



The Hymnologist's Bookshelf

Treasure No 63: The Hymnologist's Bookshelf by B. Massey: An article from Bulletin 211

Back in Bulletin 142 (May 1978) we published, under this title, an article surveying the various books then available giving information about hymns, tunes, and their use. The article arose because members of the society were being asked 'Where can I find information about such and such?' People still put that sort of question. After nearly two decades, however, the amount of source material has increased. So, following a suggestion from a member, we here venture to update our earlier article as we now survey a somewhat longer bookshelf.

Actually, our title is a touch inaccurate since, as before, we write not for the dedicated scholar but for the ordinary hymn-lover and hymn-user who probably has neither time nor inclination to delve into specialist libraries. We therefore confine attention to items that are fairly readily accessible. And, if only to keep the survey to a reasonable length, we can pass over countless small publications of but a few pages and those books that simply retell anecdotes of often doubtful authenticity. Also, with just one or two exceptions, we deal only with works published in Britain.

Many items are now out of print, but the eagle-eyed hunter may often run them to earth in second-hand bookshops. Libraries too can be of help.

1. Julian

At the head of the list must come John Julian's mighty *A Dictionary of Hymnology*. It is, by any standards, a breath-taking achievement and the level of accuracy is astonishingly high. First published in 1892 by John Murray, it went into a second edition in 1907. A photographic reprint of the second edition was brought out by Dover Publications in 1957; the 1768 closely printed, double column pages were then divided more manageably into two volumes but the work was otherwise unchanged. It sets forth 'the Origin and History of Christian Hymns of all Ages and Nations' and includes brief biographies of authors. It does not, save for an occasional passing reference, deal with tunes.

Since the printing plates for the first edition were reused for the second, the substantial additions of 1907 simply follow the earlier material and are separately indexed. Moreover, what is easily overlooked (since few people bother to read prefaces) is that the indexes are supplementary to the main alphabetical sequences. That is, if a hymn is treated at its appropriate alphabetical position in the body of the book, any index reference for it will be to subsidiary mentions only. A seeker thus needs to look first in the two main sequences (pp. 1–1306 and 1599–1729) before consulting the corresponding indexes. Most major public libraries have a reference copy.

2. Hymn-Book Companions

Many major hymn-books of recent years have had 'companions' giving particulars about hymns and authors and, in most cases, tunes and composers featured in the parent hymn-book. Here, in

alphabetical order of the parent books (plus supplements, if any) in current or recent use, we list the principal companions.

Historical Companion to Hymns Ancient and Modern, ed. Maurice Frost (Clowes 1962). Although based on the 1950 edition of *A & M*, this companion does include brief details of hymns, tunes, authors and composers represented in all previous editions. It is almost entirely factual, and is unusual in giving, in full, the originals of hymns translated from other languages.

Hymns for Today Discussed by Cyril Taylor (Canterbury Press Norwich—and RSCM 1984). This is scarcely a companion in the conventional sense, but it offers perceptive comments on the contents of 100 *Hymns for Today* and *More Hymns for Today* (which form nos. 334–533 of *A & M* New Standard edition). It can be of considerable value to those whose task (or one hopes pleasure) it is to introduce hymns to congregations.

The Baptist Hymn Book Companion by Hugh Martin, E. P. Sharpe et al. (Psalms and Hymns Trust 1962). This companion, more concise than most, refers to the 1962 *BHB*.

A Companion to 'Christian Hymns' compiled by Cliff Knight (C. V Knight, 17 Llanover Close, Newport, Gwent NP9 6GR. 1993) refers to the non-denominational *Christian Hymns* (Evangelical Movement of Wales 1977).

Companion to Congregational Praise, ed. K. L. Parry and Erik Routley (Independent Press 1953). This was undoubtedly one of the best companions of its time and its authors did not shrink from giving (well-balanced) value judgements. A 40-page paperback Supplement (Independent Press 1960) provided an index of scripture texts, a calendar of authors and composers, and a chronological list of sources of hymns.

Handbook to the Church Hymnary [1927 edn], ed. James Moffatt (OUP 1927). A new edition with supplement, ed. Millar Patrick, was published in 1935; this also treated tunes in *The Scottish [Metrical] Psalter* of 1929.

Handbook to the Church Hymnary Third Edition, ed. J. M. Barkley (OUP 1979). For the older hymns and tunes this draws quite heavily on its predecessor, but usually with some condensation.

Companion to Hymns and Psalms, ed. Richard Watson and Kenneth Trickett (Methodist Publishing House 1988). A small pamphlet of supplementary notes was issued in 1990. As the latest and in many respects the most detailed of the major British companions this is nowadays probably the first port of call in a hymnological enquiry.

A Short Companion to 'Hymns and Songs' 1969 by John Wilson (Methodist Church Music Society 1969). This little paperback commentary has now been largely overtaken by the *Companion to HP*.

