

Notes - Spiritual Songs, Morrish Edition, 1882

by John Nelson Darby

This sermon provides a historical and biographical context for the spiritual songs written by John Nelson Darby, highlighting their inspiration and composition.

Scripture: Psalm 95:1

Topics: "Worship through Hymns", "The Father in Worship"

Description

John Nelson Darby reflects on the creation of spiritual hymns during his time in Pau from 1879 to 1881, emphasizing the significance of hymns directed to 'The Father.' He shares insights into the origins and circumstances surrounding various hymns, including those written during personal trials and moments of inspiration. The notes reveal the evolution of these hymns and their publication history, showcasing Darby's dedication to expressing faith through song. His experiences, including illness and confinement, influenced the depth and themes of his writings, highlighting the connection between suffering and spiritual expression.

Transcript

The following notes, amongst other details and incidents of interest, give the grounds upon which the dates have been assigned. The earlier dates are only approximately given. The later Hymns, with the exception of "The Hope of Day," were all written during Mr. Darby's residence in Pau, in the years 1879 to 1881, when the thought of Hymns addressed to "The Father," was much present to his mind. Hymns from pp. 41 to 77 are given in the order in which they were written in Mr. Darby's manuscript book.

[The numbering is the pagination of the Morrish edition of 1882.]

*The Hymns thus indicated, were all written at Pau, in the same year, 1879.

1. "What powerful, mighty Voice, so near,"

The date of this Hymn is, it is thought, somewhere about the year 1832; but being uncertain, is placed in brackets.

7. "Oh ! the joy of the salvation"

This Hymn was dictated by Mr. Darby, to a friend, while confined to his bed in a dark room, during the intervals of a severe and prolonged attack of gout in the eye, about the year 1835.

A selection from it, was published in the following year, in "The Christian Hymn Book, 2nd Edition (T. B. Rowe, Plymouth), 1836," but with considerable variations, introduced by Mr. Wigram (as in other of Mr. Darby's Hymns), to make the Hymn more suitable for singing purposes.

These variations are shown by the italics, in the following text, which is taken from "The Christian Hymn Book;" the printing and punctuation being given as there found:-

"Hark! ten thousand voices crying

'Lamb of God!' with one accord,

Thousand thousand saints replying,

Wake at once the echoing chord.

* * * * *

'Praise the Lamb,' the chorus waking,

All in heav'n together throng,

Loud and far each tongue partaking,

Rolls around the endless song.

Grateful incense this, ascending

Ever to the Father's throne,

Ev'ry knee to Jesus bending,

All the mind in heav'n is one.

All the Father's counsels claiming

Equal honour to the Son,

All the Son's effulgence beaming,

Makes the Father's glory known.

By the Spirit all pervading,

Hosts unnumber'd round the Lamb,

Crown'd with light and joy unfading,

Hail Him as the great 'I am.'

Joyful now the full creation

Rests in undisturb'd repose,

Blest in Jesu's full salvation,

Sorrow now, nor thralldom knows.

V. 6, 1. I. - "Full" in "The Christian Hymn Book," is changed to "new" in "Hymns for the Poor of the Flock (1, Warwick Square, London), 1838," - to avoid the recurrence of the word "full" in the 3rd line; and this is followed in other Hymn Books.

* * * * *

Hark! the heav'nly notes again!

Loudly swells the song of praise,

Throughout creation's vault, Amen!

Amen, responsive joy doth raise."

The complete Hymn, as given in this Collection, was not published in its original form, till it appeared in "The Present Testimony, vol. ix. (Groombridge, 5, Paternoster Row, London), 1857."

11. "Rise, my soul! Thy God directs thee;"

This Hymn was written in Switzerland, when a large number of Christians left the Swiss Free Church ("L'Eglise Libre"), after some lectures that Mr. Darby had given on the Book of Exodus.

It was first published in "The Christian Hymn Book, 3rd Edition, 1837."

14. "Rest of the saints above,"

This was first published, on Mr. Darby's return from Switzerland in 1845, in the form of a leaflet (T. B. Bateman, 1, Ivy Lane, London) ; and afterwards, in "The Prospect, vol. i. (S. Barber, Smith Street, Guernsey), 1848."

18. "O Lord, Thy love's unbounded!"

