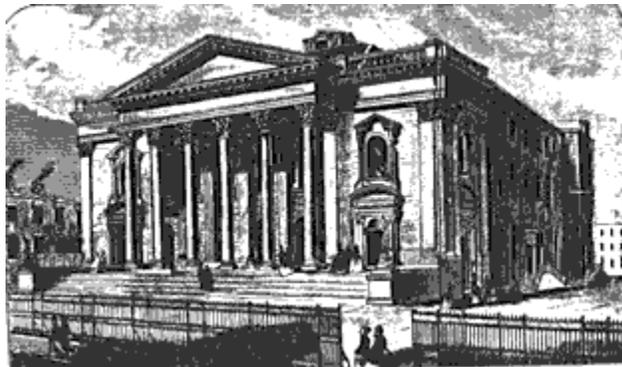


Our Own Hymn Book

PREFACE

by Charles Haddon Spurgeon (September, 1866)

Our congregation has long used two hymn-books; namely, the comprehensive edition of "*Dr. Rippon's Selection*," and "*Dr. Watt's Psalms and Hymns*." Despite the judgment of many to the contrary, we believe that the store of spiritual songs contained in these two volumes is not excelled, even if equalled by any compilation extant; and we should most probably have been very well content with those books had it not been for difficulties connected with the remarkably complex arrangement of their contents. To strangers it was no small task to discover the hymn selected for singing; for, in the first place, there were two books, which was in itself an evil; but the matter was made far worse by the fact that these two volumes were each a puzzle to the uninstructed; Rippon with its parts innumerable, and Watts with first, second, and third books.



Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit

The providence of God brings very many new hearers within the walls of our place of worship, and many a time we have marked their futile researches, and pitied the looks of despair with which

they have given up all hope of finding the hymns, and so of joining intelligently in our words of praise. We felt that such ought not to be the state of our service of song, and resolved if possible to reform it. None of the collections already published are exactly what our congregation needs, or we would have cheerfully adopted one of them. They are good in their way, but we need something more.

Our congregation has distinctive features which are not suited by every compilation, not indeed by any known to us. We thought it best to issue a selection which would contain the cream of the books already in use among us, together with the best of all others extant up to the hour of going to press; and having sought a blessing upon the project, we set about it with all our might, and at last have brought it to a conclusion. Our best diligence has been given to the work, and we have spared no expense: may God's richest blessing rest upon the result of our arduous labours! Unto His glory we dedicate "Our Own Hymn-Book."



The area of our researches has been as wide as the bounds of existing religious literature, American and British, Protestant and Romish – ancient and modern. Whatever may be thought of our taste we have used it without prejudice; and a good hymn has not been rejected because of the character of its author, or the heresies of the church in whose hymnal it first occurred; so long as the language and the spirit commended the hymn to our heart we included it, and believe that we have enriched our collection thereby. The range of subjects is very extensive, comprising not only direct praise, but doctrine, experience, and exhortation; thus

enabling the saints according to apostolical command to edify one another in their songs.

If any object that some of the hymns are penitential or doctrinal, and therefore unfit to be sung, we reply that we find examples of such in the Book of Psalms, which we have made our model in compiling or work; there we have Maschils as well as hosannahs, and penitential odes as well as hallelujahs. We have not been able to fall in with modern scruples, but have rested content with ancient precedents. We have not cast about for models suggested by the transient fancy of the hour, but have followed the indications given us the word of God and in the long-established usage of the universal church; desiring to be obedient to the sacred precept, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom: teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." We hope that in some few churches of the land we may be helpful to their service of sacred song, and aid them in praising the Lord.

The features which distinguish this hymn-book are such as to justify its issue, at least in the mind of the compiler, upon whom it has involved immense labour – a labour which has been its own reward. Those features are as follows –

❶(1) The hymns have been drawn from the original works of the authors, and are given as far as practicable just as they were written. This is so unusual a practice as to be almost a novelty, while the mangling of hymns has grown into a system – a system, however, to be most heartily deprecated. The very few alterations which we have personally made are either grammatical corrections or emendations which seemed to be imperatively demanded by the

interests of truth or were necessary in order to change the metre into such as could be sung.

