

# THE HYMN SOCIETY

## OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

### BULLETIN

### 96

### VOLUME FIVE

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NUMBER EIGHT.

SUMMER, 1962.

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#### EDITORIAL.

In this issue we present two reviews, which, like their subjects, are of major importance. Since both raise in different forms the same question, we are going to take the unusual step of offering an editorial comment after the reviews. It is perfectly clear that in hymnody we are coming to a parting of the ways. Many of our assumptions are being seriously challenged, and in this assault on some of our most precious strongholds of secondary doctrine the ecumenical movement is playing an important part. In every part of the church, history is offering us more exciting and more perilous possibilities than it has done at least since the days of the Reformation.

It happens that we are writing this on the eve of the consecration of Coventry Cathedral. We do not know what the reaction of members of this society would be to this enterprise, were we to attempt to ascertain this by holding a plebiscite. We will, of



course, do nothing so unprofitable. We offer simply our own opinion that this building symbolizes in the most dramatic way the assaults on our secondary doctrines of which we here speak. What kind of hymnody is really appropriate to that which Coventry Cathedral stands for? We have noted, for example, that the Precentor of the Cathedral (the Rev. J. W. Poole, formerly of Canterbury and of the Royal School of Church Music), has stated that at the Eucharist the custom in that church will be to use bread and not the customary wafers. This single statement represents a new and radical approach to the essential acts of our faith; it seems, in fact, to mean that there they will be striving to separate relevant symbolism from irrelevant symbolism: to distinguish the proper use and direction of imagination from the perpetuation of customs whose authenticity is questioned. By no means everybody knows and accepts the origin of the wafers. Everybody understands bread. If bread brings people nearer to the heart of the Gospel, say they at Coventry, let bread be our symbol, not wafer.

It is against that background that we have read the reviews of these two new hymn books, and studied the books themselves. We cannot think it insignificant that the *English Hymnal Service Book* has been compiled by editors whose particular hope it is that it will prove relevant to the Parish Communion. Those who have the book already will perhaps have noted the particular Eucharistic emphasis that the editors have given to it by showing how almost *any* hymn (not simply those which used to be segregated in a 'Holy Communion' section) is appropriate to the Great Thanksgiving. In the *Baptist Hymn Book* there is similarly to be detected a new and joyful approach to the Lord's Supper.

Hear then what our reviewers have to say about these books. Then, if we may, we will offer a comment along the lines here suggested.

## THE ENGLISH HYMNAL SERVICE BOOK.

By CYRIL TAYLOR.

*The English Hymnal Service Book.* Choir edition, 623 pp., 14s.6d.; pew edition, words only, 592 pp., 5s.9d. Oxford University Press.

It is almost impossible to believe that the *English Hymnal* is more than fifty years old. How is it that one can still think of it as a new book? It must be because when it appeared in 1906 it was so staggeringly new. The work of Percy Dearmer, Vaughan Williams and their colleagues marked the beginning of an entirely new era in hymn singing. Hymn books by the score have appeared since then, but only very eccentric or narrow collections have been able, or have wished, to avoid drawing upon *EH*. By this time all branches of the Church have taken it into their systems, and we can hardly realize how greatly that famous book has enriched the worship of the Church.

In 1933 it was revised: or rather, its music was. The words were left untouched, but over a hundred tunes were added, and this meant greatly enlarging the Chamber of Horrors—the name which editors give in private to what they publicly call the Appendix. Into this prison-house went no less than 45 tunes which 'do not enter into the general scheme of the book'.

That was nearly thirty years ago. Now there appears what people are sure to call a 'new' or 'revised' *EH*. But it is not that at all, as its title makes perfectly clear. It is called *The English Hymnal Service Book*, in which title the operative words, as they say, are *Service Book*. It does not put *EH* off the market. The Service Book is meant to enable every worshipper, in pew and choir-stall, to join intelligently in the whole service—whether Mattins, Holy Communion, or Evensong. And that is what the Book of Common Prayer has always intended its users to do.

So this is not just one more hymn book: it is a service-book. Let us examine what it contains.

