

**THE
NEW TAYLOR
HYMN BOOK OF 1932**

FOREWORD.

The reader will please note that the comments offered in this paper are in reference to the 1932 edition of the "Little Flock" hymn book published by Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, 22, Paternoster Row, London. Three previous editions of the hymn book appeared—1856 (G. V. Wigram, editor), 1881 (J. N. Darby, editor), 1903 (T. H. Reynolds, editor), all of which were published by George Morrish, 20, Paternoster Square, London. The magnitude of the change, as regards doctrine connected with the Person of Christ and cognate subjects, will at once be apparent to any who compare the 1932 edition with those previous to it.

"Prove all things, hold fast the right" (1 Thess. v. 22. New Trans.)

(No reference is made here to "Hymns Selected and Revised in 1928" (C. A. Hammond), which consists mostly of the same hymns contained in the edition of 1881, and is sound in the faith, and is used by the brethren who had been divided and who reunited in 1926).

THE NEW TAYLOR HYMN BOOK OF 1932

THE new hymn book has at last made its appearance. In a short time, it is confidently anticipated, it will be in world wide use. Whether the reception accorded it justifies the sanguine expectation of its promoters remains to be seen. At the moment the portents are ominous. In order to sponsor its entrance to assembly use, a lengthy apology for its existence is in circulation*—this does not bode well.

The writer of the paper has not adhibited his signature. He may have reasons for withholding his identity. Be that as it may, no aspersion shall be cast upon the author because neither name nor initials can guide as to the authority with which he speaks. On merit and that alone shall the paper be examined: others can judge whether the contents are approved in heaven, or if they merely find favour among men.

The avowal governing the methods of the revisers all must respect. To what higher standard could they conform than this?—"To expunge everything considered inconsistent with the truth." Truth is the expression of the divine mind. To refuse the truth, or to retain what clashes with it, would be serious indeed. By "the Law and the Testi-

**The Hymn Book Revision*. Stow Hill Bible and Tract Depot, London.

mony" (Isa. viii 20) all human utterances are to be verified. It is a mistake, however, to conclude that "what would be refused as unscriptural in a Bible reading" is necessarily at variance with the written Word. The Son in Eternity was refused, perhaps for the first time in public among brethren, at a reading in Barnet, England (in 1929). This incongruous element has, since that event, tarnished the testimony of brethren. How can the men who revived this ancient heresy complain against others who still abide by the cardinal verity of the Eternal Son which they, in their folly, have refused? Common honesty demands an answer to this question.

The second par. on page 3 of "The Hymn Book Revision," might well be a page from "The Directory of Public Worship" compiled by the celebrated Westminster Divines in 1644. The language on this occasion suggests it. In true ecclesiastical style we read of "the truth governing procedure in the worship of God." The arrangement is so complete that it may be wondered what part is to be assigned to the Spirit of God in an Assembly meeting. Lines, verses and hymns are so arranged in the new book, that the office committed to the blessed Spirit in leading the hearts of the saints to God comes to be almost superfluous. Little is left to the apprehension of the worshipper as regards his conception of Christ.

The grades in the various offerings under the Levitical law were necessary, and beau-

tifully foreshadow a variety of apprehension of Christ by the saints, as they contemplate Him who is "the Chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely": but the 1932 version of the hymn book aspires to give all the dignity of a ruler who brought his bullock to Jehovah, while his poorer brother had to be content with an offering consistent with his lowly station in life. However lovely this may appear, the One who says, "I know" in Rev. iii., will estimate the value of man-made uniformity in the shape of a modernized hymn book. Further reference may be made to this paragraph when considering what our author has to say of hymn 233 on page 12 of his paper. It is a measure of relief to know that some of the hymns defied the process of "adjustment" and so are to remain.

