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#### *MENDING AND MARRING : THE DOINGS OF HYMN BOOK EDITORS.*

By HUGH MARTIN.

James Montgomery complained that every writer of hymns had to bear the cross of seeing them revised 'at the pleasure of every Christian brother, however incompetent or little qualified to amend what he may deem amiss in one of the most delicate and difficult exercises of a tender heart and an enlightened understanding.' He does not complain that his hymns have been republished, though sometimes without his permission being sought, 'being rather humbly thankful that any imperfect strains of his should be thus employed . . . But of these liberties taken by some of these borrowers of his effusions to modify certain passages . . . he must avail himself of the present opportunity to remind them that if



good people (and such he verily believes them to be) cannot conscientiously adopt *his* diction and doctrine, it is a little questionable in them to impose upon him theirs, which he may as honestly hesitate to receive.<sup>1</sup>

Such a heartfelt complaint can be found in the writings or on the lips of many hymn writers. Sir H. W. Baker, the editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, used his powers of revision very freely. 'Now I know what A & M stands for', wrote one disgusted author. 'It means Asked-for and Mutilated'. There is a famous protest in John Wesley's preface: 'Many gentlemen have given my brother and me (though without naming us) the honour to reprint many of our hymns. Now they are perfectly welcome to do so, provided they print them just as they are. But I desire they would not attempt to mend them, for they really are not able. None of them is able to mend either the sense or the verse.'

But 'circumstances alter cases,' as Dickens remarked, and when writers become editors they sing a different tune. When Montgomery produced his anthology of hymns, *The Christian Psalmist*, he did not scruple to alter, and when he was helping Cotterill to produce his hymn book in 1819, he wrote, 'Good Mr. Cotterill and I bestowed a great deal of labour and care upon the compilation of that book, clipping, interlining and remodelling hymns of all sorts, as we thought we could correct the sentiment or improve the expression.' And Wesley, like Montgomery, did not do as he would be done by. He was an incorrigible mender of other people's hymns, of his brother, George Herbert, Isaac Watts and many more: sometimes for the better but often for the worse. Charles owes much to his brother's blue pencil. But in his Charleston book John made a sad mess of Herbert's 'Teach me, my God and King.' This is what Herbert wrote in *The Temple*, with one verse omitted:

Teach me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see,  
And what I do in anything  
To do it as for Thee.

A man that looks on glass  
On it may stay his eye;  
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,  
And then the heaven espy.

All may of Thee partake:  
Nothing can be so mean,  
Which, with this tincture, 'For  
Thy sake,'  
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine:  
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone  
That turneth all to gold:  
For that which God doth touch  
and own  
Cannot for less be told.

<sup>1</sup>Preface to *Original Hymns*.

Compare with it Wesley's version: He leaves verse one alone and then proceeds:

A man that looks on glass,  
On that may fix his eye;  
Or unopposed may through it pass  
And heaven behind descry.

If done to obey Thy laws  
Even servile labour shines;  
Hallowed all toil, if this the cause  
The meanest work divine.

All may of Thee partake;  
Nothing so mean can be  
But draws, when acted for Thy  
sake,  
Greatness and worth from Thee.

This is the long-sought stone  
That all converts to gold;  
For that which God for His  
doth own  
Cannot for less be told.

He turned Austin's lovely spring hymn, 'Hark, my soul, how everything', into Long Measure: 'Hark, my dull soul, how everything'. And what excuse could he have for altering 'Our God, our help in ages past' into 'O God, our help', or 'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath' to the pedestrian 'I'll praise my Maker with my breath'?

But though John Wesley illustrates the perils as well as the gains of editing, some of it is in fact inevitable. Julian says that 'Hark, the herald angels sing', 'Awake my soul', 'When I survey', and 'Rock of ages' are the four best hymns in English, and that no one of these has normally been sung as its author wrote it, and some have been drastically revised. Every man has his own list of the four best hymns, and I should want to argue about that, nor do I endorse all the changes made in these ones; but the fact Julian has noted at least shows how widespread the practice of revision is. I shall return to some of those he mentions shortly. Meantime I venture the assertion that if no alterations were permissible, about half the hymn book would disappear altogether. It would be unusable. Certainly the author's original is to be preferred where possible, and there is often great gain in restoring his version, as in the instances just mentioned. But if the changes are not frivolous, an editor or editorial committee need have no bad conscience about the principle. A hymn book is not an anthology of poetry, in which normally an editor would be under obligation to print the author's exact text. It is a collection made for a particular, practical purpose, the public worship of God. 'A hymn's business is to strengthen the faith of to-day, not to present an historical record of the faith of the day before yesterday'.<sup>1</sup>

