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HYMN WRITING FOR OUR TIMES

Adapted from an address by Revd Albert F. Bayly to the London
Branch of the Hymn Society on January 27th, 1968.

'Our times' is an elastic term. Great changes in knowledge, and in social and religious outlook can take place even in the quarter of a century which is nearly the useful life-time of many hymn books. But for our purpose there is good reason for giving the phrase a longer range. For the appearance of *Songs of Praise* in 1925 is the best point of departure for exploring modern hymnody. Both in the old material selected and the new material included, *Songs of Praise* broke new ground from which fruitful harvests have been

reaped. Treasures of poetry old and new which no other compilers of hymn books would have thought suitable were claimed and gathered in for corporate Christian worship.

Look, for instance, at *S.P.* 86; John Masefield's lines, 'By weary stages the old world ages'. And we find in *S.P.* not only the outward aspects of contemporary life:—

... The men in the mills and the mines,
The factories, offices, stations and lines,

The airplanes and steamers that pass to and fro: (*S.P.* 396),

but the authentic response of a man of science to his discoveries in the microscopic as well as those in the astronomic world.

Before thy feet I fall,
Lord, who made high my fate;
For in the mighty small
Thou show'st the mighty great.

Lo, while we ask the stars
To learn the will of God,
His answer unawares
Strikes sudden from the sod.

(*S.P.* 452, by Sir Ronald Ross.)

The editors of *S.P.* were not afraid of the Pantheism of Mary Robinson's hymn, 'The Eternal Spirit' (*S.P.* 616)

Thou art the ripening of the fallows,
The swelling of the buds in rain;
Thou art the joy of birth that hallows
The rending of the flesh in twain;

and Percy Dearmer brought into his hymns not only the Hebrew prophets, but:—

Socrates who, phrase by phrase,
Talked men to truth, unshrinking,
And left for Plato's mighty grace
To mould our ways of thinking; (*S.P.* 640).

The freshness of thought and expression, imaginative freedom and catholicity of spirit which these extracts illustrate were very welcome in the rather narrow and stuffy traditional world of much 19th- and early 20th-century hymnody.

We owe a great debt to *S.P.*, a debt which has been acknowledged by the wide use made of it, and of books based upon it, not only in Church worship but even more in Day Schools and Colleges.

Nevertheless, *S.P.* had its weak points, even as a collection for general use when it appeared. Erik Routley comments, 'Sometimes enthusiasm broke the queue and dogma was kept waiting to be served' (*H.S. Bulletin* No. 66, p. 152). Some of the lines I have quoted illustrate that.

Moreover, hymns for corporate worship need to be different from poems expressing a private and individual response to experience. Not alone among hymn books *S.P.* did not always draw the line clearly. Sir Ronald Ross's poem probably lies on the wrong side; and Shakespeare's sonnet 'Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth' (*S.P.* 622).

The editors of *S.P.*, stimulated by the influence of Robert Bridges in his *Yattendon Hymnal*, had the laudable desire to raise the poetic as well as the musical standard of hymns. 'In the future', they hoped, 'intelligent men will be able to take up a hymn book and read it with as much interest and appreciation as any other collection of poetry or music' (Preface to enlarged edition). But they sometimes forgot that a true congregational hymn must be simple in expression. Hymns may deal with the most profound ideas, but unless these are expressed in the simplest and clearest possible way they can be nothing but words to many of those who sing them. It is easy enough to follow Bridges as he addresses man with the words:—

Higher and higher shall thy thoughts aspire,
Unto the stars of heaven, and pass away.

But what can the average member of a congregation make of the lines that follow?

And earth renew the buds of thy desire
In fleeting blooms of everlasting day. (*S.P.* 498.)

Long before the end of that verse the aspiring thoughts of the worshipper are likely to have passed away beyond the stars of heaven into blankness!

A sentence used of the tributes paid in Parliament to the late President Kennedy after his assassination might well be taken to heart by hymn writers: 'There is a sense in which only small words are big enough'. To put in small words and phrases, without bathos, without clichés, with a feeling for the proper dignity of worship and the rhythmic quality needed in a hymn—to express thus our human response to God in his truth and glory, and to interpret our human experience in this light—that is surely what the hymn writer must try to do. And he must be sensitive to the knowledge and modes of life and expression of his time; not in order to say just what his contemporaries think and feel, but to express the response of a man of faith to experience of the world in which he lives.

Before we look at some efforts of hymn writers to do this since *S.P.* appeared, let us take a quick look at some features of the 'human situation' which have emerged in the last forty years.

The second world war struck a cruel blow at the idealism and hopes for world peace expressed in the creation of the League of Nations. Even with the United Nations, most people today have

much more sober and limited hopes about the immediate future of world relationships. Out of the second war emerged the ominous cloud of the nuclear bomb, which still hangs darkly over the whole of human life. The post second war period has brought the virtual end of the great empires of the western world, and the growth of race consciousness and conflict. New world powers have emerged or developed strength and influence. Technology has made enormous strides. *S.P.* appeared about the same time as radio broadcasting. Now we have T.V., with colour as its latest gift. Space-travel is with us. Air-travel is commonplace, and the motor car has made millions mobile in a new way. Biological science has also made tremendous progress, and now seems near the brink of creating life. The transplanting of human organs raises new problems for thought about personality.

But with growing appreciation of man's almost limitless power in the natural sphere goes deep questioning of his capacity to use this power safely and beneficially. Each new discovery or achievement brings a new danger.

In theology the past forty years have seen Karl Barth's 'Word of God' transcendentalism displace an earlier liberalism, and Bonhoeffer's 'Religionless Christianity' prepare the way for the 'Honest to God' School. Now the influence of Teilhard de Chardin promises a new *rapprochement* between science and a revived Christian humanism. In sharp contrast to this development, 'conservative evangelicalism' seems in some quarters to have strengthened its appeal.

