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A PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL DEVOTED TO STATING, DEFENDING
AND FURTHERING THE GOSPEL IN THE MODERN WORLD

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Editorial Notes and Comments

CHRISTMAS



AS "the time draws near the birth of Christ," a subtle change seems to come over the outward appearance and the inward spirit of a typical American city. Outwardly, wreaths, decorations of the season, "Santa Clauses" ringing bells on corners, hurrying crowds of shoppers thronging the streets and stores, Christmas carols issuing from the most unexpected places. Inwardly, for many, a mellowing of the spirit in the midst of little understood or suspected mass emotion, sudden impulsive generousities; for others, a tiring round of purchasing for friends simply because "they sent something last year"; for countless thousands a dull aching at all this hurly-burly because to them the season means nothing more than another difficult month of securing and subsisting upon the barest necessities of physical existence, while watching what seems to them a great orgy of extravagance. Some will spend a few moments looking at pictures of the Madonna and Child displayed in store windows, most will pass them with unseeing eyes. They will be too busy.

How pagan so much of all this is! Amid all the hurry, all the happiness true or "pumped-up," how much thought and love goes out to the Christ who was once a child? He has been virtually crowded out of His own natal day. Yet this does not need to be. Remembrance of the birth of our Lord, "born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth," may and ought to be the occasion of adoration and praise of His redeemed children. The day of His birth the angels sang,—where the Prince of Glory lay in a stable. Let us give Him the worship that is rightly His this year—and in His name let us do even more: let us try to bring to others, especially those who are in desperate physical need, our Christian help, and the joy of knowing our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and King.

DR. CRAIG ILL



READERS of CHRISTIANITY TODAY will be sorry to know of the illness of DR. CRAIG, Editor-in-Chief of this paper. He is much improved, however, and is expected to resume his activities about the first of the year. Your prayers on his behalf will be appreciated.

Due to DR. CRAIG'S illness, a communication from DR. E. STANLEY JONES relative to an editorial comment concerning him in our October issue, will have to be withheld until the next issue. It will then be possible, it is hoped, to publish the letter together with editorial comment.

THE NEW HYMNAL



SPECIAL attention is called to the article on the new Hymnal in this issue. It is from the pen of Dr. J. GRESHAM MACHEN, who needs no introduction to our readers. He has made a careful study of the new volume, and his conclusions are certainly to be pondered by all who realize the importance of musical praise in the Christian life.

No one, DR. MACHEN least of all, would say that the new Hymnal contains no excellencies. That would be absurd. The introduction, for example, of certain psalms from the Scottish Psalter of 1650 and later psalters, and of certain paraphrases from Scottish sources, is certainly an improvement. The only criticism of these is that there ought to be more of them. Where, for instance, are "I joyed when to the house of God," "Thou shalt arise and mercy yet," "Hark how the adoring hosts above," and other classics of historic Presbyterianism? What induced the editors to suppress the great fifty-eighth paraphrase, included in the last two hymnals: "Where high the heavenly temple stands"? There seem to be two streams of thought evident in the committee that compiled the Hymnal. Of course, this is conjecture, but an observer might fairly conclude that one stream desired a return to the great stately dignity of the psalmody and hymnody of the first post-reformation centuries, while another stream wanted to "go modern," with a vengeance. Many great hymns could not possibly be omitted by any committee. But it is no guess, only a plain statement of fact, to say that the main stream in the Hymnal is modernist, and the other stream merely a trickle.

WHO OUGHT TO GET OUT?



IN the course of an editorial on Page 4, of his issue of November 9th, the Editor of the *Presbyterian Advance* has made an assertion concerning Holy Scripture that would seem almost impossible to credit as coming from a Presbyterian Minister or periodical. Speaking of objections made in CHRISTIANITY TODAY to the proposed form of subscription for ministers in the Plan of Union with the United Presbyterian Church, he says: ". . . the fact being that, while all saving and redemptive truth is

set forth in the Bible, that old Book of Books contains no theological system whatever." (Italics by the Editor of the *Advance*.) No system of doctrine in the Scriptures! And yet the Editor of the *Advance* is a minister of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. At licensure and ordination he answered this solemn question in the affirmative: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" (Italics by the Editors of CHRISTIANITY TODAY.)