There are many good reasons why alterations may be necessary in a hymn to fit it for public worship. To begin with, often a slight change in the order of even the same words will make a hymn singable. The originals of some did not scan and had no uniformity of syllables. Some still don't: they are what are politely called 'irregular'. They demand inserted grace notes, a breathless scrambling to get the words into the tune. But a

<sup>1</sup>Bernard Manning. *The Hymns of Wesley and of Watts*, p. 117.



certain amount of attention to the rules is essential if a congregation is to be able to sing. A slight change may also avoid having the emphasis fall upon a word like 'the'.

Again, many of our best hymns are selections from a much larger number of original verses. Stopford Brooke wrote and published long hymns and declared that congregations liked them that way, but five or six verses are plenty for normal purposes. Whittier's 'Dear Lord and Father' had originally seventeen verses and his 'Immortal love' thirty-five: sometimes two or more hymns have been made out of it. Keble's 'There is a book' had twelve verses; Addison's 'When all Thy mercies', thirteen; Byrom's 'Christians awake', written at her request as a Christmas present for his small daughter, had forty-eight lines not divided into verses. Not a few hymns, including some of those just mentioned, were not intended as hymns at all. Baxter's 'Lord, it belongs not to my care' is a selection from a lengthy poem, and Neale's 'Jerusalem the golden' comes from a translation of a poem of three thousand lines, which is mainly a bitter satire on the follies and vices of mankind, with four hundred lines describing in contrast the peace and glory of heaven.

Often a good hymn contains in the original a bad verse or two which would ruin it for modern worship. A well-known example is the verse in 'All things bright and beautiful':

The rich man in his castle,  
The poor man at his gate,  
God made them high and lowly  
And settled their estate.

One wonders if the altogether admirable writer, of whom I would speak only with respect, had forgotten the parable about the rich man in his elegant dining-room with a beggar lying at his gate. Bishop Christopher Wordsworth made Christian giving sound like an investment in Premium Bonds, only with an assurance of drawing a bonus:

Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee  
Repaid a thousandfold will be;  
Then gladly will we give to Thee.  
Who givest all.

Less well known is the opening verse of 'Before Jehovah's awful throne':

Sing to the Lord with joyful voice.  
Let every land His name adore.  
The British Isles shall send the noise  
Across the ocean to the shore.

Further, words have a way of actually changing their meanings or becoming obsolete. I have read that when Wren showed Charles II over St. Paul's while it was in course of erection, the king

exclaimed in admiration that the building was 'amusing, awful, and artificial'. What he meant, and would be understood to mean, was that it was an amazing, awe-inspiring, and skilfully beautiful creation. 'Awful' is a difficult word to keep in a hymn nowadays, as is 'dreadful': they have been degraded. They once meant holy, sacred, awe-inspiring, as in Tersteegen's grand hymn in John Wesley's translation:

Lo, God is here! Let us adore,  
And own how dreadful is this place.

Charles Wesley originally wrote in 'Hail the Day', 'There the pompous triumph waits', which would convey quite the wrong impression to-day. Few would wish to sing with Toplady:

While I draw this fleeting breath,  
When my eyestrings crack in death.

Only pedantry could demand a return to 'Hark, how all the welkin rings', which Wesley wrote, from the familiar revision of Whitefield, 'Hark, the herald angels sing'. The 1904 edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* did read 'welkin', and provoked a public outcry and changed its mind. *The English Hymnal* and *Songs of Praise* actually print the hymn in both forms, as separate hymns.

A writer cannot always foresee the honest or malicious misreading of words and phrases, like the little Levite who kept the old man's watch, or the more intelligible bewilderment of the child at the green hill that hadn't got any city wall. But an editor must look out for such possibilities.

The fondness of many hymn writers for the word 'blood' would grate on the ears of most modern congregations. It has, of course, New Testament associations, notably in relation to the Lord's Supper, but it is often used in hymns in quite a non-New Testament sense, with a misunderstanding of the underlying metaphors and references. Cowper surprisingly is one of the worst offenders with 'There is a fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins'. That otherwise moving hymn cannot be mended. It has to be taken as Cowper wrote it or not at all, and so editors often reluctantly leave it out.