❷(2) Subjects frequently passed over or pushed into a corner are here made conspicuously the themes of song; such, for instance, as the great doctrines of sovereign grace, the personal advent of our Lord, and especially the sweetness of present communion with Him.

❸(3) Hymns suitable for revivals, prayer-meetings, and earnest addresses to sinners, are given in larger numbers and greater variety than in any other selection known to the editor, and several popular verses whose poetic merit had not commended them to previous compilers, have been adopted in deference to the Great Spirit who has so frequently blessed the use of them both to saints and sinners.

❹(4) The PSALMS of David are here – by the aid of various writers, more especially Isaac Watts, the English and Scotch versions, Mr. Lyte and Miss Auber – all presented, in whole or in part, in forms suitable for congregational singing, and our endeavour has been to preserve the devout spirit of that inspired book even where the Jewish expressions have been necessarily changed for Christian language.

Our deepest obligations and acknowledged to Mr. D. Sedgwick, of Sun Street, Bishopsgate, without whose diligent assistance our work could never have been accomplished. His large collection of hymn-books, and his marvellous acquaintance with hymnology, render him the indispensable helper of all hymn collectors who would have their work well done. For the authorship, dates, and general correctness of the text, we have relied mainly upon him;

and believe that he has enabled us to produce a volume altogether unique and unrivalled in value.



The editor [**Spurgeon himself**] has inserted with great diffidence a very few of his own composition, chiefly among the Psalms, and his only apology for so doing is the fact that of certain difficult Psalms he could find no version at all fitted for singing, and was therefore driven to turn them into verse himself. As these original compositions are but few, it is hoped that they will not prejudice the ordinary reader against the rest of the collection, and possible one or two of them may gratify the generous judgment of our friends.

To very many proprietors of original hymns we tender earnest thanks for the liberal manner in which consent has invariably been given to us to use their copyrights. If by inadvertence we have used any compositions without permission, we trust the owners will extend to us the same courtesy as if we had written to them, which kind assent we will gladly acknowledge in a future issue. We are bound to acknowledge our obligations to the proprietors of the invaluable works of James Montgomery, Conder, Lyte, Kelly, Sir Edward Denny, Miss Anna Shipton, and to the publishers of the hymns of Dr. Neale. We thank Rev. W. Hiley Bathurst for permission to use his excellent "Psalms and Hymns" / Rev. Thos. Davis, of Roundhay, for like liberty with his valuable "Hymns New and Old" / Dr. Horatius Bonar, for his choice "Hymns of Faith and Hope" / Rev. J. S. Monsell, for his most precious "Spiritual Songs" / Mr. Caswall for assent to use his hymns given through Mr. Stevenson / to Rev. James Kelly, for hymns from his selection / Mr. Edmeston, for several poetical odes / Rev. W. Reid, for aid through

his noble "Praise Book " / Mr. Henry Bateman, for use of "Heart Melodies" and other works / Rev. Newman Hall, for original pieces / and especially Mr. Albert Midlane, for use of "Gospel Echoes" and for several contributions specially written for our assistance. We are grateful to representatives of Dr. Reed for the use of his hymns, and to Rev. Denham Smith and others for the same favour; while to many friends we are thankful for valuable information as to authorship and dates.

We are thus indebted to all classes of Christians, and are furnished with another instance of the intimate fellowship of all saints in their prayers and praises; we pray that believers of all denominations may derive a blessing from the combined works of so many of the Lord's servants.

— C. H. Spurgeon

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As the various hymn versions of the Psalms amount to 70 more than the numbering indicates, there is a grand total of 1130 HYMNS in this volume.