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The New Presbyterian Hymnal

By the Rev. J. Gresham Machen, D.D., Litt.D.



THE first thing that needs to be said about the new *Hymnal* of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.¹ is that it is really new. It is not a mere revision of the Hymnal that has hitherto been in use—the Hymnal published in 1895 and revised in 1911 with a supplement of 1917—but a thoroughly new book. Of the 737 hymns in the old book (exclusive of “Ancient Hymns and Canticles”) only 136 have been retained unchanged, with perhaps about twenty more where the changes are slight. Of the 513 hymns in the new book 214 are entirely new. The changes in the 163 hymns which remain after subtraction of these 214 that are entirely new and of the 136 that are taken unchanged from the old book consist largely, but by no means exclusively, in omissions of whole stanzas.²

The Editors have labored long and earnestly; it is only fair that careful consideration should be given to what those labors have produced. The appearance of this book is an important event in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and in the history of Protestant Christendom. What is the meaning of that event?

The General Tendency

A sharp and clear answer to this question was given in *The Chicago Tribune* of May 27, 1933, in a quotation purporting to come from one of the leaders in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. This gentleman was quoted as pointing to the new Hymnal as being one of the chief evidences of change now taking place not only in his own church, but also throughout Protestantism generally. “If you want to know the trends of religion, listen to the way religion sings,” he was further reported as saying. The quotation continues as follows:

“About 400 old hymns were dropped. The doctrine note in hymns is almost missing. In place of doctrine, brotherhood, international fellowship, and sound service are stressed. In addition to this change the new hymns, instead of stressing outward ecclesiastical conformity, sound the mystical note.

“Since the General Assembly last met in Columbus eight years ago great changes have taken place in the Presbyterian Church. Then we faced the crisis in the fundamentalist drive on the church. The thing was fought out on this same platform from which the announcement of DR. JOHN McDOWELL’S election as moderator yesterday meant the death of fundamentalism as a party in the church. . . .”

We have purposely refrained from mentioning here the name of the gentleman who was reported to have spoken thus, because indirectly we have heard something to the effect that he does not recognize the correctness of the quotation. But however incorrect the quotation may be as a reproduction of what the person quoted actually said, the estimate here given of the significance of the appearance of the new Hymnal is, we are convinced, not so very far from the truth. The “doctrine note

in hymns” is indeed “almost missing” in many of the hymns added in the new book; and that means, of course, that the Christian note is almost missing, since the Christian religion is doctrinal to the very heart and core. The Modernist elements in the Presbyterian Church will no doubt welcome the new book all the more eagerly when they recognize its true tendency; but what we think important is that the Christian element in the Church should continue to use the old Hymnal and should not be led into adopting into its worship a book which will sadly impoverish its devotional life.

We do not mean, of course, that there are no truly Christian hymns in the new book; for among the (approximately) 136 hymns that are retained unchanged are to be found many truly evangelical hymns. There are some hymns too deeply entrenched to be dislodged by one generation—even by a generation that desires to get rid of what it calls “doctrine” and that feels little need of the grace of God. Even among the hymns added in this book, moreover, there are some, as we shall see in a moment, that a Christian man can joyfully sing. We do not mean to say that this book is as crassly Modernist as are some of the books now being used in formerly evangelical churches, and particularly we do not mean to say that its editors are consciously or systematically removing the things that conservatives in the church would like to retain. But what we do mean to say is that the book does in rather clear fashion reveal the drift of the times. People do not love now as they once did the things that are at the heart of the Christian Faith, and that is the essential reason why this book, reflecting the tendency of the church, is so different from the book that it is endeavoring to replace.

It will be convenient to divide what we shall now say into a treatment (1) of omissions and changes and (2) of additions; but nothing like completeness will be possible. All that we can do is to give examples of what has been done in the new Hymnal of the Presbyterian Church.

Omissions of Whole Hymns

Some of the omissions are to be welcomed. Thus we do not see how a believer in the Scriptural doctrine of the grace of God can possibly sing the hymn of Charles Wesley (496 in the old book):

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

Many of the other hymns of Charles Wesley are truly evangelical, and we rejoice in them; but we are glad that that particular hymn has been omitted. So also we are glad that the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” (included, as No. 758 in the 1917 war-time Supplement in the old book) is absent from the new book. Opinions may differ about the political views out of which that poem was born. Some of us may agree with them; some of us may disagree. But one thing is clear—a fiery war-song like that has no place in the worship of a Christian congregation.