Even more puzzling, because with much less justification, is the fondness of a past generation for worms. Bernard Manning poked some excellent fun at squeamish editors who went round with a tin of Keating's or D.D.T. and was all for keeping the robust language of our great-grandfathers. (*Hymns of Wesley and Watts*, p. 129.) But it really wouldn't do. When William Carey directed that no eulogy and none of his many honours were to be inscribed on his tombstone but only the words from a hymn by Watts:

A wretched, poor and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall.



we cannot help admiring the spirit of the man, though we still wonder at his choice of words. But Carey would see nothing odd in such a use of the word 'worm'. And that grand hymn, 'The God of Abraham praise', declares 'He calls a worm His friend', which does not mean that God loves even His most humble creation, but is a reference to the author. 'Great God of wonders', by Samuel Davies, read originally:

Crimes of such horror to forgive,  
Such guilty daring worms to spare.

Like 'blood', the word had lost all its original meaning, and hymn writers could solemnly produce astonishing lines. Dearmer<sup>1</sup> has collected one or two from hymns once in common use.

Earth from afar has heard Thy fame  
And worms have learnt to lisp Thy name;

or another,

O may Thy powerful word  
Inspire this feeble worm  
To rush into Thy Kingdom, Lord,  
And take it as by storm.

Yet another author, addressing the Almighty, exclaims

Permit this humble worm to bow.

An interesting discussion of what words a modern congregation will stand is provided by the now famous hymn, 'Who would true valour see'. Dearmer claims the credit for 'daring' to put this into the *English Hymnal* in 1906<sup>2</sup> but he declares that to have included hobgoblin would have been to 'invite disaster'. 'No one', he says, 'would have been more distressed than Bunyan himself to have people singing about hobgoblins in church' and he would never have sanctioned the unaltered form as a hymn. (I wonder!) So Dearmer produced a gentle drawing-room version of Bunyan's rugged verse, cutting out the wind and the weather, the giants and goblins and lions. He agreed with Bottom, 'To bring in a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing'. But Baptist and Congregational books for the last thirty years anyway have happily swallowed Bunyan whole: even *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, though it carefully alters hob-goblin to goblin.

There is a pleasant story of an eighteenth century editor who was suspicious of the worldly associations of 'Thy gardens and thy gallant walks' in 'Jerusalem the golden'; he revised them and so

<sup>1</sup>*Songs of Praise Discussed*, p. 116.

<sup>2</sup>*Songs of Praise Discussed*, p. 271. He apparently did not know that it had already been included in E. Paxton Hood's *Our Hymn Book*, Brighton, 1862.

delivered himself of the surprising assertion about the heavenly Jerusalem that

Thy gardens and thy pleasant fruits  
Continually are green!<sup>1</sup>

Editors have certainly made some bad mistakes, but none the less some of the best of our hymns owe everything to their alterations. The truth is that some great hymn writers were very poor judges of their own work. Many hymns were written hastily for an immediate occasion without thought of wider use. It was a common practice of Doddridge, among many others, to compose a hymn to be sung after his sermon. It is not strange that hymns so written should need revision and polishing. Some wrote far too many and mislaid their waste-paper basket.

A transformation was wrought in 'O God of Bethel' and 'How bright these glorious spirits shine' by the Scottish paraphrase committee, who did a very good job with several. The much-loved version of the twenty-third Psalm, 'The Lord's my shepherd', is a curiously composite work. It is usually attributed to Francis Rous, the Englishman who wrote so many of the so-called 'Scottish' Psalms. Actually it contains only seven lines by him, and two by an earlier writer called Whittingham. It was revised by the Westminster Assembly to approximately its present shape, which was finally given it by a Church of Scotland committee for the Psalter of 1650.

Another well-loved hymn which owes all its power to a hymn book editor is 'All hail the power of Jesus' name'. There was a first version by Edward Perronet, who is usually given the credit for the hymn. In fact it was completely rewritten and improved out of all recognition by Dr. John Rippon, the Baptist editor of *A Selection of Hymns*, one of the leading Free Churchmen of the early 19th century.