First come the hymns. There is not enough room for the 650 or so of *EH*. They have been cut by more than half, to 298. Still, one would think, quite enough for most congregations. There is a group of 18 carols (16 for Christmas, 2 for Easter), mostly well known. Then follow three pages of Collects for use in Processions: very useful. But they would be over long before most worshippers had run them to earth.

Then for Mattins and Evensong, the Service Book provides the words of the General Confession and the Apostles' Creed, and the words and music of the Versicles and Responses in their simplest form.

The Canticles and Psalms follow. They are pointed for singing—yet another pointing, to add still greater confusion—but no



chants are printed. The pointing is notably straightforward; none of that surrealist pointing to which we were treated when so-called 'speech rhythm' had knocked us off our balance.

There is a Table of Psalms for use in the Communion Service (for Gradual as well as for Introit), and Merbecke brings up the rear. His setting is in J. H. Arnold's edition, which ignores the note-values so carefully written out by Merbecke.

So much for the contents of the Service Book. And now to return to the hymns. There are, as was said, 298, taken from *EH*, plus another 20 which 'have proved their usefulness', but surprisingly, are not in *EH*. Most of these are by this time well-established favourites, such as

All creatures of our God and King  
Breathe on me, Breath of God  
Christ is our corner-stone  
Fill thou my life  
My song is love unknown  
O praise ye the Lord  
Stand up and bless the Lord  
Ye servants of God.

Every church wants those. But if you have to cut down, roughly speaking, from 650 to 300, what are you going to leave out?

Most of the medieval office-hymns have gone, because (the editors think, and who will deny it?) there are other hymns more congenial to the average man which can be used just as effectively to strike the note of a particular occasion early in the service, as an office hymn is meant to do.

Then practically all those boring, hack-work, once-a-year hymns for Saints' Days have gone.

So has the whole section, 'For Mission Services' except for 'O Jesus, I have promised', and 'Stand up for Jesus'.

All hymns self-consciously aimed at children disappear. But in *EH*'s section 'At Catechism' there are a few which are for children of all ages, and they are retained:

All things bright and beautiful  
Jesus, good above all other  
Loving Shepherd  
Now the day is over  
Once in royal David's city.

Finally, in *EH* there are ten Litanies: all these have gone.

By this time you have cleared the decks considerably, and what remains would be judged by most people, I imagine, to be a thoroughly level-headed selection for use in the ordinary church. Extra-ordinary churches can still use *EH*.

Specialists in the Hymn Society will all have their own particular regrets about the absentees, of course. It is sad to look in vain, for instance, for these three:

From glory to glory advancing  
O God of earth and altar  
O God of truth.

But most worshippers ask lamentably little of their hymn book, and they will not be disposed to quarrel, I fancy, about what they find, and do not find, here. Out of 318 hymns there are only 21 which are not in *Hymns A & M Revised*.

The hymns are arranged, not under headings, but in alphabetical order. This is all right provided there is a Subject Index: and there is—an admirably comprehensive one.

The words, then, are largely lifted straight from *EH*. What of the tunes?

Only three are newly written:

Noel Boston's FIFER'S LANE (89) for 'Hark, my soul, it is the Lord'

Guthrie Foote's TREDEGAR (138) for 'Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour'

Arthur Hutchings's FUDGIE (190) for 'O Thou who camest'.

There are one or two interesting introductions:

Jarman's LYNCHAM, to 'O for a thousand tongues'

VICTIM DIVINE (278), from Psalm 13 in Coverdale's *Goostly Psalmes*, harmonized by Arthur Hutchings. (The date given is 1548, but Frost says the book was burnt in 1546: see *English and Scottish Psalm and Hymn Tunes*, p. 293)

148TH NEW MELODY (317), by Edward Miller, set in his *Psalms for the Use of Parish Churches* (1790) to 'Ye boundless realms of joy', as it is here. (In my copy of Miller the second minim of the melody is dotted, and the third bar from the end has a minim E instead of the two crotchets)

TANTUM ERGO SACRAMENTUM (219), a new quasi-plainsong tune arranged by Arthur Hutchings.