Unfortunately, however, such salutary omissions are more than balanced by those which mean genuine loss. Among the whole hymns dear to the Christian heart which are omitted from this book may be noted the following (the numbers being those in the old Hymnal revised in 1911 and with the 1917 Supplement):

¹ “The Hymnal,” published by authority of The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1933. The editors are Clarence Dickinson, M.A., Mus.D., Litt.D., Editor; Calvin Weiss Laufer, M.A., D.D., Assistant Editor.

² The figures just given are to be regarded as approximate merely. It is quite possible, for example, that some of the hymns here enumerated as entirely new may be partly included in the old book, if, for example, they begin in a slightly different way so that they have been for that reason missed in the search in the index. Moreover, there has been some difficulty in the classification of hymns partly included in the new book among “Opening Responses: Intros,” etc.; and there may have been slight errors in counting.

4. Awake, my soul, and with the sun
Thy daily stage of duty run
38. Welcome, delightful morn
54. Safely through another week
God has brought us on our way
86. O God, we praise Thee; and confess
166. Hark! ten thousand harps and voices
188. Shout the glad tidings, exultingly sing
226. Sweet the moments, rich in blessing
Which before the cross I spend
254. O Jesus, Lord most merciful,
Low at Thy cross I lie
281. Come, Holy Ghost, in love
296. God, in the gospel of His Son,
Makes His eternal counsels known
298. The Spirit breathes upon the word,
And brings the truth to sight
306. Lord of our life, and God of our salvation
318. Jesus, and shall it ever be,
A mortal man ashamed of Thee?
335. Not worthy, Lord! to gather up the crumbs
406. O'er the gloomy hills of darkness
421. Blessed are the sons of God,
They are bought with Christ's own blood
432. One there is, above all others,
Well deserves the name of Friend
439. Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.
449. Father, hear Thy children's call
452. No, not despairingly
Come I to Thee
459. Weary of earth, and laden with my sin
465. My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
471. I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God
472. Lord, I believe; Thy power I own
479. Oft in danger, oft in woe
Onward, Christians, onward go
495. My soul, be on thy guard
501. Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
514. God is the Refuge of His saints
571. From every stormy wind that blows
643. There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign
683. God be with you till we meet again
708. Tell me the old, old story
711. Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,
And sing thy great Redeemer's praise
725. O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour, and my God!
727. I was a wandering sheep
729. I am coming to the cross

Corruptions in the Text

Even more revealing, perhaps, than the omission of these and other whole hymns are the omissions and changes in hymns which are in part retained.

At this point a preliminary criticism must apparently be brought against the method used in the new Hymnal. The criticism is that changes have been introduced in the text of hymns without any indication whatever that they have been made. Such indications were given in the old Hymnal, but in the new one they are lacking. We are well aware of the great difficulty that is involved in the establishment of the true text of hymns—especially in cases where the author himself issued a number of editions—and it is quite possible that we may be mistaken here and there in noting what look to us like corruptions introduced by the editors of the new book. There may be some historical justification in some cases for what they have printed. We lay no claim to competence in this intricate field of study. But the pursuance of an unfortunate method in this matter seems to be clear in the new book.

Thus in Milton's hymn (64 in the new book), "Let us with a gladsome mind Praise the Lord, for He is kind," the first line in the second stanza reads in the old book and in our edition of Milton, "Let us blaze His Name abroad," whereas in the new book it reads, "Let us *sound* His Name abroad" (italics ours, here and in similar contrasts); and the last stanza in the new book is a repetition of the first with a certain change in the first line which becomes necessary when the stanza is thus used again.

The changes may bring improvement and they may not; personally we think that they do not. But that is not the point. The point is that John Milton's name is appended in the new Hymnal to something that is not his. Milton was a poet of some years ago, whose works are generally thought to possess considerable merit. But we do not think that he ought to be given credit for something—even though it be an improvement—to which he has no right.