Meanwhile, in our own country at least, the tide for Christianity, certainly as measured by the strength and influence of the Church, has been generally ebbing, and phrases such as 'a post-Christian society', and 'Britain a mission-field' are commonly used. Humanism divorced from Christian beliefs seems to gain wide acceptance. At the same time the Ecumenical Movement has drawn the Churches closer together, and the world mission of the Church has entered on a new stage.

Such are some at least of the changes which have affected the climate for our Faith in the last forty years, since *Songs of Praise* appeared. In what ways may we expect the hymn writer to respond to them if his words are to express a living, relevant Faith for such times?

First, we may certainly expect him, or her, to take account of new and significant aspects of the world in which men live. Science and technology now touch our lives at so many points that to sing hymns without reference to them must encourage the idea that religion and worship are irrelevant to much of life.

A number of attempts are now being made to meet this need. *The Rodborough Hymnal*, edited by John and Mary Ticehurst,

includes some, among them John Ticehurst's own hymn (*R.H.* 71),

O God of towns and city squares
Where rush-hour kills our morning prayers

with its third verse:—

O God—of office desk and stool,
Of drawing-board and typing-pool,
Of every shop and store;
Of those with friends, and those without,
Of those with faith, and those with doubt—
Be near us evermore.

Our own honoured and deeply mourned member Donald Hughes provides another example in his 'Creator of the universe' (*R.H.* 70), with its last verse 3:—

Make every desk an altar, Lord
Our studying a prayer;
The classroom doors cathedral gates
To those who enter there.
Let science find in Thee its Truth;
Technology its goal;
Philosophy its noblest Thought
Thy light makes knowledge whole!

If I may be forgiven illustrations from my own hymns, 'Lord, Thy Kingdom bring triumphant' includes a fairly wide range of modern interests and activities, among them:—

The far-borne broadcast tidings
Speaking peace from land to land. (*R.H.* 9).

Another hymn, 'Thy first great gift was light', No. 7 in my new collection, refers to T.V. as well as Radio, in verse 4 affirming:—

Those broadcast waves that bring,
With tireless speed,
A vision or a voice,
Were first Thy deed.

But the modern hymn writer's task is not just to crowd his lines with as many aspects of contemporary life as he has room for, but to relate these and the thoughts they evoke imaginatively and effectively to religious faith. No. 6 in *R.H.*, 'Lord of the boundless curves of space', was inspired by a B.B.C. Third Programme talk on 'Poetry and Science'. Put alongside this a fine hymn for young people (*Sunday School Praise* 136) by R. W. Callin, 'Lift to heaven your wondering faces'.

The late Revd H. D. Oliver encouraged me some years ago to write hymns with modern metaphors. One which resulted from

this was No. 6 in 'Again I say, Rejoice', 'Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory'. Verse 2 reads:—

Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory;
Kingdom of righteousness, beauty and thought:
Power of the turbine, of aircraft and radar;
Glory designer and craftsman have wrought.

It would be impossible to write thoughtfully and adequately about modern developments such as nuclear power without dealing with the threats they pose to man's well-being, and their challenge to conscience:—

Locked in the atom God has stored a secret might,
Energy unmeasured hidden deep from human sight:
Gift of God for blessing, made by man the tool of fear;
Shall it evermore be so?

('Again I say', No. 39, written for a Youth Centre).

Nahum's dirge over fallen Nineveh can provide a starting point in trying to bring home one of the supreme issues before modern man. Cf. 'She was a city proudly strong' (Rejoice O People', No. 36).

Our modern dilemma and dangers arise not only from our handling of natural forces, but from new developments in our relationship with our fellow men. Since the days of *S.P.* race relationships have entered an acute phase, and this in turn has influenced the hymn writer seeking to deal with the Church's world mission. Joan Rogers' hymn in *R.H.* (No. 65) provides a good illustration. Beginning with the familiar New Testament thought 'The Shepherd has yet other sheep' and the command 'Go into all the world' the author passes quickly to the modern scene in verses 2-4. The last verse begins:—

Thou knowest, Lord, we fail to own
That all in Thee are one.
Our distant brethren we forget;
Those in our midst we shun.

In some of my own hymns, and choral verses and carols for children, I have tried to express a Christian approach to this and related issues. 'Long ago when Jesus walked in Galilee' ('Again I say', No. 50) is a very simple example set to Kenneth Finlay's lovely and familiar tune *GLENFINLAS*.

During the past forty years the whole aspect of the Church's world mission has changed. The Church-Mission relationship has given place to one between Church and Church. The former 'sending countries' have become mission fields themselves. The Ecumenical Movement has built up a consciousness among Christians of world-wide partnership in a common task. Once familiar 'missionary' hymns such as 'From Greenland's icy mountains', and

even 'Hills of the north, rejoice', are now out-of-date, and the situation requires a new approach from the hymn writer. Ever since I wrote my first hymn, 'Rejoice O People', in 1945 I have tried to keep this in mind. If we cannot now sing 'Hills of the north' feeling that it fits the modern situation, we can either use a revised form (cf. *Hymns for Church and School*, No. 188) or sing the excellent tune *LITTLE CORNARD* perhaps with words such as these (the last verse of 'Again I say', No. 23):—

Christ shall mankind unite,
Love His design fulfil,
Science His truth declare,
Power shall obey His will.
His might to save, His right to claim
This great world's life we now proclaim.