It is very necessary for editors to watch out for the danger of unreality and insincerity. Hymns which could no doubt be honestly sung in past generations or in some gatherings are dangerous nowadays. I confess I shudder when I hear a miscellaneous crowd shouting 'Abide with me'. I am astonished by watching congregations singing about 'The rushes by the water We gather every day', when most of them have probably never gathered rushes at all, and certainly none of them gather them every day. If I am told that they don't mean it and that they are not really attending to what they are saying, does that make it any better? A popular hymn for boys, 'Lord, we thank Thee for the pleasure', makes them declare that they are 'yearning for their home above'. Which is certainly untrue, and if true would be unChristian! A well-known Glasgow minister of the last generation, Dr. A. C. Welch, in

<sup>1</sup>*Songs of Praise Discussed*, p. 51.



announcing the hymn, 'Take my life', to his comfortable suburban congregation, is reported to have said, 'We shall omit verse 4, "Take my silver and my gold, Not a mite would I withhold". It is a bit too strenuous for Claremont'.

Let us by all means have hymns of aspiration to what is beyond our present reach, hymns that are ahead of us and call us onward. But let us avoid like the plague hymns that make false assertions or claim attainments in the spiritual life which must be untrue of most of the congregation. Many hymns are too intimate for use except on special occasions. It is best most of the time to keep to hymns of objective Christian fact, couched in terms that are suited to the average Christian, and not to concern ourselves too much with the secrets of individual psychology.

One thing no editor is entitled to do is to alter an author so as to make him say what he does not believe, as Montgomery charged people with doing to his hymns. I remember a visit I paid more than forty years ago to a Universalist Church. The minister, Dr. Walsh, was an estimable man, but eviscerated hymns with all specific Christian references removed led up to a sermon in which the preacher enumerated all sorts of things which we must not on any account believe. Unitarian books also have on occasion been guilty of a similar maltreatment of orthodox hymns. George Walker in 1788 issued *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for public Worship, unmingled with the disputed doctrines of any sect*. In the preface, after talking about the difficulties of orthodox beliefs as found in previous books, he says, 'It is the principal object of this collection to remove the offence which their doctrinal zeal has occasioned . . . the alterations bearing no small proportion to the whole work and in many of the psalms and hymns the retaining the name of the original author must be considered as a mere acknowledgment of the source from which the composition was derived'.<sup>1</sup>

In other words Watts, Doddridge, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others were made to say over their own names something quite different from what they had really written. Not unnaturally such a procedure roused protests in Unitarian circles themselves and led to the publication of a collection of hymns exclusively by Unitarians: *A Collection of Hymns compiled by John R. Beard*, 1937, which was explicitly declared to be 'a protest against hymn tinkering'.<sup>2</sup>

Some Unitarians claimed the right to adapt Watts on the ground that if he had been still alive he would have done so himself, having shown Unitarian sympathies. This is more than doubtful. But in any case they did the same to all orthodox

<sup>1</sup>See Benson *The English Hymn*, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Benson, p. 141.

writers where there was no such imaginary justification. The great Dr. Martineau took a different line. In the preface to his *Hymns for Christian Church and Home* he said that in removing all Trinitarian references from the hymns of Watts he was only doing what Watts himself did in 'making David talk like a Christian' in his own versions of the Psalms! But it is hardly a fair parallel.

It is perhaps inevitable that we should often sing the words of an author in a different sense from his. Johnson's 'City of God', for example, is a claim that the true Church of God is composed of all good men of all religions, and of none, with no questions asked about doctrine. It goes further than most of those who sing it would go. Similarly, 'Faith of our fathers', by Faber, originally said

Faith of our fathers! Mary's prayers  
Shall win our country back to thee.

For the 'faith of our fathers' meant Roman Catholicism to Faber and the theme of his hymn was the winning of England to allegiance to the Church of Rome. So also 'Lord of our life,' by Philip Pusey, which Routley calls the battle hymn of the Oxford Movement, refers in its original intention to the plight of the Church of England, confronted within by heretics and evangelicals and without by nonconformists. Yet it is sung to-day by those same evangelicals and nonconformists.

Translators are a separate problem. Certainly many of them have produced so-called translations which the original authors would not recognise. The Roman Catholics accused Neale of doctoring the old Latin hymns, which he said was necessary if they were to be used in the Church of England. Many of his 'translations' from the Greek are really original hymns inspired by something he read in the old Greek documents, as he himself admitted about some of them. He attributed 'Christian, dost thou see them' to St. Andrew of Crete, but no other scholar has been able to find the original. When he first published 'O happy band of pilgrims' he attributed it to Joseph of the Studium. But in a later edition of *Hymns of the Eastern Church* he said it contained so little from the Greek that it could not really be called a translation: so, too, with 'Art thou weary'.