Let it not be said that the changes which we have just indicated are slight and that therefore the editors of the new Hymnal had a right to make them. In this matter of literary property, we think that only the most complete precision is in place. It was, therefore, altogether what sound scholarship and the best interests of the Church demand when the editors of the previous Hymnal announced as their policy that "As far as possible, the HYMNS are here printed as their authors wrote them" and that "All deviations from the author's text are indicated in the note beneath the hymn." It is, we think, a very serious backward step when the editors of the present book have departed from these sound literary principles.

Moreover, some of the changes made in the texts of the hymns are by no means so slight as those which we have indicated in connection with that translation of Psalm cxxxvi by John Milton.

Sometimes the wording is changed apparently in the interests of simplicity and uniformity; and very mistaken and pedantic some of these changes seem to us to be. Sometimes they are superficially clarifying, but in instance after instance they will be found really to remove what is really distinctive in the line and reduce it to the level of the commonplace. Thus in the hymn of Isaac Watts, "Begin, my tongue, some heavenly theme," the old book (126) has in the last two lines of the second stanza the following:

Sing the sweet promise of His grace,
And the performing God,

while the new book has (94):

Sing the sweet promise of His grace,
And *our* redeeming God.

No doubt the new line is superficially easier; but the real point of the stanza is destroyed. The point is the correspondence of God's performance with His promise. That point is beautifully

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The New Hymnal—Continued

expressed in the last line as it appears in the old book; but in the new book the climax is destroyed by a non-distinctive closing line.

So in the hymn of Charles Wesley, "O for a thousand tongues to sing My dear Redeemer's praise" (147) the new book (199) has "My great Redeemer" instead of "My dear Redeemer"; and in the line "His blood can make the foulest clean," it has "the sinful" instead of "the foulest"—to the ruin of what is distinctive in the stanza.

Sometimes the changes, in their removal of what is distinctive, display the tendency, so marked in this book, to turn attention away from the cross of Christ and essential things of the Bible. So in the hymn, "Thou didst leave Thy throne And Thy kingly crown When Thou camest to earth for me"—a beautiful hymn, by the way, sadly marred by this objectionable opening, which teaches a wrong, "kenotic" view of the incarnation—the old book (193) has at the end of the fourth stanza, which deals with Calvary, the words:

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
Thy cross is my only plea;

whereas the new book (231) simply inserts the same refrain as that which appears in other verses:

O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee!

Again the distinctiveness of the line is destroyed; and this time it is destroyed in a particularly unfortunate way. Many are the places in this new book where mention of the Cross of Christ, in its true Christian meaning, is removed.

Omissions of Stanzas

This tendency toward removal of passages that set forth the death of Christ as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God, and toward removal of passages presenting other basic things of the Faith, particularly references to sin and judgment to come, appears with special clearness in the choice of stanzas to be omitted from those hymns of the old book which in part are retained.

Thus in "Light of light, enlighten me" (37 in the old book, 21 in the new), the stanza is characteristically omitted which prays that the sinner may be led to fly from every error. In the hymn of Heber, "Hosanna to the living Lord!" (55 in the old book, 53 in the new) the climax stanza which deals with the last judgment is omitted. Without that last stanza, the central emphasis of the hymn is changed. Similarly, in John Newton's hymn, "Now may He who from the dead Brought the Shepherd of the sheep" (73 in the old book, Response 41 in the new), the last stanza is omitted, which speaks of "that dear Redeemer's praise, Who the covenant sealed with blood."

In "All hail the power of Jesus' Name!" (157 in the old book, 192 in the new) three stanzas are omitted, including (very characteristically) the one which mentions the fall of man and the grace of God:

Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
Ye ransomed of the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all.

In "O could I speak the matchless worth" (159 in the old book, 203 in the new), in addition to changes in the first and last stanzas, the second stanza is omitted, which speaks of the blood of Jesus as a "ransom from the dreadful guilt":

I'd sing the precious blood He spilt,
My ransom from the dreadful guilt
Of sin, and wrath Divine:
I'd sing His glorious righteousness,
In which all-perfect, heavenly dress
My soul shall ever shine.

That stanza should have been the very last one to be omitted.

In a Communion hymn by Horatius Bonar (334 in the old book, 352 in the new) the last stanza, which is the climax and gives point to all the rest, is omitted:

Mine is the sin, but Thine the righteousness;
Mine is the guilt, but Thine the cleansing blood;
Here is my robe, my refuge, and my peace,
Thy blood, Thy righteousness, O Lord my God.

