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THE BRISTOL CONFERENCE, 1972

Clifton Hill House, Bristol: we were there in 1946 in the days of Canon Briggs, Maurice Frost, Leslie Christie: when Millar Patrick was Editor of the Bulletin and *Ancient and Modern* was as yet unrevised. It was a pleasant retreat-house in those days, suitable for our modest company. Now it is a university hostel; the nice eighteenth century house is now connected to a clanging barracks of corridors and banging doors and common rooms and a canteen. To this we returned in 1972 for a lively and populous conference.

It is unnecessary here to detail any of the business transacted by the Executive, or at the Annual General Meeting (Tuesday, 25 July). Most of that business had to do with the Constitution, and in a later issue we shall be ready to publish its results. It is clear, of course, that our Constitution is out of date, and that an important section of it—that dealing with the revision of *Julian*—has to

be rewritten. The whole must be approved at certain legal levels. So we can thankfully dismiss that subject for the moment. Nor are we quite ready to announce exactly what *has* been done about *Julian*—although it is not too early to say that we have our good friend Arthur Holbrook to thank, most heartily, for some very close and devoted work in bringing the first part of Leslie Bunn's work into a manageable shape.

It is the more public events that I am asked here to rehearse. We started off with an event which reminded us very forcibly that this wasn't 1946. The Chairman of the first meeting reminded the company that it was indeed in 1946 that Cyril Taylor invited the Conference to consider what the purpose of a Hymn Society was. This was to introduce the Reverend Geoffrey Wrayford, who asked the same question again, and, after addressing us for fifteen minutes—the shortest address the Conference has ever listened to—made us divide into groups and answer the question for ourselves.

The answers we came up with were various and wide-ranging. This was the question as he put it:

Has the Hymn Society a responsibility for helping the congregations of 'Great Britain and Ireland' in the use of hymns in worship? If so, how can the Society fulfil it?

In summary, and to some extent conflating the answers found by the various groups, what we said was this:

1. Yes, the Society has a responsibility. Traditionally it has discharged it in promoting research (*Julian* for example), providing a forum for discussion in the annual conference, and in publishing the Bulletin. But it has never decided whether it is a learned society or a 'support group.' The failure to decide is probably not mistaken: it is both, and should not shirk the responsibilities implied in both descriptions.
2. None the less, if the Society hoped to promote the 'discerning use of hymns,' there's plenty of evidence that it has not succeeded very widely. It has, of course, no authority; and since it exists on a shoestring, little influence. Few people know about it; few editors know (Editorial interjection some wouldn't want to know!) about its file of unpublished hymns.
3. Therefore, would it be a good idea for the Society to publish work-sheets or even hymn-booklets apart from the Bulletin? (One hears a rumble from the Treasurer). The hymn-singing occasions in Westminster Abbey suggest by their established success, that similar events could be held regionally. The Society should try to discover the needs of the clergy regarding new material, and participate in training schemes for clergy and musicians in communication.

4. The Society should publicize experiments, and make use of local broadcasting opportunities. More ambitiously—can the Society do anything to arouse public opinion concerning the copyright law, which places those who wish to use new hymns and tunes in the awkward position of having to apply every time for permission to use them?

This will indicate that once aroused, the members of the Conference became ambitious and imaginative. To re-connect these soaring aspirations with the world in which human beings live, a working-party was set up; its convener is Mr Wrayford, and its other members are Peter Cutts, Bernard Massey, Patrick Morison and John Wilson, with Dr Westbrook as consultant. In October the Working Party proposes to meet in London.

We dusted ourselves down after this and dined. Then, on the Monday evening, we all went to St Mary Redcliffe to sing. Everybody knows the splendour and magnificence of St Mary Redcliffe—there could not have been a more august setting for our Act of Praise, nor a more gracious welcome than that which we had from the Vicar. The team appointed to present it was a powerful one: Alan Luff, as commentator, who demonstrated quite beautifully the art of economical and illuminating speech; Stanley Parker, of Redland Park Congregational Church, Bristol, as conductor; and Garth Benson, the resident director of music, at the organ. Stanley Parker, for whom no challenge is too overwhelming, had to control a choir of (I think) over 250 voices scattered about the cathedral-like church as well as a massive congregation which took all the remaining seats and an organist who as is usual in such buildings, couldn't see him. Wedged behind a pillar in close proximity to a battery of tenors who must have been imported from Wales I was occasionally conscious of a certain democratic independence which certain sections of the music-makers, not least the organist, raised in competition with Stanley's beat. But that was only now and then. It was a superb programme; our members are getting a copy of the hymn booklet with this issue.