Most of the 'translations' of Robert Bridges are independent poems on a theme suggested by the work of another. For example, S. H. Moore says of 'Ah holy Jesus' that it is 'a fine hymn but not Heermann's', though he finds occasional indications of 'a desire to translate'. Perhaps if we say 'based on' or 'suggested by', we get over the difficulty. But I have enough to answer for in trying to explain the ways of hymn book writers, and ought to leave it to the translators to explain the ethics of their own profession.



A PRIVATE HYMN BOOK FROM SCOTTISH  
CONGREGATIONALISM

By ERIK ROUTLEY

Dr. Harry Escott, a distinguished member of the Society, has recently written a *History of Scottish Congregationalism* (Glasgow, Congregational Union of Scotland, 217 West George Street, C.2, 30s.), which has been judged a classic by all who have read it with care. Among other matters, this work pays careful attention to the hymnody of Scottish Congregationalism, and should certainly be consulted by any who are interested in this branch of our subject.

Dr. Escott tells us, for example, of the Glasite Hymn Book, *Christian Songs* (1749), incidentally to telling the reader about the Voluntary Principle in which the Glasites anticipated the Scottish Congregationalists, and of *Hymns for the Use of the Tabernacles in Scotland* 'probably compiled' by John Aikman and George Cowie (1800). There are other references as well, for which we must be grateful to Dr. Escott, but the mention of Aikman at once introduces the special subject on which I would here write a line or two.

Aikman, one of the founders of Scottish Congregationalism (which has no 'puritan' history, but began as an evangelical reaction against the rigours of the Kirk), caused a church to be erected in 1802 in Edinburgh which is the first ancestor of that church in which I now minister (now called 'Augustine-Bristo'). The church stood in College Street, which has now been swallowed up in the old university buildings, and Aikman not only inspired but personally paid for its erection. Later the name of the building was changed to 'Argyle Square Chapel'. This was not the first Congregational Church to be built in Edinburgh, for John Haldane had founded one in Albany Street in 1799, among whose later ministers was the strange mystic, John Pulsford. But since that church closed in 1954, Aikman's can be called the oldest surviving foundation.

Aikman died in 1834, and was succeeded in 1835 by a young man of 27 named William Lindsay Alexander (who, for reasons we are about to specify, rates three inches in *Julian*). Alexander there began a ministry of historic standing, which included the building in 1861 of the present church (called then 'Augustine' Church), and the publication in 1839 of a hymn book. The 1861 centenary is one whose claims we modestly advance in the shadow of more momentous events in the South.

Very soon after I arrived in Edinburgh (1959) I was hunting about in the Deacons' Vestry cupboards for things which were probably none of my business, and I came across a small stout box, containing 24 beautifully bound copies of Alexander's hymn book, together with a copy of R. A. Smith's *Sacred Harmony* (1825),

which was clearly the authorized tune-book. (Smith was, of course, Precentor of St. George's Parish Church, Edinburgh, in his day.) The book has this on its title-page:

SELECTION OF HYMNS  
for  
PUBLIC WORSHIP  
in  
CHRISTIAN CHURCHES  
by

WILLIAM LINDSAY ALEXANDER, D.D.

Edinburgh: Hugh Paton, Adam Square, 1849.

Charles Wesley's quatrain beginning 'The Church triumphant in thy love' (*EH* 639, v. 1) is quoted on the title page. The cover bears the initials 'A.S.C.—S.S.T', which being interpreted signify 'Argyle Square Church Sunday School Teachers' (sc. Monthly Prayer Meeting—words added on the title page in hand-writing). *Julian* says that the hymn book was published again after 1861 as the *Augustine Hymn Book*, but I have not yet seen a copy of it under that name.

Alexander continued his ministry until his death in 1877 and is still regarded as a patron saint of our foundation. The later history of Augustine-Bristo does not concern us here, although we can take the opportunity of saying that the quaint name is a concession to Scottish literalism in that it was adopted after a union with Bristo Place Church in 1941. Augustine, we say, is a saint (Alexander's favourite saint, of course), and Bristo is a street. Heaven and earth thus uneasily meet in our compendious name.

