition was created long before the English language arose, and in this tradition literary people are educated. They still think in terms of foreign language, and hold thought to be beautiful only as it is expressed in the forms of this traditional culture. But these forms do not harmonize with the needs of our language; nor does the spirit of other ages and races reflect our deepest emotions.

Now, song is not song unless it appeals to the emotions and serves as a binding force holding some group together. It is easy to generalize in this way, but it is hard to produce songs that meet the intellectual and artistic requirements. When I became interested in hymns I had no thought of writing myself. Poetic talent seemed to be going to waste on every side, simply because no appropriate theme suggested itself to the isolated poet. I found that authors in general wrote descriptive poetry instead of hymns, and the kinds of poetry, narrative and lyric, were not clearly distinguished. Again, most of them conveyed a thought different from what I sought. This led me to ask myself what it was in the older hymns that I disliked, and I soon saw that I should get nowhere by criticising the hymns others wrote. I must either write models to show what was my aim, or be content to let each poet follow his own bent. When I set to work the difficulties of the task became ap-



parent, and have remained only too evident. But my hymns will at least break ground, and may help others to do what is beyond my powers. It is clear at least that the first object in the attempt to make new songs must be to break down the foreign traditions that cramp the writing of English verse; and the second is to remove the remnants of foreign expression that block the way to a vivid emotional appeal. If these ends are made definite the task of writing songs may be left to the more competent.

In the beginning I tried to write a song with a universal appeal. After many attempts I gave up this aim as an impossible ideal. The attempt to arouse the many diverse human emotions by one group of words, or by one tune, fails almost inevitably to touch any deep emotion. It is at best a mere skimming of the surface, not an expression of real feeling. I then tried a more simple plan—that of appealing to individual emotions and to local sentiments. Out of this came the purpose on which this collection of songs is based—not the writing of a national song, but the devising of a series of songs, each having a particular and limited appeal. Instead of one American, are there not many Americans, each of whose lives needs expression?

In following foreign traditions we have separated songs into isolated groups. Thus our national songs are martial songs that have no appeal except when war is imminent; we have love songs for youth, topical songs for the music hall, and religious songs for the church. This separation seems to me to be artificial, due not to any gulf in our emotions, but to the fact that religion, patriotism, love, and nature appreciation arose, or at least had their bloom, in different languages or times; so they come to us historically as separate entities, and not as complementary realities. Real American emotion, when it frees itself from foreign and traditional trammels, will be a unified flow of feeling, and not a group of isolated rivulets of song. Indeed, religion is patriotism, and patriotism is religion; love is social as well as sexual; while in nature beauty is to be added to fact. Only the view we take of each subject gives it its emotional force, and its value is material or cultural just as it feeds the stomach or the soul. Why not, then, recognize the unity of our emotions and pass from their expression in one form to another without regard to time and place, or, rather, recognize the purity and elevating force of song in every time and place? Only thus can we socialize thought and make life with others more spiritual than any form of individual contemplation has proven.

If this revival of poetic expression did not have a double trend, it might be left to work out its own salvation; but the contrast between the two tendencies that exist in it is too marked not to arrest attention. What is poetry, after all? Merely a survival, a relic of older modes of thought—feeling seeking expression only when deep-seated passions are occasionally revived; or is it a living, present force, an effective weapon of social reform? To-day few people can resist the impulse to write verse. Does this tendency and the interest it reflects indicate the presence of a concealed giant who could pull loads, or is it a mere survival of an old habit, like looking at a new moon over the shoulder to see what one's luck is to be? A question will help to make the issue clear. Is it the function of poetry to create the emotion by which the day's work is done, as well as to serve as a relaxation for tired reformers when work is ended? Should we read poetry upon rising to get heart, or only at eventide to relax the tired mind? Is poetry to be put in the class with golf and solitaire, or with dynamos and rapid-firing guns?

Poets who describe Amazons and mermaids should write at night to relieve the monotony of the day, and what they write will have effect only by the relaxation it makes possible. But truly functional poetry shoots farther than any gun and cuts deeper than the sharpest knife. It strides ahead of the reformer and wakes the world to an appreciation of what he is doing. As we decide this question we take sides not only in poetry, but in every field where thought and life are striving for expression. True art comes when we are doing our best; when we are in earnest; when we throw aside hindrances and make every word, color, view, or line count. To-day cathedrals are ugly because they have no use, and art galleries are dreary because artists think only of color, legs, and arms, and the weak faces of Madonnas. The day of metaphor and word pictures is gone; but the day of song has not passed, for song is the only means of appealing to the love of musical harmony that is deep in every breast. There is no door to the human soul so wide open as that of poetry. This approach may be used by the reformer if he will write poetry because he loves and needs it, and not because his leisure hours are hard to fill. The new poet must be more concise in expression and more social in thought than his wordy predecessor. His sentences must not merely roll along, but must hit some object or arouse and vitalize some deep emotion, and give to verse a truly social function; in other words, the end must dominate the form.

Somebody has said that the influence of the theatre is to broaden the home, and to get the people to feel and think in larger groups. Song certainly has this same merit in a unique degree. I cannot see how any great social, political, or religious movement can arise without the larger grouping that song alone can create. We can eat alone, walk alone, or read by our fireside, but emotion arises only as a group feeling, due to group contact. We are different, and indeed higher and purer when we sing than when we read or eat. This is why the American people must learn to sing. They will come into their own heritage only when they have their own songs set to music that harmonizes with their thought and feeling. We may have a foreign religion, and read we must the books of the past, but we will not sing fervently except to words and music that reflect our inner selves, with scant regard for the transmitted thought of past ages and other races.

The prime difficulty in writing new poetry lies in the accepted emotional values of the words to be used. Poets have so long employed certain phrases to express their ideas that these words have a high emotional value. The thoughts flow easily and powerfully when these associations are unbroken. But if the same words are employed to express other ideas, or old figures are used in unfamiliar ways, emotion refuses to follow the new paths, and discord instead of pleasure is brought. Poetry of four kinds has been exploited. The poetry of war, of nature, of physical love, and of human depravity has appeared in endless variety. Certainly without the thought of depravity the religious hymn would fail of its appeal. When vigor is demanded, the similes of war are used, and with them are combined pictures of the glory of nature. The social note in poetry is impossible so long as these discordant thoughts and figures are used; on the other hand, the avoidance of them destroys the emotional value which poetry has acquired.

The penalty of the loss of emotional power must be paid by those who would blaze the way to a new form of poetic expression. But the lessened emotional value of the first endeavors will be heightened when poets have made the public familiar with social poetry. Just as nature poetry had to fight its way to popularity in the eighteenth century, so social poetry must have its martyrs and heroes to-day. New emotional channels of thought must be created, and in the new current emotion will flow more deeply and more forcefully than before.