The Bible is another area of the Christian's 'world' where time has brought change that the hymn writer must take into account. Christians may draw various conclusions still from new knowledge of its background and critical examination of its contents. But most would agree that these factors cannot be ignored, and that there is a real need for hymns which express in a new way our response to the living Word of God which still speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures. David W. Morgan, in his winning hymn in the 1967 Free Church Choir Union competition, 'O Thou beyond all time and space', does this well. In a number of my own hymns I have tried to deal in a positive way, not only with the Bible as a whole, but with the message of particular books—especially the prophets. A hymn on Amos ('Rejoice O People', No. 32) ends:—

Still we hear Thy word in thunder,
But the thunder of love's might;
Now we see in grateful wonder
Mercy dawn on judgment's night:
Love triumphant
Breaks in glory on our sight.

Current theological thinking is naturally reflected in hymn writing, now as in the past. The most recent theological ferment, evoked by the Bishop of Woolwich's 'Honest to God', soon moved Christopher Driver to a hymn, 'We met you, Lord, one evening in the way' (*Prism*, May 1963, and *Hymns and Psalms for living in the New*, No. 8). There is thought in this hymn. The writer is sensitive both to the Bishop's ideas and to the world in which the hymn-singer lives (although allusions to 'quota' and 'contract' would 'ring a bell' only for a small proportion of possible users). But has C. Driver written here a true congregational hymn? A footnote suggests that he is not sure. David Goodall's 'The world He loves'

beginning 'When the pious prayers we make' (© L.M.S. 1962) is another hymn with a cutting edge of thought and expression for our generation.

Erik Routley, in his recent 'Hymns for today and tomorrow', writes, 'I advocate a return to the carol in our public praise as a first step to good hymn writing' (p. 165). He finds the special genius of ancient ages expressed in carols which 'make those bold collocations of ideas which Protestantism normally separates', using as an illustration 'Tomorrow shall be my dancing day' (*OBC* 71). Such carols 'juxtapose the passion and *laughter*, redemption and the *dance*, atonement and a *love* song.' Strongly reminiscent of this is Sydney Carter's modern carol (which Erik Routley quotes), 'Lord of the dance' (*Hymns and Psalms for Living in the New*, No. 13). Another modern carol, winning entry in a *Sunday Times* competition in 1958, begins:—

Joseph came to Somers Town, behind the Euston Road
Evicted from his caravan and now of no abode;
Mary sought a lodging there, shelter for her head,
But all the jostling houses could offer them no bed.
(Author, R. F. Colville).

I have made some little attempts at carols for today, such as 'If Christ were born in Burnley' (*University Carol Book*, No. 68) with others in my new collection.

I appreciate the point of Erik Routley's commendation of the carol. He may well be right in saying that 'What Ira D. Sankey did in his day for the unchurched poor, these people' (such as Sydney Carter) 'are doing for the unchurched "welfare staters"'. But Sankey's influence was not an unmixed blessing to Christian worship. It established a tradition which in some ways hindered rather than helped many people in appreciating the finer quality of the Church's classic heritage of hymns. It would be a pity if the attempt to be 'with it' and to make a 'popular' appeal with colloquial phrasing and easy rhythms established a new 'Sankey tradition' which undid any of the good work pioneered by the editors of *Songs of Praise* in raising the general standard of taste in both hymn words and music. I must confess that I find some of the words material in the 20th-century Light Music Group collections rather weak in this respect. 'Dunblane Praises' has words material of higher quality, though not much is really suitable—or intended—for normal congregational use.

To touch on a controversial point for modern hymn writers, there is a strong movement now to switch in hymn writing, as often in contemporary prayers, from Thee, Thou, Thy to You, Your, etc., in addressing God. I have a fairly open mind about this, though personally the older practice comes far more naturally to me than

the new. I think that there is a case for distinguishing our mode of address to God from that which we use to one another. After all, they are different relationships. Once the novelty of 'You' has worn off, I doubt if its use will long convey any greater feeling of reality or contemporary relevance than the old form. Moreover, our present heritage of hymns is almost entirely in that older form, and could not be recast. It would be a tragedy to abandon this heritage, or to 'date' it unnecessarily by writing all new hymns in a different form. However, it is possible that the arguments for this change will eventually prevail, and that we must be prepared to use the two modes of address to God side by side for a long time.

More important, it seems to me, are some of the considerations brought forward by Erik Routley in his chapter 'Images for today' in 'Hymns for today and tomorrow'. Writing of the wide use of modern translations of the Bible, he does not think that any such translation can have the effect on the language of hymns that the Authorised Version has had. 'Hymn-writers, if they wish to be Scriptural, will now be able to achieve this only by being faithful to the underlying ideas, dogmas and patterns of the Scriptures. They will no longer be able to appear Scriptural by using direct verbal reminiscences' (p. 102). This, I think, is important. I hope that, in general, it is what my own hymns have done, so far as their relationship to the Bible is concerned—except when, for some particular purpose, I have used a Scriptural quotation, such as 'Go into all the world.' I agree fully when Erik Routley writes, 'The real Scriptural principle in good hymn-writing is the spirit of Scripture rather than its attractive but sometimes misleading letter . . . it seems clear that the modern hymn-writer will serve his age best if his argument is clear and religious and based on the truth declared in the Scriptures, and clothed in words and images that declare his contact and compassion with the world in which he lives' (p. 105).

'The world in which he lives'. Yes, certainly, that includes the world of space-travel, nuclear power, rush-hours and all the other modern developments which I have alluded to. But not *that* world *alone*. After all, although the lives of many of us are deeply affected by these things, a great part of our experience is with aspects of life and the universe which have inspired poets and hymn writers for centuries. I believe that it is still worth while trying to convey the response of a Christian mind and heart to such experiences—to nature in its varied aspects and moods—still the everyday environment of millions of people and eagerly sought by millions more when released from daily tasks—to home and friendship and Christian fellowship—to music and the other arts, to life's common joys and sorrows, temptations, tasks and trials, to stages in the Christian life, baptism, profession of faith, Christian marriage, and so on. Each generation makes its own characteristic

response to such experiences and needs to find expression for it in its own way. I hope that hymns such as I have tried to write in:—

O joy of life, when full and strong
The tide of youth flows in the blood ('Rejoice O People', No. 16),
or:—Lord of the home ('Rejoice O People', No. 6),
or:—Thy greatness is like mountains, Lord ('Again I say', No. 19)
will still find a place alongside those that deal with the newer aspects of man's experience.