ATTOLLITE PORTAS (134) for 'Lift up your heads, ye gates of brass'; this is Hermann's LOBT GOTT, which is given, in J. S. Bach's version, at *SP* 481 as a 5-line tune (8.6.8.8.6). Here, however, it is truncated to become a 4-line tune, the 3rd line (lifted note for note from Reimann's O JESU at *EH* 406) is no part of the original, the 4th line has lost all its original colour, and the result is a poor thing indeed.

There are in all some eighty changes of tune, when the first 298 hymns in *EHSB* are compared with their settings in the 1933 edition. Of these, 32 are tunes which appear elsewhere in 1933.



And now comes the great surprise. The prison-gates of *EH*'s Appendix, sternly locked by Vaughan Williams and Martin Shaw, are thrown open, and out come the prisoners. Most of them have been inside for thirty years: some for over fifty.

The list which follows may look somewhat indigestible: but it is worth trying to emulate Mr Gladstone and chew every mouthful however many times it was that he did chew it (I forget exactly), in order to realize how radical is the change of policy.

Believe it or not, Dykes's *ST AGNES* is the only old lag, with her husband waiting for her outside, who has not been restored to liberty. Now read what has happened to the others.

[*The following restorations represent a reversal of the policy of 1906.—Ed.*]

Thrupp's *EPIPHANY* is added to *LIEBSTER IMMANUEL* for 'Brightest and best'.

Monk's *ST PHILIP* displaces *HEILIGER GEIST* for 'Lord in this thy mercy's day'.

Scholefield's *ST CLEMENT* is added to *LES COMMANDEMENS* for 'The day thou gavest'.

Sullivan's *GOLDEN SHEAVES* displaces *ST GALL* for 'To thee, O Lord, our hearts we raise'.

[*The following represent a reversal of the decisions of 1933—Ed.*]

Smart's *EVERTON* displaces *WURZBURG* for 'Alleluia! hearts to heaven'.

METZLER'S *REDHEAD NO. 66* displaces *BROMSGROVE* for 'O Christ our hope'.

Dykes's *ST CUTHBERT* takes precedence of *WICKLOW* for 'Our blest Redeemer'.

Langran's *DEERHURST* displaces *VISION* for 'Hark the sound of holy voices'.

Maclagan's *PALMS OF GLORY* displaces *BOYCE*.

Parratt's *HUDDERSFIELD* displaces *TON-MAN* for 'Holy Father'.

Hopkins's *ELLERS* displaces *R.V.W.'s MAGDA* for 'Saviour, again'.

HURSLEY takes precedence of *BIRLING* for 'Sun of my soul'.

Brown's *ST ANATOLIUS* displaces *Ferguson's HOMINUM AMATOR* for 'The day is past and over'.

Irons's *ST COLUMBA* displaces *SPEER* for 'The sun is sinking fast'.

Maclagan's *BREAD OF HEAVEN* is added to *NICHT SO TRAURIG*.

Lahee's *NATIVITY* is added to *Shaw's CHEERFUL* for 'Come let us join'.

Dykes's *ST BEES* goes with *Noel Boston's FIFER'S LANE* for 'Hark my soul'.

*STELLA* displaces *GESIUS* for 'Jesu, my Lord, my God, my All'.

Yoakley's *ALL SOULS* displaces *CONGLETON* (moved to 'Draw nigh') for 'Here, O my Lord, I see thee'.

Dykes's *ST OSWALD* is added to *Shaw's MARCHING* for 'Through the night'.

Hayne's *ST CECILIA* displaces *Boyce's KINGSLAND* for 'Thy kingdom come'.

Hayne's *BUCKLAND* displaces *Shaw's GENTLE JESUS* for 'Loving Shepherd'.

Staniforth's *JERUSALEM* becomes the first tune for 'Lift up your heads, ye gates of brass'.