Written on the top of a coach, while trying to recall a Hymn by Mr. Deck, beginning with the same words, well known to many.

It appeared on the same leaflet with the above; and in "The Prospect, vol. i. 1848."

20. "This world is a wilderness wide:"

The manuscript of this was given by Mr. Darby, to a friend, at Montpellier, in 1849.

It was first published in "The Prospect, vol. i. 1849." It is called, in "The Present Testimony, vol. i. 1849," "A Song for the Wilderness."

22. "O Jesus, precious Saviour,"

First appeared in "The Present Testimony, vol. xiv. (Groombridge, 5, Paternoster Row, London), 1862."

25. "Sing, without ceasing sing,"

First came out in "The Present Testimony, vol. xiv. (Groombridge), 1862."

28. "Oh! bright and blessed scenes,"

In "Present Testimony, a new series, vol. i. (Groombridge), 1867;" and called there, "Home."

31. "O ever homeless Stranger!"

This was written during a severe illness, in Canada, in which it was thought he was dying, and when medical aid had been in vain pressed upon him. He got up, although weak; wrote the Hymn; and was then obliged to go to bed again, for the remainder of his illness.

First printed in "Words of Truth, vol. i. (R. L. Allan, 75, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow), 1867." It is called, in "Present Testimony, a new series, vol. i. 1867," "The Man of Sorrows."

41. "Soon we taste the endless sweetness"

First published in "A Voice to the Faithful, vol. iv. (24, Warwick Lane, London), 1870." It is called, in "The Streams, (Tract Depot, Warwick Lane)," "The Tree of Life."

45. "And is it so! I shall be like Thy Son!"

In "A Voice to the Faithful, vol. vi. (24, Warwick Lane, London), 1872."

Entitled, in Mr. Darby's manuscript, "The Hope of Day."

*48. "Father! Thy Name our souls would bless,"

Written at Pau, in the South of France, 1879.

Mr. Darby first concluded this hymn thus;-

"In holiness Thou keep'st us here,

With all a Father's love;

As Jesus loved, - we have no fear, -

Taught, led, by Thee above."

*51. "To live of Thee, -blest Source of deepest joy

Entitled, in Mr. Darby's manuscript book, "Echo of Songs in the Night."

*54. "There is rest for the weary soul- "

*56. "Oh! bright and blessed hope!"

*60. "Blest Father! infinite in grace:"

(1) Another manuscript reading of verse 2, is as follows;

"Thy love will find its perfect rest,

Where all around is joy;

Where - all in Thee supremely blest -

Thou shalt their powers employ."

(2) In place of the two last verses given in the text, the following verse occurs in the earlier manuscripts,

"Yet more than all, a Father's love

Doth deeper joy recall ;

And is, where all is bliss above,

The chiefest song of all!"

(3) There are further variations in the manuscripts.

*62. "Father! in Thine eternal power - "

This Hymn was written for an invalid who was in great suffering.

*66. "I'm waiting for the glory:"

Entitled, in Mr. Darby's manuscript book, "Sonnet."

68. "Father! Thy sovereign love has sought"

Written at Pau, 1880.

70. "And shall we see Thy Face!"

The manuscript is on the back of a letter sent to Mr. Darby in February, 1881.

72. "O Lord! Thy glory we behold,"

Written it is believed, in 1881.

75. "We'll praise Thee, glorious Lord!"

This Hymn was given by Mr. Darby to a sick friend, in March, 1881.

77. "I'm waiting for Thee, Lord, - "

This was sent by Mr. Darby to a friend, in November, 1881. In the letter accompanying it, he says; - "I send a hymn, suggested by one you like: but that brought you down, to being 'often weary.' This goes up, to where there is no weariness. I don't quite like it, as there is a certain levity about the metre. But it is Christ!"

The manuscript is roughly written, on a very small piece of paper, in single triplets. But now that the arrangement corresponds with the Hymn of which it is a paraphrase, an unfinished appearance is accidentally given to it. The Hymn, however, is complete.

80. "Jesus! canst Thou receive"

Entitled, in Mr. Darby's manuscript, "Part of a Hymn."

82. "It is not with uncertain step"

Entitled, in Mr. Darby's manuscript, "To Georgie L."

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