In my view, the task of the hymn writer today is to look at the whole of modern man's life, relationships and experience, not only that which he finds within Church walls, and to try to express what he sees there in the light of his vision of God's character, purpose and message of deliverance through Jesus Christ. Let him do this, as Erik Routley prescribes, with 'toughness and grace' (Broadcast, 'What makes a good hymn?' and—in a sentence from Stephen Leacock on 'How to write humour' which he quotes with approval—'with correctness, aptness and simplicity in words and phrases' such as Erik Routley finds in John Arlott (*BBC* 435) and Timothy Rees (*BBC* 273)).

Then, I believe, without striving after what is startlingly new in form or content, the hymn writer will still be able to give modern man a true and worth-while expression for his faith, his aspirations, his penitence, his needs, his spiritual experience and his will to serve and share the purposes of God.

NEW HYMNS FROM TWO GENERATIONS

Our revered friend Albert Bayly is at last receiving recognition as one of the major hymn writers of our time. It has been long delayed. When his 'Rejoice, O People' came out in 1950, it just missed the current editorial spate, and only its title-hymn, 'Rejoice, O people, in the mounting years' appeared in a standard hymn book in Britain during the years that followed. That was because it had become known earlier—in time to be considered, and welcomed, by the editors of *Congregational Praise* and the *BBC Hymn Book* (both of which appeared in 1951).

American editors were more hospitable—they usually do make their decisions rather more quickly than English editors—but it is really only during the past few years that Bayly has had the honour he deserves. *Hymns for Church and School* (1964) took him seriously, and he appears, I am told, in both the supplemental books which are being prepared by the Methodists and by the Proprietors of *Hymns A & M*.

Last year (1967) another volume of Bayly hymns and poems

appeared — 'Again I say, Rejoice' (7s.6d. from the author — The Manse, 10 High Street, Thaxted, Essex).

In a sense a review is quite unnecessary here because Bayly has confessed his faith in the preceding article. Bayly—and the editors, who keep no secrets, assure us that he is now a senior man—believes in looking at the whole of contemporary life as he writes: and he has seen plenty. He has served, in a ministerial life of forty years, in six Congregational churches in districts as widely separated as Morpeth and Thaxted, taking in industrial Lancashire on the way. But his approach to contemporary life is poised and modest. I remember once in earlier days that somebody pointed out, in a hymn of his about modern industry, that he had used the word 'aerodrome' which had already given way to 'airfield'; he altered the word in the later versions of that hymn, 'Lord, thy kingdom bring triumphant', and I cannot recall that he has ever been caught that way since. His language is conservative, rather than self-consciously 'with it'; he has never let himself be separated from good theology by the clamour of modernism.

Any reader will be glad to add 'Again I say, Rejoice' to his copy of the former Bayly collection: it is less exclusively devoted to hymns than the former book, but then it is a good deal fatter. They will see that he has not lost his touch.

Turning to another collection of original hymns by an author quite young enough to be Bayly's son, Fred H. Kaan, one would expect a descent from the dignified to the skittish or even the vulgar. Not at all. Fred Kaan—whom I proudly claim as another Congregationalist colleague—has a quite remarkable gift for hymnody. He was born a Dutchman and a graduate of Utrecht; but not only does he speak English like a native and better than most, he writes it like a poet. He wrote these hymns for the church in a new part of Plymouth which he is about to leave to become Minister-Secretary of the International Congregational Council. They appear in a modest booklet, cyclostyled very agreeably, under the title *Pilgrim Praise*. The original edition has recently been superseded by a second, bringing the total to thirty. Among them there is a very impressive hymn for baptism—simple, but satisfyingly theological, containing this verse:—

With Noah, through disaster born,
With Moses, from the river drawn,
And Jonah, from the sea released
We celebrate this rising feast.

That indicates a certain tendency to ruggedness which occasionally makes a hymn rather forbidding at first sight. But often he captures the true lyric spirit, and at least once he really achieves a combination of anger and inspiration—in 'We meet you, O Christ'.

I have long been looking for a hymn which would give Dr Stanton's terrifying tune SHERSTON a chance. This, without doubt, is the one: here is its first verse:—

We meet you, O Christ, in many a guise,
Your image we see in simple and wise;
You live in a palace, exist in a shack,
We see you, the gardener, a tree on your back.

I like also a chance to sing the tune PERSONENT HODIE to English words—and 'Down to earth' is just what I am looking for.

Finally there is a hymn at the end entitled 'Not so much a hymn . . . ' which begins:—

City of man, how rich and right
outspread your streets and squares,
how grand the standards of your life,
how high your stocks and shares. . . .
City of man, how deep and grim
your camps and shacks and holes;
how wide the eyes of hungry men,
how bitter human souls.

Not quite so much a hymn—as you see: but perhaps one of those songs which would fit perfectly into a rather ironic and unpleasant modern morality play.

Anyhow, get hold of *Pilgrim Praise* (from the author, International Congregational Council, 11 Carteret Street, London, S.W.1); see for yourself how ably he has combined, in the manner of his generation, the contemporary and the timeless in his work.

E.R.