In what clear form we find celebrated in that omitted stanza the imputed righteousness of Christ and the cleansing by His blood—the things that are the very heart and core of the gospel!

In "Who is on the Lord's side?" (369 in the old book, 272 in the new), one of the two stanzas chosen for omission begins thus:

Jesus, Thou hast bought us,
Not with gold or gem,
But with Thine own life-blood,
For Thy diadem.

That is the only stanza in this fine hymn that deals with the blood of Christ. A hymnal deeply Christian in its tendency would have omitted any other stanza sooner than that.

In the hymn of Frederick W. Faber, "Was there ever kindest shepherd" (435 in the old book, 93 in the new), which begins, in the new book, perhaps better, with "There's a wideness in God's mercy," those halves of the old stanzas 2 and 4 are omitted which mention the blood of Christ, so that the hymn as it now appears contains no clear reference to Christ at all!

In "Come, Thou Fount of every blessing" (589 in the old book, 235 in the new), the stanzas beginning "Here I raise my Ebenezer" and "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it" are omitted. Surely that hymn, at least, might have been spared mutilation.

A particularly clear example of the removal of the gospel which has been brought about by omissions in this book is found in the treatment of the beautiful children's hymn, "Around the throne of God in heaven Thousands of children stand" (702 in the old book, 450 in the new). The third stanza of that hymn asks the question about those children whose "sins are all forgiven" (we are here omitting the refrain: "Singing, Glory be to God on high," which occurs after each stanza):

What brought them to that world above,
That heaven so bright and fair,
Where all is peace, and joy, and love;
How came those children there?

Then the next stanza in the old book gives the answer to that question as follows:

Because the Saviour shed His blood
To wash away their sin;
Bathed in that pure and precious flood,
Behold them white and clean.

That stanza is omitted in the new Hymnal; and the answer to the question appears merely in what is said in the last stanza, which now comes immediately after the question:

On earth they sought the Saviour's grace,
On earth they loved His Name;
So now they see His blessed face,
And stand before the Lamb.

Here, in a very characteristic way, the grounding of salvation in the work of Christ is removed, and the true character of saving faith is obscured.

The Added Hymns

When we come now to the (approximately) 214 hymns which have been added in the new Hymnal to those which appeared in the old book, it should be said in commendation that among these hymns are included a series of Psalms from the Scottish Psalter of 1650 and from certain other sources, which, if they were not balanced by other things, would constitute a valuable enrichment of the devotional life of the Church. We may mention also by way of commendation, for example, the inclusion of a beautiful Christmas hymn by Martin Luther (126), and also—to take a more modern example—the hymn "I am trusting

Thee, Lord Jesus, Trusting only Thee" (287), which has come to be very familiar and very dear to many Christian people.

There are, moreover, among the added hymns a few that do, in some specific fashion, touch upon the heart of the gospel in the Cross of Christ. As examples may be mentioned the hymn of Horatius Bonar, "Glory be to God the Father" (60), which contains the stanza:

Glory be to Him who loved us,
Washed us from each spot and stain,
Glory be to Him who bought us,
Made us kings with Him to reign!
Glory, glory, glory, glory,
To the Lamb that once was slain!

and the hymn by the same author, "Blessing and honor and glory and power" (196), and "Behold the Lamb of God!" (153) by Matthew Bridges, and a good Communion hymn (360, by John Morison as in "Scottish Paraphrases"). Others might be mentioned, too; and we do not mean to convey the impression that there is nothing at all that is good in the hymns included in this book.

But these are very distinctly exceptions; and in general it may be said that the added hymns contain little specific reference to the atoning blood of Christ—certainly that they contain little in comparison with the wealth that was found in the hymns, and stanzas of hymns, that have been removed.

What characterizes the new hymns above anything else is their deadly vagueness. Such vagueness cannot, of course, be exhibited in any review; it can be appreciated only when a man reads the new hymns through for himself. This vagueness is altogether attractive to the non-doctrinal Modernism that now dominates the visible Church; but to the Christian heart it is almost as depressing as definitely and clearly unscriptural teaching would be. Let it be clearly understood, therefore, that what we shall now say in criticism of individual hymns is only supplementary to the central indictment that they ignore the great central verities of the Faith and particularly the heart and core of the Bible which is found in the shed blood of Christ our Sacrifice.