Moreover, the '*A & M-ization*' of *EHSB* is carried a big stage further by the introduction of the following tunes which were not even in *EH's Appendix*:

Monk's *ALL THINGS BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL* in addition to *ROYAL OAK*;

Monk's *UNDE ET MEMORES* in addition to *Gibbons's SONG 1* for 'And now, O Father';

Monk's *EVELYNS* in addition to *R.V.W.'s KING'S WESTON* for 'At the name of Jesus';

Elvey's *DIADEMATA* in place of *EH's* four suggestions for 'Crown him with many crowns';

Watson's *HOLYROOD* in place of *SELMA* for 'Fair waved the golden corn';

Dykes's *RIVAUUX* in place of *DAS LEIDEN DES HERRN* for 'Father of heaven';

Stainer's *CHARITY* as alternative to *Shaw's DIAN* for 'Gracious Spirit';

*CWM RHONDDA* as alternative to *CAERSALEM* for 'Guide me';

Dykes's *BEATITUDO* as alternative to *BALLERMA* for 'How bright';

Purday's *SANDON* as alternative to *Dykes's LUX BENIGNA* for 'Lead, kindly light';

Harwood's *LUCKINGTON* as alternative to *Shaw's HIGH ROAD* for 'Let all the world';

Stainer's *LOVE DIVINE*, which precedes *MORIAH*;

Monk's *WORDSWORTH* as alternative to *HERZLICH THUT MICH ERFREUEN* for 'O day of rest';

Dykes's *O STRENGTH AND STAY* for 'O perfect love', displacing *Scott-Gatty's WELWYN*;

Dykes's *GERONTIUS* as alternative to *RICHMOND* for 'Praise to the Holiest';

Smart's *TRISAGION*, in place of *QUEDLINBURG*, for 'Stars of the morning';

Dykes's *DOMINUS REGIT ME* as alternative to *ST COLUMBA* for 'The King of love'. [*To be quite fair, it might be recalled that V-W in his original preface referred to this as a 'beautiful tune' and regretted its omission for copyright reasons—Ed.*]

Maclagan's *NEWINGTON* as alternative to *HORSHAM* for 'Thine for ever'.

What will be the result of this astonishing *volte-face*? Fervent



## THE HYMN

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT

<i>Funds and Liabilities</i>	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
General Fund as at 1st Jan., 1961 ...	678	4	8			
Deduct Excess of Expenditure over Income for the year ...	9	11	3			
	668	13	5			
Add Life Membership Fee transferred	5	5	0	673	18	5
Life Membership Fund as at 1st Jan., 1961 (23 @ 5 gns.) (1 @ 7 gns.) ...	128	2	0			
Deduct Membership Fee transferred to General Fund ...	5	5	0			
				122	17	0
Julian Fund as at 1st Jan., 1961 ...	154	13	2			
Add Donation received during the year (Eccl. Music Trust) ...	50	0	0			
	204	13	2			
Deduct Editor's expenses during the year	50	0	0			
				154	13	2
Sundry Creditors ...				66	7	6
				<u>£1,017</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR

1960	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
80 Printing Bulletins, 91, 92, 93 and 94 with supplement ...				106	7	1
15 Distributing ditto ...				18	4	2
Annual Conference—						
17 Printing Broadsheet ...	45	9	6			
3 Sundry Expenses less receipts	1	15	6			
	47	5	0			
Less Donation ...	5	0	0			
				42	5	0
Officers' Expenses—						
2 Secretary ...	2	0	0			
10 Editor ...	10	6				
3/10s. Treasurer ...	1	2	0			
				3	12	6
4 Sundry Printing ...				9	1	3
7 American Society ...				7	17	6
10s. Subscriptions Cancelled ...				10	14	5
2 Donations						
28 Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year ...						
				<u>£198</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>

## MN SOCIETY

## AT 31ST DECEMBER, 1961

<i>Assets</i>	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
INVESTMENTS—						
Defence Bonds 4½% ...	500	0	0			
Defence Bonds 5% ...	300	0	0			
				800	0	0
CASH at Midland Bank Ltd., Oxford—						
Deposit Account ...	173	17	5			
Current Account ...	6	13	10			
Cash in hand ...	2	9	10			
				183	1	1
Sundry Debtors ...				34	15	0
				<u>£1,017</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>1</u>

## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1961

1960	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
121 Membership Subscriptions—						
242 @ 10s.6d. ...	127	1	0			
19 Library Subscriptions and Sales of Bulletins ...	11	9	0			
1 Members' Donations ...	6	7	8			
28 Interest on Defence Bonds ...	37	10	0			
3 Interest on Deposit Account ...	6	3	0			
				188	10	8
172 Excess of Expenditure over Income for the Year ...				9	11	3

DAVID S. GOODALL,  
Hon. Treasurer.