CHURCH AND CHAMBER BARREL-ORGANS

By NOEL BOSTON and LYNDESAY G. LANGWILL. Published 1967 by L. G. Langwill, 19 Melville Street, Edinburgh 3. Pp. viii + 120. Price 50s., plus 2s. postage. Reviewed by BERNARD MASSEY.

'A Chapter in English Church Music', says the sub-title, and those of us who heard Canon Boston with his infectious enthusiasm describing and demonstrating these old instruments of church praise will know how fascinating that chapter is. His untimely death in 1966 left his collaborator with the task of completing the book alone, but we can be grateful that the fruits of Noel Boston's life-long study of barrel-organs are here recorded in permanent form.

Chapters on the history of church barrel-organs and a description of their construction are followed by what is likely to be of greatest interest to members of this society; that is, a consideration

of the hymn tunes set on the barrels. As a contribution to our knowledge of the hymn-singing habits of a century and a half ago surviving barrel-organs are invaluable. For one thing, they show what tunes were most popular at the time when the barrels were prepared. True, by no means every church had a barrel-organ, but well over 500 have been logged in various parts of the country, and from these, 63 tune-lists have been obtained. We learn, for instance, that OLD HUNDREDTH and TALLIS' CANON tied as pick of the 19th-century pops, each being recorded on all 63 lists. Whether one can go further and deduce how the popularity of a tune varied across the country is perhaps doubtful, but the authors do not press this point.

Most intriguing, no doubt, is what those barrel-organs still in working order tell us about the contemporary style of hymn performance. Many textual variations in the tunes are brought to light and also countless ornaments such as trills, passing notes and grace notes. The problem of tune aliases arises: one tune may be differently named in different tune-lists and, even more confusingly, several tunes may share one name. Thus it is vital for the researcher in this field to hear the tunes played and not just to transcribe the names.

The organs on which particular tunes (or at least tunes with particular names) are, or were, available are exhaustively listed. In this catalogue of some 300 tunes a few chants are included: these could be performed—by a skilful 'organist'—on those larger instruments in which the wind was supplied by mechanism independent of that for rotating the barrel. A separate list gives secular tunes. Details are presented of all known barrel-organ builders and of all known extant instruments. Many excellent photographs also add to the delights of this well produced volume.

As Mr. Langwill notes in his preface, the book was Noel Boston's brain-child. It documents a great deal of his valuable research in a field hitherto largely uncharted and forms a worthy and fitting memento of his enthusiasm. To say this is not to overlook other contributions. But none had made the subject so much his own as Boston had, and one hopes that others will now be stimulated to continue recording such important historical information before it vanishes beyond recall.

HYMNS AT THE HOLY COMMUNION

By C. E. POCKNEE

In an increasing number of Cathedrals and Parish Churches throughout the Anglican Communion the Holy Communion is being restored as the chief act of Sunday morning worship in accordance with the custom of the primitive and undivided Church, when the faithful met together every Lord's Day to greet the risen

Christ in the Breaking of the Bread. This service, which is frequently known today as the Parish Communion, emphasizes the unity and fellowship which all Christians should find at the Lord's Table and it cuts across the old party distinctions of 'high' and 'low'; and it therefore has important bearings on the oecumenical movement since true unity and fellowship must find their ultimate expression in the sacrament of unity in which the Church as the Body of Christ receives his Body in sacramental fellowship. Justin Martyr's account of Sunday morning worship in his first *Apologia*, written about A.D. 150, makes it quite evident that in the primitive Church there was only one service on the Lord's Day; and that this was the Eucharist in which the risen Christ was greeted by his people in sacramental fellowship. That this service had music with the singing of psalms and hymns we learn from contemporary evidence.

But when we turn to the chief hymnals in use in the Anglican Communion hymns which express these ideals are hard to find. In the *English Hymnal* hymns emphasizing Sunday as the day of the Lord's resurrection are limited to two: Spenser's 'Most glorious Lord of life that on this day' (283) and Wordsworth's 'O day of rest and gladness' (284). To these might be added the Easter hymn from the Greek, 'The day of resurrection' (137). Even so, this is a meagre selection to express one of the major themes of the Lord's Day. *Hymns Ancient and Modern Revised* has a better selection on Sunday and the resurrection:—

39. On this day, the first of days (from the Latin)
40. Again the Lord's own day is here (from the Latin)
41. O day of rest and gladness (Wordsworth)
42. This is the day of light (Ellerton)

But none of these says anything about Sunday as the day of fellowship in the Lord's own service of the Breaking of the Bread. Indeed, the editors of *AMR* seem to have overlooked Ellerton's other verse in his 'This is the day of light' which was noted by Julian:—

This is the day of Bread,
The Bread that thou dost give;
Today for us the feast is spread
That hung'ring souls may live.

When we look at the considerable range of Eucharistic hymns provided in both books it is difficult to find any that underlines the unity and fellowship that ought to be found at the Lord's Table in sacramental fellowship with Christ. Only one, written by a

former Prime Minister, W. E. Gladstone (*E.H.* 322) meets this critique in its third verse:—

We, who with one blest Food are fed
Into one body may we grow;
And one pure life from thee, the Head,
Informing all the members flow;
One pulse be felt in every vein,
One law of pleasure and of pain.

The Eucharistic hymns in both books are largely governed by the ideals of the Oxford Movement which saw the primitive Church through a screen of medieval misconceptions in regard to the Eucharist or Mass. Clearly some rethinking on these issues is now so widely going on both in the Anglican Communion, and in the Roman Catholic Church under the liturgical renewal, that it must be reflected in our hymnals. We need more hymns like Canon G. W. Briggs's 'Come, risen lord, and deign to be our guest' (*S.P.* 266), with its fine third verse:—

One body we, one body who partake,
One Church united in communion blest;
One name we bear, one bread of life we break,
With all thy saints on Earth and saints at rest.

COMPANIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

By F. C. B. MALDRAM

John Lawson's recent anthology, *The Christian Year with Charles Wesley* (Epworth Press, 12s.6d.) invites comparison with John Keble's *The Christian Year* of 1827, which is, admittedly, its inspiration. It has also sent the present writer to the study of a less well-known book, William Morley Punshon's *Sabbath Chimes* of 1867.

Punshon was born in 1824 and died in 1881: he entered the Wesleyan Ministry in 1845, was President of the Wesleyan Conference in 1874, and served both in Canada and in this country. He was held in especial regard in Bournemouth, as witnesses the fact that the new Methodist Church in that town is (as was its predecessor, destroyed by enemy action in the last War) a Punshon Memorial Church. The present *Methodist Hymn Book* includes two hymns over his signature (Nos. 662 and 666). Both are taken from *Sabbath Chimes*, abridged and slightly altered.

Lawson and Keble have similar aims: Lawson writes, "Our hope in compiling this anthology is that in these days it may be brought home anew to Anglicans how completely Charles Wesley is one of themselves, and to Methodists how fully original and authentic Methodism is the religion of the Book of Common

Prayer". Keble states, "The object of the present publication will be attained, if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer Book." In his preface to *Sabbath Chimes* Punshon strikes a more personal note: speaking of his book he says, "I covet for it, chiefly, three successes; that, if God wills, it may be a messenger of mercy to the wandering; that it may be a comforter to the troubled, and that it may be a memory of the writer to many friends".

In all three volumes the main concern has been the provision of a passage for each Sunday of the year. Keble prefaced this with poems for morning and evening, and followed it by one for every red-letter day of the kalendar, rounding off his work by pieces for the twelve occasional offices.

Lawson has a selection for every Sunday and red-letter day (and has added one for Christmas Eve) and concludes with a very valuable Guide to the Holy Communion (twelve passages illuminating the liturgy from 'Give us this day . . .' to 'Heirs through hope . . .').

Punshon has a meditation for each Sunday though he passes straight from Advent to Epiphany and has nothing for Lent 6: the gaps are filled by poems for Christmas Day and Good Friday in the appendix where also are to be found Sabbath Morning, Sabbath Evening, Ascension Day, Baptism, The Lord's Supper, Matrimony and Burial of the Dead.

In two respects Lawson differs from the earlier books: firstly, he keeps closely to the liturgical provision of the Prayer Book—the Collect for the Day for the most part, though occasionally the Epistle or the Gospel. Both Keble and Punshon have allowed themselves a wider field by including other passages from both Old and New Testaments. Secondly, his selections are in most cases short, whereas Keble and Punshon give us anything up to fifteen verses for every occasion.

Of the three writers Keble is the most gloomy: he is so oppressed by the sinfulness of the age that at times he comes perilously near to discounting the efficacy of God's redemptive love. With Wesley the note of triumph keeps breaking through; with him, as with St. Paul, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound". Punshon, whilst akin to Keble in content and form, is nearer to Wesley in spirit, though his Christianity is perhaps more pacific, less boisterous.

We give below a verse from each *Companion* to illustrate his thought on seven occasions of the Church's life. With Keble and Punshon it is not always easy to extract a suitable passage as the thought of one verse is carried forward into the next, and so neither is intelligible out of its context.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Wesley (The Epistle).

Rejoice in Jesu's birth!
To us a Son is given,
To us a Child is born on earth—
Who made both earth and heaven!
His shoulder props the sky,
This universe sustains!
The God supreme, the Lord most high,
The King Messiah reigns!

Keble.

"Suddenly there was with the angel"

Think on the eternal home
The Saviour left for you;
Think on the Lord most holy, come
To dwell with hearts untrue:
So shall ye tread untired His pastoral ways
And in the darkness sing your carol of high praise.

Punshon (The same).

Father in heaven! we bless Thee for the song
It melts into our hearts, and makes them warmer;
It stirs us to put on the warrior's armour,
And in Thy name do battle with the wrong.

EPIPHANY 5

Wesley.

All ye that Sion love
Rejoice in her increase,
Yourself begotten from above
To taste her happiness;
Who wept her state decayed,
Let every mournful soul
In her prosperity be glad
With joy for ever full.

Keble.

"Philip and the Ethiopian"

'Twas silent all and dead
Beside the barren sea,
Where Philip's steps were led—
Led by a voice from Thee;
He rose and went, nor asked Thee why,
Nor stayed to heave one faithless sigh.

Punshon.

"The men of Nineveh shall rise in the judgment"

No timid prophet, frightened 'neath the burden which he bore,
Spoke sadly in her stately halls one evening, and no more;
But God's own Son revealed Himself by many a healing sign,
And from their graves the dead came forth to witness Him Divine.

GOOD FRIDAY

Wesley (The Gospel).

Saviour, Prince, enthroned above,
Repentance to impart,
Give me through Thy dying love
The humble contrite heart:
Give me what I long implored
A portion of Thy grief unknown;
Turn, and look upon me, Lord,
And break my heart of stone.

Keble.

"Despised and rejected of men"

Is it not strange, the darkest hour
That ever dawned on sinful earth
Should touch the heart with softer power
For comfort, than an angel's mirth?
That to the Cross the mourner's eye should turn
Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn?

Punshon.

"There they crucified Him"

'Twas here, on this accursed hill,
"Without the gate", the deed was done
Which made the vexed earth's heart to thrill.
And darkened the indignant sun.

WHIT SUNDAY

Wesley.

Away with our fears,
Our troubles and tears!
The Spirit is come.
The Witness of Jesus returned to His home.
The pledge of our Lord
To His heaven restored.
Is sent from the sky
And tells us our Head is exalted on high.

Keble (The Epistle).