It has been decided that certain titles of Christ are to stand, even "if their significance did not characterise the respective hymns in which they appear." Order at all times is desirable in hymns or individual oral expression at the breaking of bread; but are not all human utterances inefficient and weak in setting forth the excellencies of Him who is so worthy? Poverty of thought and word abide, whatever means may be used to rectify inconsistencies which the most spiritual in a meeting regard with no severe censure if the one who comes short is with God in his soul. To those who most clearly interpret the mind of the Spirit the words of Isa. xi. 3: "He shall not judge after the sight of His

eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears" are sufficient restraint from censorious activities when gathered in Assembly. It is a mercy to think that "Jehovah" and "Hallelujah" are not to go the way of "Immanuel's Land," even if, dispensationally, the name first revealed to Moses (Exodus vi. 2, 3), and the praise which accompanies that name, come short of the sense of relationship and nearness communicated to the saints by the risen Son of God:—"My Father, your Father, My God, your God" (John xx. 17). The "Chief Musician"—a precious name, so truly applied to Christ—cannot suffer eclipse either, even if saints have to go to the Old Testament for it.

Why, it may be asked, is Mr. Darby's name so frequently quoted with approval when the new book so thoroughly eliminates so many distinctive features of that servant's labour in relation to the Little Flock hymn book? At one sweep, 120 hymns are rejected on the plea of "adjustment," and yet the men who so unsparingly mutilate the work of J. N. D. have the temerity to retain the title of the hymn book. Formal protest is hereby made against so glaring an encroachment on the rights of others. Obviously the name or initials of a servant of God, whose praise is in all the churches, carries a prestige which the so-called revisers wish to retain. While they reject his teaching as out of date they dare not say so openly.

As a matter of fact the specious word "adjustment" should pass out of the reviser's vocabulary. It does not express their true meaning. When foundation truths are assailed, and so many hymns are expunged to make way for such of the "new light" as has found its way into verse, a much more appropriate term would be "displacement." It is humbling to learn that liberties are to be taken with the work of authors now with the Lord, while that of some still in the body is to be displaced. Writers who have passed away cannot answer "adjustments." Are these honourable dealings, or does a wise discretion exhibit itself here?

Who would not welcome additions to a hymn book where "touches of Christ which the Spirit has given during the last thirty or forty years" are to be found a place? It is however asked in all seriousness, has the Spirit of God been engaged all those years in paving the way for this twentieth century denial of the Son in Eternity? Is it the work of God the Spirit to degrade the testimony of Scripture as to God the Son? No! an enemy hath done this. Let brethren be undeceived as to the source of this denial. It is degrading to our Lord the mere suggestion that the Father's bosom was not the eternal dwelling place of the Son. It is degrading to the Spirit of God the assertion that the "new light" proceeds from Him whose special service is to take of the things of Christ and reveal them to us. The last par. on page 6,

continued on pages 7 and 8, of the pamphlet under consideration, contains the most complete denial of the Sonship of Christ, in His fulness of glory, as has ever been penned. Alterations in hymns 150, 181, 401, are occasioned, it is said, on account of "clearer light" which the Lord has shed on the great subject of His own Sonship.

There is nothing distinctive in the denial of the "Eternal Son." The arguments brought forward to support the thesis are precisely the same as have been used by various theologians all down the ages. Any one acquainted with ecclesiastical history will confirm this. Men of spiritual power, including J. N. D., met and refuted those arguments. The only "new" feature of the present movement is that a small section of influential brethren have joined hands in confirming a particular tenet of Unitarian teaching that the Sonship of Christ is not eternal, but had its beginning when He was born of a woman. The Unitarian, of course, denies His Deity which is affirmed in the new book. If He is not the Son in Eternity the whole Christian position is shaken and faith in Him as such is vain!

A certain phraseology has crept into the circle of brethren, having, perhaps unconsciously, a sinister design behind it. Phrases such as "The Lord in Deity," "The position and form of God in which our Lord was absolutely, before His incarnation," "Our Lord as in the form of God" are used to pre-