172

£198 1 11



supporters of *EH* will surely be sad that their book which blazed so magnificently daring a train in 1906 has in 1962 repudiated its ancestry, and dared nothing at all. And will not those who are dissatisfied with *A & M Revised* turn rather to *EH* ('the whole works') than to this book, which has so largely reverted to the *A & M* ethos? Will it make a difference that this is a Service Book, and not merely a hymn book?

It is easier to be a reviewer than a prophet.

#### THE BAPTIST HYMN BOOK, 1962.

"The unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable." Wilde's aphorism about fox-hunting is not wholly inapplicable to hymn-singing. As a metaphorical summary (pious excursionists in the saddle, musical and poetic pabulum in the undergrowth) it could aptly be used by detractors of the sport—and even, in their more reflective moments, by its *aficionados*. For, let us face it, hymn-singing is a pretty sanguinary business on the whole, by turns drearily dutiful and enthusiastically spell-bound. The number of hymns suitable for singing by a congregation with any pretensions to living in the modern world is lamentably small: and it is intolerable to realize how many there are currently at large (words and tunes, but especially tunes) which deserve to be struck off the register on charges of ravishing lonely spinsters and corrupting innocent minors. Really, it is time we had a moratorium on metre in church.

These melancholy and troublesome reflections are prompted by the new *Baptist Hymn Book*. They are the more melancholy and troublesome precisely because this is such a very good hymn book. If it were bad one would need only to deplore: as it is one worries.

The book is good. Its editors have achieved what might have been thought impossible, by giving the impression that they have put everything in without leaving anything out. Its range of utility is great, its tolerance wide; and even its worst moments are free from such a palpable failure of editorial patience as that which caused *Congregational Praise* to set "What a friend we have in Jesus" to SICILIAN MARINERS.

Yet the present reviewer found the book deeply depressing. Depressing, rather—alas—than surprising: for, although not himself a Baptist, he has nevertheless been exposed to the harsher realities of evangelical life, and knows all too well those dear, dire, cosy covens which meet week by week in church halls up and down the country, who must be lighting a chorus under the cauldron every few minutes to keep it bubbling, and upon the say-so of whose tutelary Hecates the adequate sale of a book like this presumably depends.

But by what right? By what possible right do our dreadful

little ghettos continue to encyst themselves in the body of society? The charge is not that if a visitor from the twentieth century happened to drop in on a service of Christian worship he wouldn't know the lingo or the tune: the Church has as much right as anyone to demand a reasonable willingness to learn. The charge is that what we ask our visitors to learn they have every contemporary cultural and æsthetic reason for refusing with contumely to learn. For those among them who are neither antiquarians nor sentimentalists, the sermon and the act of communion must often be the only moments when liturgy meets life.

As far as words are concerned, it is the *New English Bible* that has finally torn the curtain, and shown up the rest of our devotional language for the abracadabra it normally is. The modern world will buy 'A heavy squall came on . . .' (Mark 4.37); but it will no longer (if in its right mind and untreated by the Hidden Persuaders) buy 'Fierce raged the tempest o'er the deep', or the gratuitous adjective of "guileless sleep" (*BHB* 117).

Music is even more difficult than words. Not everyone agrees that the Church can borrow from pop-culture without getting at the same time a nasty load of the Devil (the two Beaumont tunes laudably included here will scarcely convince waverers), and what else is there? Must the few neophytes we boast choose between (in effect) the schools of Gibbons and of Sankey? A book which, in this year of grace 1962, can print *SAGINA* as the *only* setting of 'And can it be' (426) makes one fear the worst for the future of hymns and (*sub specie temporis*, of course) of the people who sing them.

Yet these editors have done their job with rare skill and an obvious longing to feed the hungry if they may. There are five of Albert Bayly's hymns, for instance (but as against eight of Frances van Alstyne's), and three of Erik Routley's tunes (but as against seven of F. C. Maker's). A *BLESSED ASSURANCE* on one page usually means a *MEINE HOFFNUNG* on the opposite page to compensate.