The fires that rushed on Sinai down
In sudden torrents dread,
Now gently light, a glorious crown,
On every sainted head.

Punshon.

"Go to, let us go down"

Oh for the lambent fire to fall,
To purge the vile, the weak to nerve!
So when the clarion-voices call
We shall be meet to build or serve.
Come, Holy Ghost! with cleansing power,
When Thou from pride our hearts hast striven,
Then, blameless, we may rear the tower,
Whose topmost stone shall reach to heaven.

TRINITY 3

Wesley.

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son;
Strong in the Lord of hosts,
And in His mighty power,
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Keble.

"Joy in the presence of the angels"

O lost and found! all gentle souls below
Their dearest welcome shall prepare, and prove
Such joy o'er thee, as raptured seraphs know,
Who learn their lesson at the Throne of Love.

Punshon (The same).

The purest bliss the angels share
Is o'er a world forgiven.
Oh mystery beyond compare!
Earth's joy and sorrow vibrate there,
And pity brightens heaven.

TRINITY 19

Wesley.

Jesus, if still the same Thou art,
If all Thy promises are sure,
Set up Thy kingdom in my heart,
And make me rich, for I am poor:
To me be all Thy treasures given,
The kingdom of an inward heaven.

Keble.

"Lo, I see four men loose"

How are they free whom we had bound?
Upright, whom in the gulf we cast?
What wondrous helper have they found
To screen them from the scorching blast?
Three were they—who hath made them four?
And sure a form divine he wore.

Punshon.

"The Raising of Lazarus"

Not unto death, but for the Father's glory
Through the hushed world the purpose is complete,
For they who mourned, and we who read the story,
Bow at His feet.

HOLY COMMUNION

Wesley.

Receiving the bread,
On Jesus we feed:
It doth not appear,
His manner of working; but Jesus is here!

Keble.

Sweet awful hour! the only sound
One gentle footstep gliding round,
Offering by turns on Jesus' part
The Cross to every hand and heart.

Punshon.

Dear pledge of love divinely true,
The rainbow of the covenant new,
Symbol of peace, 'mid sacred strife,
Spanning the story heaven of life.

John Lawson is to be commended for the care and wisdom with which he has made his selection. We are grateful to him for reminding us of these three Companions of the Year.

AN UNNOTICED PARALLEL?

By I. H. S. STRATTON

'Lord, by thy word my rule' (*Hymns A & M Revised*, 327), by Bishop Christopher Wordsworth (1807-85), stands apart from the rest of the hymns by this author by reason of its compressed thought and terse expression: in fact, it is almost too terse for its meaning to be grasped in the short time taken to sing it. The 1907 edition of Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* and the *Historical Edition of Hymns A & M* mention only that the hymn was found in the edition of Wordsworth's *Holy Year* of 1872 under the heading 'At Confirmation'. They do not discuss the structure of the hymn nor the close verbal parallel which I have recently discovered in Robert Nelson's *Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England* of 1704. I set out in parallel the hymn and the fifth prayer for Ash Wednesday as printed in the 1795 edition of Nelson.

Lord, be thy word my rule,
In it may I rejoice;
Thy glory be my aim,
Thy holy will my choice;

Thy promises my hope,
Thy providence my guard,
Thine arm my strong support,
Thyself my great reward.

LORD, grant that at all Times I may
account my Sins, yea all my Sins, to
my Shame; and make thy Laws, yea
all thy Laws, to be my Rule; and thy
blessed Will to be in every Thing my
Choice and Satisfaction. Let thy
Promises be my Hope, thy Providence
my Guard, thy Grace my Strength, and
thy blessed Self my Portion, both now
and in the End, through *Jesus Christ*
my Saviour and Redeemer.

Although Nelson was a non-juring layman when the book was first published, it quickly became a standard book of Anglican devotion. Wordsworth would have been well acquainted with it; and there can be little doubt that the hymn is a recasting of the prayer into verse form, perhaps unconsciously so if the prayer had been memorised in youth. It is remarkable how few changes were needed to turn prose into verse.

The prayer itself is something of a problem. The other prayers in the book can be divided into three groups: (a) Prayer Book collects or slight adaptations of them; (b) prayers acknowledged to be by other authors, 'Bp Kenn', 'Mr Kettlewell', and 'Bishop Taylor'; (c) very long prayers in the best tradition of the time, presumably by the author. This one, with the marginal note, 'For universal obedience', stands apart from the others by the author on account of its brevity and lack of frequent exclamation marks. It breathes a different spirit. May it date from an earlier period when English was less verbose?

In any case, we can only be grateful that some beautifully balanced phrases, set in the midst of an overwhelming mass of verbiage, caught the eye of the poet-bishop and set him to work with such a happy result.

THE 1868 APPENDIX TO HYMNS A & M SOME FURTHER NOTES

By JOHN WILSON

Following the Editor's account (in the last Bulletin) of the contents of the 1868 *Appendix to Hymns A & M*, here are some details of bibliography, and some examples of contemporary criticism.

Advertisements in *The Musical Times* show that the *Appendix* was published in October, 1868, by 'Novello, Ewer & Co.', whose name was on the title-page and through whom the Compilers had published the original *A & M* eight years earlier. Within a few months, a disagreement between Compilers and Publisher led to a transfer of the publishing contract to the firm of William Clowes & Son, who have published subsequent editions. The advertisements show that Messrs Clowes assumed legal responsibility on March 25th, 1869. We can say, therefore, that any copy of *Hymns A & M*, or of the *Appendix*, with the name of Clowes on the title-page must be dated 1869 or later.