Alexander's book consists of 552 hymns very pleasantly printed on excellent and durable paper, with an index of topics so fully and elaborately contrived as to testify that in those days people really were expected to read their hymn books and know them. Of the authors represented Isaac Watts comes out at the top, as might well be expected—with 117 hymns. These do not include several which *Congregational Praise* (mostly following Barrett, 1887) regarded as indispensable—'We give immortal praise', 'Nature with open volume', 'Alas, and did my Saviour bleed', and 'When I survey' has already lost its fourth verse. Watts in those days was still enjoyed for his teaching rather than his poetry. But 'I'll praise my Maker' is there, of course.

Wesley, although he appears on the title-page, has the rather small allowance of twenty-eight hymns, and these do not include 'And can it be' or 'Love divine, all loves excelling'. Doddridge actually stands second, with forty-seven hymns, Newton following closely with forty-six. Montgomery has nineteen and Cowper fifteen.



Alexander himself contributed some twenty hymns to the book (it is difficult to determine the exact number: some hymns are left unscribed, some marked 'anon'). He was but an indifferent hymn-writer of the pedagogic kind. Here is a fair example of his work, which probably shows him at his best, and which has an added interest if it be compared with a late hymn of Canon Briggs's to which I have before referred with special affection, 'Jesus, whose all-redeeming love' (*Hymns of the Faith*, 53: see Oxford Hymn Sheet, 1958). This is No. 64 in the Augustine collection:

Jesus, and didst thou condescend	And didst thou pity mortal woe,
When veil'd in human clay,	And sight and health restore?
To heal the sick, the lame, the blind	Pity, O Lord, and save my soul,
And drive disease away?	Which needs thy mercy more!

Didst Thou regard the beggar's cry	And didst thou save a trembling
And give the blind to see?	frame
Jesus, thou Son of David, hear;	When sinking in the wave?
Have mercy too on me!	I perish, Lord! O save my soul!
	For thou alone canst save.

The arrangement of the hymns is, as might be expected, theological, beginning with the Persons of the Godhead and subsuming the Church's Year under the theological categories rather than the temporal; it continues through 'The Christ, his privileges, graces and duties' to the Church, its worship and ordinances, and ends with Miscellaneous Seasons and Doxologies (Nos. 538-553).

Of its kind and for its period it is a devout piece of work. It shows the characteristic humourlessness of its age in such lines as (293), 'Lo, what an entertaining sight Are brethren that agree' (Wesley)—even in 1849 a curious conceit. It manages to avoid most of that imaginative doctrine of Watts and Wesley in which Manning delighted, and on which G. S. Barrett was probably the first to lay special emphasis in selection.

But it contains many jewels which are not now sung in Augustine-Bristo. The present minister at his induction quoted from Doddridge's 'My helper God! I bless his name', which is still in no current hymn book. But it is in Alexander—No. 531. *The Church Hymnary*, which is the current manual of praise in the church, does not have 'Awake, our souls, away, our fears', but Alexander does.

The book is a typical dogmatic-evangelical collection of nineteenth-century Scotland, designed as a supplement to the Scottish Psalms and Paraphrases, and laying emphasis on the kind of teaching one finds in the eighteenth-century Calvinists. It avoids the worst, as it misses the best, in most of this, but it is still a book to look back on with affection and a touch of regret that circumstances prevent this kind of local editorship nowadays.

Of his 552 hymns, exactly 100 appear in *CP*, sixty-six in *The Church Hymnary*. There is one strange mystery: there is no

Hymn 535. Could my eminent predecessor not count, was this some strange superstition, or was some special gem of Watts, or of Wesley, or of his own, suppressed at the last minute by order of the deacons?

## REVIEWS

By L. H. BUNN

It was in 1861 that the witty classical scholar, C. S. Calverley, publishing his *Verses and Translations*, referred to a still earlier day

Ere yet 'knowledge for the million'  
Came out 'neatly bound in boards'.

Not his to foresee the even wider diffusion in our time of the modern 'paper-back', of which three new examples have come to our notice. It would be diverting to make spacious centenary allusion to Calverley himself, though his connexion with hymns is confined to Barnby's *Hymnary*, 1872, for which he wrote eighteen translations from the Latin.

This year's special commemoration, however, requires that we look first at *A Hundred Years of HYMNS ANCIENT AND MODERN*, ninety pages, published last year by Wm. Clowes and Sons at 2s.6d., but also 'in boards' at 3s.6d. The author is Dr. W. K. Lowther Clarke, Canon of Chichester, and seventh successive Chairman of the Proprietors of *HA & M*, beginning with Sir Henry Baker in 1860. By 1881 only five remained of the original eleven Proprietors, and at five the number has ever since been maintained, the latest appointment being the beloved senior Chairman of this Society, Dr. Maurice Frost [1959]. As Canon Clarke was elected in 1937, he has a unique acquaintance with the history and administration of *HA & M*. Apart from this, he was Editorial Secretary to the SPCK for twenty-eight years until 1944.