pare the way for something else. Deity sets forth His place in the Godhead. When He became a man did He surrender His status in the Godhead? If He did not, what does this addition to a quotation from Phil. ii. mean? "He emptied Himself taking a bondsman's form," "**which is not Deity.**" A grave responsibility rests upon the person who puts the matter in this shape. Men who, either by pen or lip, promulgate this delusion should surrender their trusteeship as stewards of the mysteries of God. And yet the statement emphasized above is contradicted on page 11 in these words:—"Personally He is inseparable from Deity." These two utterances are utterly irreconcilable. If the latter is true—and it is—then the former is false beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Brethren, from J. N. D. onward, who use the term "Eternal Sonship" have nothing to guard against. The creed has been attacked, but why should this be? Athanasius was sound on the eternal Son, even if the words of the creed which bear his name, may be, and surely are, faulty. His sonship would not be eternal if He began to be the Son at some undefined period between John i. 1 and Gen. i. 1. For the same reason, those who build on Psalm ii. are utterly at fault when they labour to prove that our Lord's sonship had no existence in eternity save in the counsel and purpose of God. The latter implication is just as false as any statement of the creed. This argument—that sonship began

in time—is really on rationalistic lines. A human vessel and its results, according to the process of “natural law,” is required before the Son of God could be so designated. He entered the circumstances of time as described in Luke i. 35. The words spoken to Mary:—“The Holy Thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God,” are confirmatory of the appearance upon earth of Him “whose goings forth are from of old, from the days of eternity . . . until she which travaileth shall have brought forth . . . and this (Man) shall be Peace” (Micah v.).

Psalm ii. 7:—“Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee” does not by any means contradict the Eternal Sonship of Christ: nay rather it establishes the truth in regard to this important subject. “Thou art my Son” is not contingent upon, but really is antecedent to “This day have I begotten Thee.” This should be noted by all who reason from a human standpoint. The Son in this Psalm declares Jehovah’s decree, and reveals the words **addressed** to Him. Sonship and the inheritance are in view. See the parable of the husbandmen (Luke xx.). His Sonship is announced **before His birth** in Luke i.: at His baptism, when He is **addressed** as Son in Mark i.: on the mount of transfiguration, when He is again addressed as Son in Luke ix.: He is further declared Son of God in resurrection in Rom. i. The 13th chapter of Acts should be carefully considered along with Psalm ii. when it will be

seen that resurrection is closely connected with Sonship and Heirship—on to the Inheritance yet future. It is sad beyond measure that brethren must resort to the thoroughly unsound principle of the “Natural Law in the Spiritual World” in their attempt to prove that the names “Son” and “Son of God” could not apply to Him before He was conceived in the womb of the virgin. “He was not begotten twice” is the argument of a person who has lost the true bearing of Scripture as to Him who was, and is the Eternal Son. It would not be of faith to answer such base reasoning.

No one having even a superficial knowledge of Scripture, would deny parentage to the Son of God—as born of a woman; but they do not go to Heb. vii. 3 to prove His genealogy. Melchisedec was “without genealogy; without father, without mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life but assimilated to the Son of God.” To plead for parentage here would be doing violence to Scripture. Our Lord’s earthly relations are clearly indicated in Luke ii., thus—“when the **PARENTS** brought in the child Jesus” (v. 27); “now His **PARENTS** went to Jerusalem” (v. 41); “His **MOTHER** said unto Him, Son . . . Thy **FATHER** and I have sought Thee” (v. 48). In those verses His parents are mentioned where He had beginning of days and end of life. Alas! His life was taken from the earth. “This day” of Psalm ii. has no place in Heb. vii. “From

Everlasting to Everlasting" is written in indelible letters over a Scripture such as this: for it is He who was the Son from Eternity we have portrayed here. It is the name of "Son" which is assailed and indirectly, the Person, hence Heb. vii. is a most apposite Scripture for all who will learn.

Why is there such an outcry against the designation of "Son" in eternal conditions if it be true, as this pamphlet informs us, that "titles applying to Him as man may be used to designate Him in His eternal relations in Deity"? Is not this just what is denied? Those who oppose cannot have it both ways. But, "the legs of the lame are not equal." The one denial cancels the other affirmative.

When told, on page 8 of the paper under review, that "the very title Son of God involves that God is Christ's Father" it would be just to suspect again "natural law in the spiritual world," otherwise it is mere redundancy on the part of the writer to suggest what the title "involves"—this or that, or to say that Scripture "abounds with confirmation" that God is Christ's Father. For whose enlightenment does he pen these words? Most assuredly is there submission in the apprehension of the humblest believer that:—"The Father sent the Son." Is there an ulterior motive for labouring the truism that God is Christ's Father? It has been said that, "There are Christians who do not believe on the Son of God" (see Belfast Notes). Christians under condemnation?