A glimpse of these early days is given in one of the last letters from the chairman of the Compilers, Sir H. W. Baker, to Novello's—undated, but certainly written in the winter of 1868-69. After

asking for a few corrections in the new *Appendix*, Sir Henry added:

And there is an important error in every Edition, and has been from the first, of the Old Book: I only observed it on Sunday in service time—

In Hymn 35 line 3 for "He" read "he"—It is the Baptist who brings the tidings—it is very strange that none of us have ever noticed this—please have it corrected in all plates.

Anyone concerned in hymn-book production will appreciate the little pang of the editorial Vicar as they sang 'On Jordan's bank' at Monkland that Advent.

Contemporary reviewers, already enthusiastic about *A & M* itself, gave a warm welcome to the *Appendix*. The *Musical Times* writer (Nov. 1st, 1868) began with a long discussion of the qualities needed in a truly congregational tune, and—after dismissing both the 'severe' school and the 'ultra-secular'—concluded that:

There should be first of all a sufficiently marked and taking melody to catch the ears of amateurs of the smallest pretensions; whilst, on the other hand, the harmonies should be solid and musician-like. In other words, the amateur element should agree in liking it for its charm of melody; and the professional for its solidity of general construction. Judged by this test there has no book appeared in our day so thoroughly successful or so satisfactory to all parties as *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. . . . Whatever may be its defects, there is no book which has had such an influence (for good) upon the congregational singing of England and her colonies as this.

By these standards the *Appendix* was another step forward. Musically, it was to be praised for its imposing list of modern composers, and especially for the contribution of Dykes, whose original tunes and arrangements amounted to 'nearly one-fourth' of the book. Less praiseworthy to this reviewer were S. S. Wesley's tunes (including *AURELIA*), since:

. . . not one of Dr Wesley's contributions could be identified, without a reference to the index, whilst on the other hand the greater part of Dr Dykes', some of Mr Henry Smart's, and the whole of Mr Barnby's tunes could hardly fail to be recognised at once from their marked individual characteristics.

How many of us today, one wonders, would feel sure of telling a Barnby from a Smart, even if we could guess at a Wesley or a Dykes?

But while generous in his praise of such things as Ouseley's *HAIL, GLADDENING LIGHT*, the *Musical Times* man had a sharp eye for plagiarism. Smart's *REX GLORIAE*, he thought, owed something

to the slow movement of Hérold's *Zampa* overture; Dykes's *PAX DEI* had 'a strong suggestion, both in melody and harmony' of a certain Mendelssohn duet; and Dr Wesley, in *AURELIA*, 'favours us with a reminiscence of Pearsall's popular part-song *O who will o'er the downs so free?*'. Even more reprehensible was the 'secularist' tune for 'Onward, Christian soldiers', which could not fail to remind people of the favourite air by Paisiello known in England as 'Hope told a flattering tale'—though the tune was in fact a rather brutal adaptation from Haydn's 53rd symphony. Were the compilers 'in utter ignorance of its antecedents'? The reviewer's wish for this 'blunder' to be corrected was fulfilled in 1875 when *ST GERTRUDE* was substituted; but the ex-Haydn tune reappeared surprisingly in *EH* (643i), and less surprisingly (under the name *FOUNDATION*) in the Methodist books of 1904 and 1933.

It was a pleasing feature of some of the Victorian hymn-books that they listed the 'harmonizer or arranger' as well as the 'composer or source' of every tune. We learn, therefore, that Dykes contributed seven harmonisations to this *Appendix*, and it is worth noting that four of them have survived almost intact in the latest (1950) edition of *A & M*. The Editor mentioned *WIR PFLUGEN* (*AMR* 483): the others are *MILES LANE* (217), *O QUANTA QUALIA* (281), and *MARTYRDOM* (299 ii and 314). In *MILES LANE* and *MARTYRDOM* Dykes's harmonies have been touched up; in *O QUANTA QUALIA* there is only a slight alteration of his tenor part. The Dykes triple-time version of *MARTYRDOM* was no doubt brought into the *Appendix* because the Compilers in 1861 had backed the wrong horse by printing the tune in its common-time form.

In the first printing of the *Appendix* Handel's *GOPSAL* was listed as being 'harmonized or arranged' by Handel himself, but this entry was later deleted from the index. As Dr Routley mentioned, the version was that of W. H. Havergal, who had published it in the second edition (1850) of his *Old Church Psalmody*. Havergal was busy preaching a back-to-Ravenscroft austerity for hymn-tunes, and felt obliged to prune Handel a little; but he was enough of a Handelian to call the tune *GOPSAL* and another Handel tune *CANNONS*. More authentic versions of *GOPSAL* had already been published by Samuel Wesley (who discovered the tune) and in the *Companion to the Wesleyan Hymn-Book* (1847).

Another full review of the *Appendix* came in the attractively-produced fortnightly *The Choir and Musical Record* (November 14th, 1868), published by Metzler & Co., and here too there was acclamation. The selection of words was 'entirely satisfactory', with a special welcome for Dr Newman's 'Lead, kindly Light', even if 'its genuine poetry and complete elevation above the typical commonplaces, to which too many hymn-writers accustom us, may prevent it becoming a general favourite'. The choice of tunes deserved

'the highest commendation', again with special praise for Dykes. If there had to be adverse criticism, it was for such things as *WIR PFLUGEN*—a vulgar tune . . . that must have originally been a drinking song; for the ill-match of 'the jolly vicar-of-Bray-like melody' *ELLACOMBE* with the hymn 'Come, sing with holy gladness'; for the congregationally-too-florid part-writing of a Bach chorale; for the inclusion of 'Dr Gauntlett's childish carol tune [IRBY] . . . very much out of place in a hymn-book'; and finally—'the greatest blot in the book'—for Shrubsole's 'execrable tune' *MILES LANE*.

Reviewers of today's hymn-books, beware! The curious may be looking you up in Two-Thousand-and-Sixty-Eight.

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