But oh, the lumber! Oh, the challenge to the self-discipline of ministers and congregations that these worthy pages represent! It is all here, from *RIMINGTON* to *BLAENWERN*, from 'In heavenly love abiding' to 'City of God, how broad and far' and 'God of grace and God of glory'. No wonder people who hate hymns hate them so vehemently!

*Autre temps, autres mœurs.* Maybe Gélinau is the best answer we have yet. Maybe we should accept the episcopal advice of T. B. Strong and sing hymns only on Ash Wednesday. But something must be done, that is certain. When Dr Dodd has finished with the Old Testament he must be persuaded to begin translating Watts and Wesley. For we have reached a point when the singing of ninety-nine hymns out of a hundred is a retrospec-



tive activity—a congregational retreat into the past (this book has missed Russell Bowie's 'Lord Christ, when first thou cam'st to men', with its terrible and truthful contemporaneity). For the individual habitué, there may be much good and little harm in such exploration of yesterday's treasures: but if we are all doing it all the time we must not be surprised if we do not seem to meet many people who are not already Christians like ourselves.

It is a pity, of course, that hymn books have still to carry denominational names or ambiances. Yet it would be no better if there were one book for us all. In the century since *Hymns Ancient and Modern* first appeared, the centrally-published corpus of hymns-with-tunes has reached and passed its apogee, and is now, one hopes, nearing the end of the line. These beautiful compendia have become standing invitations to the very conservatism which their editors find (always in the preceding generation) so galling and frustrating. Up with local enterprise, loose-leaf books, and *ad hoc* hymnodists!

The *Baptist Hymn Book* is splendidly produced, a joy to handle and to read. Like the recent directory of worship from the same stable, it has no page-headings; which makes the alphabetical arrangement of hymns within sections largely nugatory. It seems an excellent idea not to bother to print first lines entire in the Index, since two or three words are usually sufficient identification: but it was cussed to head the abbreviated column "First Line" just the same.

A delightful and exemplary 'Companion' is published separately, price 27s.6d., which reveals the editors of the *Baptist Hymn Book* as men whose own discrimination, unfettered by the adamant stubbornness of a Free Church constituency which knows what it likes and is determined to have it, would have produced a very humane collection indeed.

CARYL MICKLEM.

#### EDITORIAL COMMENT.

These two books present a very strange contrast. Both are attempting the same end, using means directly opposed. The end in view is to make the hymn books accessible and agreeable to those who will be using them. The *English Hymnal Service Book* does this by reducing its contents from 656 to 336<sup>1</sup>, and by reinstating a very large number of tunes which 'people still love'. The Baptist book does it by providing the most thorough revision of a preceding book that any denominational hymnal has ever achieved

<sup>1</sup>Statistics take a tumble here. *EH* 95 and 96 become *EHSB* 219: but *EHSB* 332 covers both 'This joyful Eastertide' and 'Let joy your carols fill'. Is the true score for *EHSB* 335, 336 or 337?

in a single edition, and by offering a book of enormous comprehensiveness.

Both in a way reverse the policies of their predecessors. *EHSB* does this by returning to a more 'middle-of-the-road' ethos. *BHB* does it by repairing a great deal in its predecessor that most people agreed to be breaches of taste and editorial courtesy. *EHSB* has aimed at selection; *BHB* has aimed at comprehension. *EHSB* now has no Sankeys and little Gibbons; *BHB* has *more* Gibbons and *more* Sankeys.

We think (and here we are not disagreeing with either of our reviewers) that both books combine aggressive gestures with a certain lack of 'bite'. We think that while both appear to be revolutionary, both are in reality cautious. *EHSB* is cautious in making no gestures at all in the direction of advanced musical or literary taste—and we mean by 'advanced' either that which is of high musical and literary culture or that which is associated with the contemporary 'teenage impatience'. If ever there was a middle-of-the-road hymn book, it is *EHSB*. It might be said, but the expression is bound to be inflammatory, that it is profoundly and somewhat miserably middle-class.