How, for example, can a Christian congregation sing the hymn by Ozora Stearns Davis (179), the third stanza of which reads:

The common hopes that make us men
Were His in Galilee;
The tasks He gives are those He gave
Beside the restless sea.

It is difficult to see what room there is here for the central redeeming purpose that caused our blessed Lord to assume our nature and die in our stead on the Cross.

How can a believer in the unique authority of the written Word of God sing the hymn, "One holy Church of God appears" (335), by Samuel Longfellow, which in its third stanza says, regarding the "living Church":

The truth is her prophetic gift,
The soul her sacred page;
And feet on mercy's errands swift
Do make her pilgrimage.

In fairness, however, it ought to be said that the new book contains fewer hymns by this Unitarian writer than the old book did, and that it is to be commended especially for the omission of the hymn "Beneath the shadow of the cross" (542 in the old book), which is far indeed from celebrating the Cross of Christ in the Christian sense.

What believer in the new birth, however, and in the sonship which comes to man only through that supernatural act of the Holy Ghost can possibly sing the hymn, "In Christ there is no East or West" (341 in the new book), which ends with the words

All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth

without any indication whatever that men dead in trespasses and sins can become "Christly" only when they are made alive by God's grace?

The true end of Church-union propaganda is rather clearly indicated in the hymn (344) by the New England Quaker writer, John Greenleaf Whittier, which begins with the stanza:

Forgive, O Lord, our severing ways,
The rival altars that we raise,
The wrangling tongues that mar Thy praise,

and in which the hope is expressed that there may be "one Church for all humanity." What kind of Church will that one Church be? No one who knows Whittier's hymn, I think, can possibly doubt but that it will be the same kind of church as that which was spoken of in my hearing (if I may quote his words roughly as I remember them) by the Unitarian presiding officer at a recent meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science in Philadelphia. "Rabbi Fineshriber and I," said he, speaking of the leading "Liberal" rabbi of the city, who was one of the speakers, "are in the same church."

Some of the worst of the new hymns appear under the general heading, "The Kingdom of God on Earth" (363-426). Thus in "O Lord of life, Thy Kingdom is at hand" (370), by Marion Franklin Ham, a Unitarian minister, it appears in the course of the hymn that the Kingdom will be here when "man shall rule the world with equity"! Even worse, if anything, from the Christian point of view, is the hymn, "Once to every man and nation" (373) by another writer of Unitarian background, James Russell Lowell, where, in a way that can hardly be regarded as anything other than blasphemous, the poet speaks of "Some great cause, God's new Messiah," and says of himself:

By the light of burning martyrs,
Jesus' bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever
With the cross that turns not back.

But it is reserved to a Presbyterian minister, Dr. William P. Merrill, a signer of the Modernist "Auburn Affirmation," to contribute to this book the hymn which perhaps more definitely and clearly than any other indicates the trend of the Church. It is the hymn, "Not alone for mighty empire" (416), where the closing stanza reads:

God of justice, save the people
From the clash of race and creed,
From the strife of class and faction:
Make our nation free indeed.
Keep her faith in simple manhood
Strong as when her life began,
Till it find its full fruition
In the brotherhood of man.

The inclusion of that stanza in a hymn of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. certainly raises with particular clearness the issue between Christianity and Modernism. If it be true that "faith in simple manhood" will find "its full fruition in the brotherhood of man," then the Bible is false from beginning to end: all its solemn warnings, all its rebukes to human pride, all its promises of the sovereign grace of God are but idle words; and we have been utterly mistaken in our reliance for salvation simply and solely upon the atoning blood of Christ.

Which shall it be—"faith in simple manhood" or faith in Christ crucified? Shall we regard the Cross of Christ merely as an example for us to imitate, a cross upon which we ourselves can die, or shall we regard it as a Sacrifice which alone can satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to God? Shall we say, with Dr. Merrill, in another of the added hymns (401):

Lift high the cross of Christ!
Tread where His feet have trod,

or shall we say with the writer of one of the rejected hymns:

I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all, and frees us
From the accursed load:
I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White in His blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

The time has come, in the Presbyterian Church and in other churches, when we must choose.