The New Methodist Hymn-Book [i.e. the 1933 edn] *Illustrated in History and Experience* by John Telford (Epworth Press 1934). As the title suggests, this is rather more anecdotal (yet not trivial) than other companions. It deals only with the words of hymns and their authors.

The Music of the Methodist Hymn-Book by J. T. Lightwood (Epworth Press 1935). Reprinted with revision and an appendix by F. B. Westbrook in 1955. *New Church Praise Commentary* by Peter Cutts (United Reformed Church 1981) refers to the URC supplement *New Church Praise* (1975). There are only occasional snippets of biography.

Companion to the School Hymn-book of the Methodist Church by W. S. Kelynack (Epworth Press 1950). Although the parent book has now fallen out of use, this is the only companion dealing with much children's hymnody. It treats only the words of hymns and their authors: there is no companion to the music of this hymnal.

Companion to The Song Book of The Salvation Army compiled by Gordon Taylor (The Salvation Army 1989). This supplies information about authors and their texts (by no means all of Salvationist origin) in the 1986 words-only *Song Book*. (Music is provided by the corresponding *Tune Book*, to which there is no companion.)

Songs of Praise Discussed by Percy Dearmer and Archibald Jacob (OUP 1933). Some of Dearmer's views may now seem quirky, but this is nonetheless a valuable (and sometimes entertaining) book. The introductory material includes a useful summary (pp. xxvi–xxxii) of those elements of English prosody applicable to hymnody.

Songs of the People of God: A companion to The Australian Hymn Book [With One Voice] by Wesley Milgate (Collins 1982). One of the most thorough and detailed companions.

A Companion to 'Sing Alleluia' by Wesley Milgate (Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd 1988). This documents in detail not only the material in *SA* (the 1987 supplement to *WOV*) but also supplies corrections and updating to the *WOV Companion*.

A companion is of course useful not only to users of the hymnal to which it refers. It is often worth consulting more than one companion for particular items of information.

3. More General Works

A number of the companions, notably that to *A & M*, include historical introductions and general articles. There are also several books providing an 'overview' of the subject. Among these may be mentioned:

Alan Gibson, *The Ministry of Song*, Carey Kingsgate Press 1959.

Norman Goldhawk, *On Hymns and Hymn-Books*, Epworth Press 1979.

A. S. Gregory, *Praises with Understanding*, Epworth Press 1936, reprinted 1977.

H. A. L. Jefferson, *Hymns in Christian Worship*, Rockliff 1950.

Alan Luff, *Welsh Hymns and their Tunes*, Stainer & Bell 1990.

Hugh Martin, *They Wrote our Hymns*, SCM Press 1961.

K. L. Parry, *Christian Hymns*, SCM Press 1956.

Millar Patrick, *The Story of the Church's Song*, The Scottish Churches Joint Committee on Youth 1927.

Millar Patrick, *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody*, OUP 1949.

C. S. Phillips, *Hymnody Past and Present*, SPCK 1937.

Arthur Pollard, *English Hymns*, Longmans 1960.

Erik Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, John Murray 1952.
Erik Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, Darton, Longman and Todd 1966.
Erik Routley, *The English Carol*, Herbert Jenkins 1958.

Cyril Taylor, *The Way to Heaven's Door (Broadcast Talks on some Favourite Hymntunes)*, Epworth Press 1955.

Donald Webster, *Our Hymn Tunes - Their Choice and Performance*, St Andrew Press 1983.

Two booklets in the RSCM 'Study Notes' series, both by Erik Routley, are worth noting: *The Words of Hymns: a Short History* and *Hymn Tunes: an Historical Outline*. He also contributed a valuable foreword in similar historical vein to *Hymns for Church and School* (1964): this account was extended up to 1981 in the Hymn Society booklet *English Hymns and their Tunes* issued that year for the International Hymn Conference at Oxford.

Two scholarly works on the musical side are Maurice Frost's *English and Scottish Psalm and Hymn Tunes* (SPCK and OUP 1955), dealing almost entirely with pre-1700 tunes, and C. E. Pocknee's *The French Diocesan Hymns and their Melodies* (Faith Press 1954).

On more particular aspects one must mention Bernard L. Manning's classic *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts* (Epworth Press 1942; reissued c.1990). Methodists will hardly need reminding of Henry Bett's *The Hymns of Methodism* (third edn, Epworth Press 1945) and J. E. Rattenbury's *The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley* (Epworth Press 1948). Also on Wesley hymns is Edward Houghton's *The Handmaid of Piety* (The Wesley Fellowship 1992). Studies of some German hymnwriters appeared in *Sursum Corda* by Sydney H. Moore (Independent Press 1956).