*BHB* on the other hand is cautious in saying, in effect, 'We will see that what we, the editors, really want and believe in is in the book; and we will give plenty of ground in order that that aim may be achieved'. Mr Micklem has said with uncompromising clarity that this caution is nowadays misplaced. We hope we do not here misjudge the Baptist editors, or attribute to them too hastily thoughts that were much in the minds of those who edited *Congregational Praise*. But despite the two Beaumonts, *BHB* is cautious, and comprehensive, and perhaps for that reason unduly cumbersome, and unduly open to misuse by those who have not seen the real point of what its editors were trying to do. This said, we feel that the extraordinary patience and scholarship to which every page of *BHB* bears witness should be emphatically praised. But in this comment we realize that we must either embarrass the editors by divorcing them from the taste of their constituency (we think this may offend them) or ask them to be responsible for what we are calling caution.

But the real point is that *EH*, in 1906, was not cautious at all. And this, we think, is a matter of history and sociology which the Society ought to take note of.

Looking again at *EH* (we have done it in these pages often enough) one is astonished anew at its dogmatic lack of caution. It is indeed a young man's book. V-W, we remember, was 34 in 1906, and Percy Dearmer 39. They knew what they wanted. And they gave very little ground.

But of course they gave some; and the appearance in *EH* of ST CUTHBERT and IN BABILONE and BENEVENTO (not to mention, of



course, the prisoners who entered on their uneasy sleep) prompts our entertaining and possibly irreverent reflection. We honestly believe that V-W in 1906 knew only the hymn tunes that were in currency through *A & M*; and that over against this canon he placed those tunes which he discovered through his awakening interest in folksong, and those which came his way through his massive musical scholarship. He knew the old books, and he knew the folk songs, and he knew *A & M*. Actually, he was probably delivered from an embarrassing comprehensiveness by being more or less ignorant of the Dissenting interest in hymnody.

You may say that he lost little by this. True. But if he had really said, 'Let us collect all the best tunes there are', he would actually have found in obscure contemporary books tunes which would have made *BENEVENTO* and *ST CUTHBERT* look very pale indeed. To take just a couple of examples: V-W went on record as being a great admirer of *MILES LANE*. It is impossible to think that he would not have admired *MADRID* (*MHB* 375). He included in *EH* a tune of singular beauty called *NUN LASST UNS GEH'N* (104); would he not have thought well of W. F. Hurndall's *BENISON*, had he known his *Worship Song* as well as Dearmer did? (See No. 570 in that book.)

Reflections such as these are tantalizing and intriguing. But our point is that it is a mercy that V-W was, as he surely was, so innocent in these things at 34. He was not a hymnologist—can't you just hear him contemptuously dismissing the 'bat-eyed hymnologists' as he once dismissed the musicologists with the same adjective? V-W travelled light, and travelled without halt.

Now it is obvious that the cultural preceptor of these two pioneers was Robert Bridges. And our members do not need reminding how truculently Bridges dismissed all attempts to play down to contemporary culture. Bridges has been characterized as donnish and priggish by later generations; but what he said he said as firmly as Dearmer made his liturgical statements in *The Parson's Handbook*. For Bridges anything less than excellent was inadmissible. His attempt at excellence in the *Yattendon Hymnal* is well known—and it is full of curious misjudgments in its text and quaint but engaging splutters in its Notes. *EH* became 'Bridges for the people'.

And the people took it. No use saying that they largely sang the old *A & M* tunes. They may have done. But they bought the book. This piece of inspired and impudent private enterprise, so far from having any denominational backing that it actually incurred the interdict of certain bishops, was such a success that revision of its words has not been considered on a large scale since its publication 56 years ago.

The inference to which history seems to drive us is that in 1906 you could do this kind of thing, and that in 1962 you cannot.

Are our modern editors right about this? Does the view of the church's contemporary duty which is implied in the production of one book of 300-odd hymns scaled down to the popular religious taste of three generations ago, and another of nearly 800 hymns whose new musical material is entirely conservative in idiom, chime with the view of Christian enterprise which in the farthest outreaches of the ecumenical movement is being urged on us?