The author's achievement in these twelve short chapters is an illuminating account of the origin and fortunes of *HA & M*. He compresses into the first twenty-one pages some two or three thousand years of preparatory history, from ancient Hebrew psalmody to England in 1860. But this portion, despite its brevity, is refreshingly informative, and scarcely a page is without some noteworthy sentence, while selections from the Church press of the mid-19th century furnish a living background to the hymnal.

It is the rest of the book, however, which is distinctive, some details being drawn from records of the Proprietors, and made public for the first time in *Theology*, April, 1939, by the late Dr. C. S. Phillips. These chapters, V-XII, constitute a first-rate document for knowledge of this subject. Chapters V and VI make



available authentic facts about the genesis of the hymnal, and contemporary comment upon the first edition and the Appendix of 1868. (The Compilers never rested content with their work, but repeatedly roused themselves to improve their collection.) Rival productions of this period are also noticed (*Church Hymns, Hymnal Companion*, etc.). In Chapter VII the revision of 1875 is discussed, and its Supplement, 1889, and in Chapter IX the *pros* and *cons* of *An Official Hymn-book*. *Problems* are dealt with in Chapters VIII and X. Here perhaps the most interesting disclosure [pp. 65f] is that an acute danger arose of the hymnal falling under Roman Catholic control, when W. H. Lyall, a Proprietor from 1860-1900, entered the Roman Communion in 1879.

The merits and rejection of the new edition of 1904 occupy Chapter XI, followed by a statement of the relation of this work to the *English Hymnal*, 1906. The remainder of Chapter XII tells of the Second Supplement, 1916 to the 1875 edition (an attempt to salvage [not *salve*! p. 81] something from 1904); also the resetting in 1924 of the 'Standard Edition', the *ad interim* production of the Shortened Music Edition, 1939, and the *Plainsong Hymn Book*, 1932. The climax is reached, of course, with the principles and publication of the most recent Revision in 1950.

For an understanding of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, and perhaps of the Church of England itself, this small authoritative book is indispensable; there is nothing like it.

Another thoroughly Anglican book, though of different structure, is *Hymns and Worship*, SPCK: 1961, pp. xxiii + 102, by the Revd. G. F. S. Gray, Rector of Fakenham. His former experience of teaching divinity students in China helps to explain alike the scholarship, warm sympathy and width of vision which make this little book well worthy of attention.

In thirty-eight chapters hymns are considered that are common to both *HA & M Revised*, 1950, and the *English Hymnal*, 1906, '33 (with references to *Songs of Praise*, 1925, and the American Prot. Episc. *Hymnal*, 1940); and in a footnote to the Preface it is stated that 'all but six are included, translated into Chinese . . . in *Hymns of Universal Praise*'. Now this collection was briefly reviewed by the late Dr. Millar Patrick among 'notable new books' in the very first issue of this *Bulletin* [Oct., 1937], to this effect: '... a co-operative book produced by a committee representing six branches of the Church in China . . . Of the 514 hymns contained in it, 452 are translations into Chinese, and sixty-two are original Chinese hymns, one of them an ancient Nestorian hymn recently discovered in a cave in Kansu. Of the tunes, two are Japanese in origin, thirty-four are the work of Chinese musicians'.

The 'missionary' interest of Mr. Gray's book is therefore to be expected. But not only are there the classics of Heber and Watts (pp. 23f, 42f); we have incidental allusions to Tibet (p. 11) and the

'flooded paddy-fields' in China (p. 20); the ancient 'Nestorian' Church of Malabar (p. 29), the broad expansion of the Gospel in the 19th century (p. 76f), the reaction of Asia and Africa against Europe and its faith (p. 91), and even the new independence of Ghana (xxiii). Ellerton's hymn, 'The day Thou gavest' (p. 75) occasions a penetrating scrutiny of the Church's task overseas.