(John iii. 18). Who can they be, and are they now brought to light?

From the "Eternal Son" the writer of the pamphlet proceeds to deny the "Eternal Word." He tells his readers that:—"While the Word is employed in John i. to designate the Lord before His incarnation, this does not mean that this appellation applied to Him as in the form of God." Before His incarnation was He in the form of God? If He was, what appellation applied to Him in that form?

Let John i. 1 answer the question—

"In the beginning was the Word."

Had He distinct personality then?

"And the Word was with God."

Was He in the form of God then?

"And the Word was God."

How can any person subject to the teaching of Holy Scripture dare resist the testimony of the Spirit of God that the appellation (the Word) applies to Him in the form of God? Further, did the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, ever divest Himself of Deity in order that in manhood He might become "The Word" if in the form of God this designation did not apply? Scripture may be consulted again. What change did the incarnation bring about as recorded in John i.? The answer is:—"And the Word became flesh." The expression "Incarnate Word" signifies that He was the Word before He came of a woman.

Marvel it is in the face of all this, that "Eternal Word has been deemed incorrect"—in the words of our author. **The Word** in John i. 1 definitely does not "refer to Him as speaking the mind of God here." Neither does it only "involve" that He was "The Logos," but He is said to be The Logos "in the beginning." Before He became flesh, as we have seen, He was "The Logos." It is tampering with the clear testimony of Scripture to say otherwise. It is true He spoke in manhood, being "The Logos"—after John i. 1.

If it is meant that the Father's voice was never heard addressing Him as "the Word," then this is in accordance with Scripture; but He is so designated by the Holy Spirit (God) wherever the term is used in Holy Writings. There is no evidence that the designation:—"The Word" was in common use when He was here. Apart from John's writings Luke mentions it but once. "Logos" it is again true does appear over 300 times in the New Testament, but it is seldom indeed used as applying to our Lord. So far as we know the name "Logos" addressed to Jesus never crossed human lips. The bare supposition that, "The Logos" is employed by the Spirit in John i. "as tending to preclude the application of divinely given mediatorial titles such as Son to our Lord as in the form of God," bespeaks a mind formed by philosophy or vain deceit, and not governed by the unerring word of the living God.

Perhaps the root error of that which is now advanced as fresh light from God, is contained in the quotation just given that "Son" is a mediatorial title. His divine glory as Son is construed to meet the exigencies of the moment, when His Sonship is made to depend upon His entry on man's world. Before the dignity of Son can be His, according to this teaching, office and dispensation have to be entered upon. It is here where they surrender that which has been the precious deposit of the Church in all ages. Are brethren to follow the lead now given, or are they to abide by that which cannot be shaken by any assault of modern times? Are they to "remember their leaders who have spoken to them the Word of God: and considering the issue of their conversation imitate their faith, Jesus Christ (is) the same yesterday and to-day and to the ages (to come)"? This appeal is to you, brethren beloved, "Be not carried away with various and strange doctrines."

The tenderest intimacies of the Godhead are bound up in the term Father and Son. John xvii. is a witness to this. His incarnation did not intrude upon these, nor prevent a continuance of that which is too precious for human mind to comprehend or human lips to utter. Mediatorial titles have to do with the earth and man: this name of Son has to do with God and Eternity, and bespeaks the holy communion ever existing between the ever blessed persons of the

Godhead fully revealed now as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The revelation, however, did not originate these holy, eternal conditions: it only brought the knowledge of such to adoring hearts who exultingly exclaim:—"We have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). When "Eternal Word" and "Eternal Son" are superseded in assembly usage, brethren may well write "Ichabod" over their new or revised hymn book.

Hebrews i. shows it was by the Son that the worlds were made. Hebrews xi. 3 makes it clear that the worlds were framed by the "**Rhema**" of God—not the "Logos," as the writer of Hymn Book revision shows. But why was he not more explicit; why did he not tell his readers that "Logos" omitted in Heb. xi. is given in 2 Peter iii. 5 to express another phase of the same truth? for we read there that by "the '**Logos**' of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water . . . the heavens and the earth by the same '**Logos**' are kept in store."* This omission appears to be culpable.

