

## What's "IN" a name?

Eric Brown

If you read the article about short hymns last week you will know that I did a search, in the 1933 MHB, for those with 2 verses.

In the course of turning the pages my eye lighted on the first line of a very familiar hymn; only there was something odd about it!

Hymn 249, written by Caroline Maria Noel in the nineteenth Century – what had caught my eye was at the start of the first verse:

**In** the Name of Jesus  
Every knee shall bow,  
Every tongue confess Him  
King of Glory now.  
'Tis the Father's pleasure  
We should call Him Lord,  
Who from the beginning  
Was the mighty Word.

Surely, the hymn stored away in my memory bank commences "At the name of Jesus", not "In the name .....".

Last Thursday I conducted a "straw poll" at Blandford's 'zoom' coffee morning – giving them lines 2-4 and asking for the first line. Everybody opted for "At the name ....." . When I explained the reason for the question, there was one person who then said that they had come across this "alternative".

In Hymns and Psalms (74) we have the more familiar form "At the name of Jesus".

The attribution is to Caroline Maria Noel (alt.) . There has been at least one alteration – we find a different verse 3 in H&P as well as a wording change to the first line of the last verse as well as the change at the beginning of the hymn.

Singing the Faith (317) prints the same words as H&P but does not mention any alteration from the original text.

**In** or **At**, does it matter which version we sing; is there any difference in meaning between the two words?

The first line comes from Paul's letter to the Philippians (chapter 2, NIV):

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> who, being in very nature<sup>1</sup> God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> **that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow**, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> **and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

An inspection of many translations in "BibleGateway" has the word **AT** in verse 10. Use of this word is all 'inclusive'; there will be a time when "all in heaven, on earth and under the earth" will acknowledge and bow to Jesus.

(I resist the temptation to say, in current parlance, they will 'take a knee' for Jesus!)

Paul was proclaiming Jesus – to all, Jew and Gentile alike. Jesus is exalted to the highest place and a time will come when all will acknowledge Him and bow to Him. Until that time comes the Christian Church should be looking outwards to the community where we are situated, both serving and proclaiming Jesus.

There is however a big temptation to turn inwards, concerning ourselves only with the affairs of the church. "**In**

the name” suggests, to me, this latter course of action – something we do and keep within the confines of our closed societies.

It was that, poorly expressed by me, distinction which I felt very strongly on seeing the first line of the familiar hymn in the 1933 hymn book.

Caroline Noel was the daughter of an Anglican clergyman and wrote a number of hymns, especially during the time she was bedridden for 25 years of her later life. ‘At the Name of Jesus’ was written as a processional hymn for Ascension Day and was first published in 1870. It would appear that the original first line started with **In** but was subsequently changed to **At**.

As is typical for a hymn of this age, when first published there were more verses than those printed in modern hymn books.

If you look at various ‘hymn-lyrics’ web-sites you will find seven or even eight verses – more than are printed in any of our hymn books.

The eight verses are printed here, showing which are used in our various hymn books:

Lines 1&2, 3&4 etc. of the hymn as we know it have been printed together, making a four rather than an 8 line verse.

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow  
Every tongue confess him King of Glory now:  
‘Tis the Father’s pleasure we should call him Lord,  
Who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

v1: MHB, H&P, STF

Mighty and mysterious in the highest height,  
God from everlasting, Very light of light;  
In the Father’s bosom, with the Spirit blest,  
Love in Love eternal, rest, in perfect rest.

At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,  
All the angels faces all the hosts of light,  
Thrones and Dominations, stars upon their way,  
All the heavenly orders, in their great array.

Humbled for a season, to receive a name  
From the lips of sinners unto whom He came,  
Faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,  
Brought it back victorious, when from death he passed:

v2: MHB, H&P, STF

Bore it up triumphant with its human light,  
Through all ranks of creatures, to the central height,  
To the throne of Godhead, to the Father’s breast;  
Filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.

v3: H&P, STF (only)

Name Him, brothers, name Him, with love as strong as death,  
But with awe and wonder and with bated breath:  
He is God the Saviour, He is Christ the Lord,  
Ever to be worshipped, trusted, and adored.

v3: MHB (only)

In your hearts enthrone him; there let Him subdue  
All that is not holy, all that is not true:  
Crown him as your captain in temptation’s hour;  
Let His will enfold you in its light and power.

v4: MHB, H&P, STF

Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again,  
With His Father’s glory, with His angel train;  
For all wreaths of empire meet upon His brow,  
And our hearts confess Him King of glory now.

v5: MHB, H&P(alt), STF(alt)