Three books by Erik Routley, though published in America, are so significant that they justify a bending of our 'UK only' rule. *An English-Speaking Hymnal Guide* (The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, MI 58321, USA, 1979) is in the main a companion to the words of 888 commonly encountered hymns from both sides of the Atlantic. The use of abbreviations and an ultra-telegraphic style allows the inclusion of an astonishing amount of factual information on the hymns and brief biographies of authors and translators. A complementary volume, *A Panorama of Christian Hymnody* (Liturgical Press 1979), takes the form of 28 articles on various aspects of hymnody, illustrated by the (usually) complete texts of 593 hymns. In particular it shows the development of the different streams of hymnody and their historical contexts.

The *Music of Christian Hymns* (GIA Publications, Chicago, 1981) is not so much a source of factual information about individual tunes as a wide-ranging review of the history of hymn music, salted with many of the author's assessments of particular tunes and composers. An especially valuable feature is the provision of 605 music examples. The book is in fact a revised and much expanded version of his *The Music of Christian Hymnody* (Independent Press 1957).

4. Biographies

For biographical information about major writers and composers the *Dictionary of National Biography* (or where appropriate the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* or the *Dictionary of American Biography*) or dictionaries of music and musicians such as Grove will be invaluable—although all but the wealthiest hymnologist will have to rely on a library for such tomes. Bernard Braley, however, has written three entertainingly discursive volumes of collected biography called *Hymnwriters 1, 2, 3*, all published by Stainer & Bell. *Volume 1* (1987) tells of Thomas Ken, William Cowper, Reginald Heber, Walsham

How and John Ellerton; *Volume 2* (1989) of John Newton, Montgomery, H. W. Baker and Albert Bayly; *Volume 3* (1991) of George Herbert, E. H. Plumptre, Robert Bridges and Fred Pratt Green.

5. Commentaries on Individual Hymns

The best-known of exegetical works on hymns is no doubt Erik Routley's *Hymns and the Faith* (John Murray 1955) which discusses and elucidates 49 popular English hymns. In similar vein, but seemingly little known, is G. F. S. Gray's *Hymns and Worship* (SPCK 1961) which treats 41 hymns.

Several worthy paperback books come from Frank Colquhoun: *Preaching on [34] Favourite Hymns*, 1986, and *More Preaching on [28] Favourite Hymns*, 1990 (both Mowbray); and devotional commentaries (from Hodder and Stoughton) *Hymns that live*, 1980, *Sing to the Lord*, 1988, and, with briefer treatment of the separate hymns, *A Hymn Companion: Insight into 300 Christian Hymns*, 1985.

On a smaller scale are three books by David and Jill Wright (all from Paternoster Press): *Praise with Understanding: an Encounter with Thirty Hymns*, 1984, *Thirty Hymns of the Wesleys*, 1985, and *Thirty Christmas Hymns*, 1989.

But for the lay hymn-lover the best single-volume source is surely Ian Bradley's *The Penguin Book of Hymns* (second, corrected, edn 1990) which gives the full original text of 150 hymns with a page or so of commentary on each. There are also (briefer) references to the tunes commonly associated with the hymns.

6. The Liturgical Use of Hymns

The ways in which hymns have been and ought to be used in the context of worship are indicated in many of the works already cited. However, of the few books specifically directed to this topic must be mentioned Cecil Northcott's *Hymns in Christian Worship* (Lutterworth 1964) and particularly Alan Dunstan's practical down-to-earth manuals. These are the *Hymns* (SPCK 1973) and *The Use of Hymns* (Kevin Mayhew 1990).

A number of hymn-books provide lists of hymns grouped by theme to the Church Year. *A Guide to the Use of Hymns Ancient and Modern* (Clowes) was published for both the 1922 and 1950 editions of that hymnal. A similar service was provided for the 1933 *MHB* by the very detailed *Subject, Textual and Lineal Indexes to the Methodist Hymn Book* (Methodist Conference Office 1934; reissued in larger format 1979). The major part of this book is an alphabetical index of every line of every hymn in *MHB*, a boon to those seeking the context of a line lodged, or half-lodged, in the memory. Covering eight different hymnals (though leaning more to the evangelical side) is David Baker's *The Hymns and Songs List* 1992 (Hodder and Stoughton) which catalogues hymns and songs thematically and particularly in relation to the Church Year and the ASB Lectionary.

Erik Routley's *The Organist's Guide to Congregational Praise* (Independent Press 1957) gives detailed guidance on the accompaniment of the hymns in CP. Much of this is worth attention by users of other hymnals but, as the hymns are referred to only by their numbers in CP, a copy of that book must be at hand.

© The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland

For anyone who enjoys, sings, plays, chooses, introduces, studies, teaches or writes hymns ...

The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland. Visit www.hymnsocietygbi.org.uk for more details.