Discussion on these holy themes is to be deprecated. Who would not subscribe to this? A pertinent question would be—who first introduced and has sustained this enquiry for three years? The person who did

*See J.N.D.'s definition of "Logos" in footnote to 1 Corinthians i. 5 in New Testament.

so is to be blamed. Let the writer of the paper under consideration take this to heart.

Hymn 181 has been challenged—

“Veiled Thy glory yet 'twas witnessed
“By Thine own while here below”

can be compared with J. N. D.'s—“Man of Sorrows”

“There see the Godhead glory
“Shine through the human veil”

What glory was it His own contemplated in John i. 18? J. N. D., at all events, would endorse the two lines of hymn 181 objected to. It is only one who can define “the form of God”—and where is he to be found, for “no man knows the Son but the Father”—who can determine if “the form of a servant” as seen in our Lord subsists side by side and is co-extensive, in His case with Deity? We tremble at the bold statement that “a Bondsman's form” so fully established in Jesus “is not Deity.” The last par. on page 10, continued on page 11, gives and takes Deity and humanity with a freedom which can scarcely be credited: as already remarked—the one cancels the other. The only upright conclusion an honest observer can arrive at is that the writer is in a maze or labyrinth—and he cannot find his way out.

Continued discussion on hymn 150 reminds one of a chemist taking a certain substance into his laboratory, passing it through a searching test in order to discover its constituent elements; but the search is futile:

"Canst thou by searching find out God?" When Conder wrote his excellent hymn acclaiming Jesus as the Everlasting Word, it was the excess of a full heart delivered from the soul-destroying blight of Unitarianism. The ordinary believer will lose all interest in the prolonged emphasis laid upon the Deity of His Person when the eternity of the Word is set aside. To answer questions as to His distinctive place in the Godhead, and the eternal name which He bears with "Yea and Nay" (2 Cor. i. 18, 19), has never been proof of soundness in the faith in those who resort to this expedient. Moreover, what excuse can the revisers of the hymn book offer when they replace the very words of Scripture "Fulness of Godhead" by other words, however true, when the very utterance of the Spirit of God is available.

"Thou of full Deity possessed
"Eternally Divine"

while giving the truth cannot excel Col. ii. 9.

The writer of "The Hymn Book Revision" truly observes that "the changes made in hymn 233 will be specially noticed," but not with the general approbation he bespeaks for himself and others. He says—

"In Thy presence break the bread (verse 3) is incongruous. The breaking of bread is for a remembrance of Christ, and this obviously contemplates His absence, not His presence. He is present spiritually as He is recalled in His ap-

pointed way; but this is after the bread is broken, not before."

Charity would suppose that the writer, in speaking of "His absence," would refer to the fact that Christ is not here, and that saints, in the language of Scripture, as they eat the bread and drink the cup "announce the death of the Lord until He come." But a more abstruse reasoning enters into this argument. The presence of the Lord in the midst of His gathered saints is denied. He is "absent till the bread is broken." "Gathered together unto My Name" (Matt. 18) has not the same significance now! It is evidently wished to be understood that "the remembrance of Christ" in the breaking of bread is the only barrier to "His presence" being realized and enjoyed while gathered in Assembly. Furthermore, after the bread is broken—"not before"—when it is admitted "He is present spiritually," the character of the meeting changes—"hymns and other expressions of worship would be addressed to the Father" (Page 3, par. 2).

Such a mixture of truth and error rarely comes out so boldly as this. Admittedly Christ is outside such a gathering on the morning of the first day of the week until the given moment. His tardy admission is followed by worship addressed to the Father: and yet "he who honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has sent Him" (John v. 23). Reduced to some measure

of intelligible understanding, this teaching means that little place is to be found for the Lord Jesus, save in a very limited way, either at the beginning, middle, or end of a meeting convened by Him, and for Him in the affection of His people in response to His cherished desire—"This do in remembrance of Me."