Both these are in a way (as both reviewers say) such very good books. *EHSB* is still, so far as its words go, a collection keeping a high and distinctive standard. Not everything that was excellent in *EH* has gone—indeed, surprisingly little. We would add very few to the three hymns whose omission Mr Taylor regrets—'Come, O thou Traveller' would be the most eminent. But the fact that the editors have kept 'Bozrah's way' (*EH* 108) and 'He wants not friends' (401) with its haunting music, and both the hymns that go to *INNSBRUCK* (86, 278) shows that they respect what *EH* stood for at the literary level. More disquieting is their cavalier treatment of the social applications of the Gospel, for which they make virtually no provision.

But perhaps both books miss greatness because they exasperate us so little. Mr Taylor's review contains one exceptionally telling sentence. 'Congregations demand lamentably little of their hymn books'. The question is, are we right to pay so much more respect than Bridges and his pupils did to this mediocre congregational demand?

We have waited many years now for a hymn book containing one tune that makes us say, 'But, good heavens!' We can still recall how we felt when we first set eyes on the third tune to 'Nearer, my God, to Thee' in the *Methodist Hymn Book*, and V-W's *MANTEGNA* in *Songs of Praise* (126), and Stanton's *SHERSTON* (*BBC* 287). Nothing in *Congregational Praise*, or in *Christian Praise*, or in *Sunday School Praise*, or in the recent *Irish Church Hymnal* has evoked quite that response. Where you find something really shocking like that—where you find something of which you say, 'Nobody will sing this, and quite right, too'—you are liable to find greatness, enterprise, a 'chancing of the arm'; where such things cannot be found you will find elegance and even grace, but always caution and perhaps a cultural saying of soul which is in the end loss of soul. Professor Hutchings's tune to 'O Thou who camest' (*EHSB* 190) is the one moment of arrest in the music of *EHSB*. In *BHB* one finds much that is so very good, but not quite this.

Need we be so cautious? Need we be so terrified of our congregations? Need we exclude what will be rarely sung? Need we be quite so polite? Need we be so unsure, where V-W and Dearmer were in their generation so sure? Must we be so much more afraid than they were that posterity will write us down fools for our judgment? V-W is no less great, but rather greater, because pint-sized



critics can tell him he was wrong about ANGELS' SONG, and can question his judgment about the tune to 'Eternal Father strong to save'.

Could a book edited by a couple of young enthusiasts with a handful of chosen friends round them get published now? Must editors always have at their elbow non-expert critics who will say, with Sherlock Holmes, 'Cut out the poetry, Watson!'?

## CONFERENCE AT BRISTOL,

SEPTEMBER, 1962.

The Annual Conference will be held at Bristol, from Tuesday, September 18th, to Thursday, 20th. The address will be The Baptist College, Woodlands Road, Bristol. Members will assemble for tea at 4 p.m. on the 18th, and disperse after breakfast on the 20th.

The chief meetings of the Conference will be as follows:

### TUESDAY,

5.00 p.m.—*The Making of the Baptist Hymn Book*, by the Rev. Hugh Martin, C.H., D.D.

7.45 p.m.—An Act of Praise in Tyndale Baptist Church. Conducted by the Rev. Cyril V. Taylor (Vicar of Cerne Abbas; formerly Warden of the Royal School of Church Music)

### WEDNESDAY,

11.15 a.m.—Annual General Meeting

2.00 p.m.—*The Music of the Baptist Hymn Book*, by the Rev. Eric P. Sharpe (Joint-Chairman of the Society)

4.00 p.m.—Evensong in Bristol Cathedral

8.00 p.m.—*The English Hymnal Service Book, its Nature and Object*, by Canon Noel Boston (a member of its editorial Committee).

The cost to members will be £4 4s. Please make bookings as early as possible with the Rev. Wilfred Little, 29 The Avenue, Basford, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs: but note that Mr Little's address after August 29th will be Ash Tree House, Audlem, Crewe, Cheshire.

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Please note that our Secretary, Mr Holbrook, changes his address on August 29th. The new address is

85 LORD HADDON ROAD, ILKESTON, DERBYSHIRE.