Large questions are also confronted under 'Onward, Christian soldiers', 'O God, our help' and 'My God, I love Thee', while the author is topically aware of the H-bomb, road-accidents and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Nearly all the hymns chosen are generally known, and there is a competent Introduction. Most of the writers quoted are Anglican, though there are a few well-known pieces from other sources. Christian doctrine is expounded and illustrated, the great festivals are represented, and there are seven or eight Communion hymns. Sometimes hymns are effectively treated in pairs: thus the Genevan 100th Psalm goes with the Lutheran Rinckart's *Nun danket*; more striking is the comparison between 'Jerusalem the golden' and Blake's *Jerusalem*, 'the City of God a-building here, and perfected above'. We find hymns of divine Providence and Christian discipleship, of combat and pilgrimage, 'Just as I am' (taken from Charlotte Elliott's *Invalid's Hymn-book*, 1841), and H. M. Butler's robust 'Lift up your hearts', written for Harrow schoolboys in 1881 but disclosing the darker experience of maturity.

*Corrigenda* are few and slight: although Brady of the New Version was an Irish clergyman, the Laureate Nahum Tate was a layman (p. xv, 87); again, in Chapter 2 the facts about 'mirth' and 'fear' in the Old 100th are reversed; also, on p. 27, Newton's 'God moves in a mysterious way' appeared first in the 'Omicron' *Letters*. Against these trifling criticisms shall be set warm commendation of this unusual book, distinguished both as to conception and execution.

The third volume submitted is Dr. Hugh Martin's *They Wrote Our Hymns* (SCM: 1961, 6s.), pp. 142, including a valuable index. On the cover the title is printed boldly over a shadowy background of the title-page of the 1st edition, 1707, of the *Hymns* of Isaac Watts. The book issues from traditional Dissent, for the author is the distinguished Baptist minister who edited in 1953 the belated *Companion* to the revised Hymnal of his denomination published twenty years earlier. The *Companion*, the work of several hands, is not always irreproachably accurate; but one would have no hesitation in trusting the scholarship of the present pages for which Dr. Martin has undivided responsibility.

In the ten chapters the order of treatment is more or less chronological, each being entitled with a characteristic phrase. Watts' *Songs before unknown* leads to his friend Doddridge's *Hark, the glad sound*, and so to Methodism, *Born in song*. Montgomery



(V), like the Wesleys, has Moravian associations, and also, as printer for Cotterill, touches a great Anglican controversy, while Dr. Bonar, *In every part with praise* (VI), introduces the Scottish contribution. The Church of England is surveyed at various altitudes, from *God's mysterious way* (IV) with the Olney poets, to Ellerton (IX), Bishop How (VIII), and *The Royal banners* (VII) of Neale and the Catholic Revival. Chapter X deals with women writers. From the index, already mentioned, we note that there are allusions, however slight, to the Dissenting Academies and Deputies, Miss Auber (correctly styled 'Henriette'), and Dr. Routley (incorrectly styled 'E.K.'). Although no separate chapter is given to Baptist hymn-writers, they are frequently mentioned, Keach, Beddome, and Anne Steele, for instance, all finding a place.

To read the chapter on Doddridge (II) is to find a very detailed and satisfying account of his character, learning and influence, and this is the impression created throughout this book, whatever subject is handled. The field has been carefully explored, and our gratitude goes to so wise and skilful a guide.

L.H.B.

### A MATTER OF PUNCTUATION

A sad ruin has been made in many modern hymnals, which has escaped the omniscient surveys of the late Dr. Julian and Dr. W. H. Frere in their hymnological writings, of the first line of the second verse of William Kethe's paraphrase of Psalm 100. The Great Bible of 1540 upon which Kethe based his paraphrase reads:

'Be ye sure that the Lord he is God'.

What the Psalmist is saying in effect is: 'The Lord whom ye know is really God'. The line puts in an emphatic way the contrast between the gods of the heathen, 'the work of men's hands', and the One true God. Kethe for his paraphrase wrote:

'The Lord ye know is God indeed'.

But with the notable exception of Robert Bridges in *The Yattendon Hymnal*, No. 79, this line has not only had its spelling modernised but also its meaning altered in most of our hymnals, since it now reads:

'The Lord, ye know, is God indeed'.

To put 'ye know' into parenthesis is to make the hymn writer into a gossip not quite sure of what he is saying.

The Scottish Psalter of 1650 recast the line as:

'Know that the Lord is God indeed'.

While this underlines the unique character of God, a mere Sassenach may be pardoned for doubting whether it is indeed a linguistic improvement of the original.

C. E. POCKNEE.