Brethren surely cannot fail to see that not only are they confronted with the unabashed denial of the Son in Eternity, but also they are invited to endorse the further error that He is not present in Assembly while those gathered partake of the memorials of His precious body given for them in death. "*Ammonite and Moabite*" may be levelled against any who still stand four square by the truth as to the Lord's Person which they have forsaken. Those words in italics, found on the last page of "The Believer's Friend" for July, can be borne with equanimity by any against whom they may be directed, remembering as they do that "Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon" (John viii. 48) was spoken against Him whose glory they seek to maintain unsullied. T. H. R.'s hymn, as coming from his pen, will still be sung by all who value "Christ's presence in the midst, the resource of faith in a day of ruin" (J. N. D.).

The cup is indeed the Scriptural term, even if one receptacle or more may be necessary or convenient according to the number par-

taking: be they many or few. All drink of "the cup" whether, in a city, there be one or more rooms where saints gather. One vessel cannot go over every gathering although all partake of one cup of blessing.

And has it really been necessary to expunge "Immanuel's Land" on the pretext of dispensational incongruity — Scripture language though it may be (Isa. viii. 8)—while "heavenly land" is not, even if there is no violation of the truth in the latter? Rutherford's meaning cannot be misunderstood. It was not the literal land of Israel he longed for; neither did the gifted authoress, who collated the dying sayings of perhaps the most heavenly minded saint of the seventeenth century, mistake his meaning. He had long been in the enjoyment of "heaven as known now to faith by the Spirit." A subject of persecution by the ruling ecclesiastics of his day, his faith moved on to being with and like Jesus:—

"I shall sleep sound in Jesus,
Filled with His likeness rise
To love and to adore Him,
To see Him with those eyes:
'Tween me and resurrection
But Paradise doth stand,
Then—then for glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land."

His hope anticipated the Day of Christ and was of a more robust order than that of the person who once gave out in a company of saints gathered together for the reading of the Word, that:—"We must be careful

not to insist on the idea of **place** in regard of those who have fallen asleep." Heaven as our eternal home is swept aside by such extravagances. "Immanuel's Land," "Canaan's Rest," and other synonyms are well understood by innumerable believers who have delighted in the spiritual meaning conveyed to them in the words of Scripture. And it is the merest pedantry—like other corrections in the same paper—to enlarge upon the obvious, as if some new discovery had been made in divine truth not accessible to the respective editors of the hymn book in 1881 and 1903.

It does small credit to the revisers, the alteration in hymn 393. Their spiritual acumen had surely been inactive when they agreed to the change. It is all the more surprising in view of the attention paid to the reading of Old Testament Scriptures in recent years, when much spiritualising of plain dispensational teaching, not connected with the Church or the Spirit's Day, has supplanted a right division of the word of truth.

There is one word more which might be added ere laying down the pen: reference is here made to the many honoured names which appear as the authors of the hymns in this collection. Some of those names go back to the remote past. The record of their labours is in heaven: their work abides in evidence here—much more enduring than their names. Some writers are of more recent

date, even if a few lived two or three hundred years ago. Last century, however, produced most of the hymn writers whose works have been drawn upon. A clear line of demarcation can be shown between those who have passed away and those who remain. Can there be instanced a single contributor to the hymn book, among the former, who denied the Eternal Son? Again, is there one among the latter whose hymn has been accepted if he, or she, ventures to assert the truth now denied, or does not follow the present trend in excluding the name of Son in eternity? It is not the first time there has been a division among the people because of Him! "What think ye of Christ?" A further question will bring this line of exercise to a close: what sort of hymn book could be produced, if hymns were confined to the work of an infinitesimal few amongst brethren of this day who have the fortitude to come out boldly for the name "Son of God," but with this proviso that it is non-eternal?

Considering "the abundant light, instruction and grace God has so graciously ministered to His people during the last hundred years," it is particularly sad to witness the reaction so deliberately manifesting itself now in the new hymn book. Much of the recovered truth is already out of date. The necessities of the period—Athenian not Berean in character—demand an up to date theology. This call is being met and the

craving of the natural mind for something new is being satisfied. Yielding to the modern urge the revisers have made themselves the willing—or reluctant as the case may be—servants of the clamour of men who, having known better things, are leading the unwary forward on popular lines. Their folly will, sooner or later, be manifest to all. May the Lord defend His own! “He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches” (Rev. ii. 7).

J. R. S.



2d. each.

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