Two hymns were added to the eight in the booklet: Pratt Green's *Trinity* and RVW's *Old Hundredth*. The singing was—one can only say—tremendous. This is undoubtedly the spirit one wants to generate in an Act of Praise. We have come a long way since the handful at Cambridge, 1950.

The second half of Tuesday morning gave us more music. We had a double bill: first, *Praise the Lord*, the new edition, was introduced to us by its editors, Father John Ainslie, Stephen Dean and Paul Inwood. A group of singers illustrated their concerted talk, which was briskly produced and in the course of which we all sang now and then. On pp 208 ff we review this important and attractive book.

Then—in sadly restricted time—Peter Cutts took us on a quick scamper through *Pilgrim Praise*, and Pratt Green's 26. How he managed in those few minutes to convey so much of the special character of both these books is a question which his hearers can only answer with an admiring gasp. Agreeable though the earlier part of the session was, I myself could not help feeling very strongly that it is more satisfying to see a book perceptively reviewed by somebody who has had nothing to do with its production than to see one being diligently expounded by its own editors. I mean no disrespect to the trio who presented *Praise the Lord*: it was we who asked them to do it, and they did it most excellently. But the other form of presentation naturally produced more good counterpoint.

In the afternoon, members paid a pious pilgrimage to the Wesley New Room and refreshed themselves with evensong at the Cathedral. In the evening they settled down to something perhaps a little more like the old-fashioned Hymn Society style, which was a lecture by the Editor, chaired very kindly by Dr Westbrook, on the *European Psalmist*. This is to be printed in the next issue.

All this, together with much work on the part of the Executive, and the A.G.M., was packed into not much more than 36 hours. Once again we had the pleasure of meeting each other and talking shop. Once again we were very well accommodated and organized. Once again we must thank our Secretary, who acted (being a Bristol man) as conference secretary also, our Treasurer without whom we couldn't survive at all, and all our participants. Say what you like, we've come quite a distance since 1946.

E.R.

REVIEW

Praise the Lord! Geoffrey Chapman & Co., full music edition, £3.50: melody edition, 50p.

It is appropriate, I think, to say here that the *Bulletin* reviews any hymn book of which a review-copy is sent to the Editor, and sometimes books of which copies are not sent. It is necessary to say this because a rumour has got about that the *Bulletin* is unduly selective in its reviews. There are certain books of which we have applied for copies without result: and of course, in these explosive times, books may well be published of which the Editor doesn't happen to hear until a late stage. This will, we hope, explain why some reviews are delayed, and others don't appear at all.

That unpropitious comment happens to be relevant to *Praise the Lord*; we have received, gratefully, a copy of the new edition of 1972, but we never received one of the first edition, 1966. In a sense this is a review of both books, because the stature of the new

edition cannot be judged without considerable reference to the former.

One thing strikes us as a very hopeful sign. It looks as if the Roman Catholic Church in England is going to be as fortunate as the Anglicans, in not having an 'official' hymn book. The fact that the Church of England has never authorized any hymnal at the expense of others has been a major contribution to the vitality of English hymnody. The Roman Catholics are, we think, very much to be congratulated on not commissioning a single 'denominational' hymn book. Your Editor is understandably tempted to hope that the United Reformed Church will be equally lucky: but that, one suspects, will be too much to hope for.

Anyhow, we now have (to our knowledge—there may well be others) three major hymn books serving the Roman Catholic Church, all produced within the last few years: the *Parish Hymn Book*, edited by John Rush, 1968: the *New Catholic Hymnal*, edited by Geoffrey Laycock and Anthony Petti, 1971; and *Praise the Lord*, edited by John Ainslie, Stephen Dean and Paul Inwood, 1966 and 1972. They differ in style and approach as much as, in their own day, did the *Hymnal Companion*, *Hymns A & M* and the *English Hymnal*, although naturally the characters of the members of the two trios do not in any way correspond. We reviewed the *New Catholic Hymnal* recently, and found it exciting and demanding and enthusiastic. The *Parish Hymn Book* has something of a traditional 'A & M' style about it, and would be the easiest of the three to introduce to a congregation whose capacities for learning new material in new idioms are strictly limited. What has *Praise the Lord* to contribute?

Well, to answer that we have to go back to the 1966 edition. This was a book of 175 hymns (of which nineteen were Gelineau Psalms), edited by Wilfred Trotman. It very clearly had the same sort of constituency in mind which the *Parish Hymn Book* editors wished to serve. The tunes were simple, the keys were low (EASTER HYMN in B flat!), and the new tunes were in a very easily-mastered style. There were many non-Catholic texts, of course, but it would hardly be too much to say that it was a serviceable conflation of the *Westminster Hymnal* with *Hymns A & M*. It must have been a certain sense of anticlimax, a thought that the mountains had brought forth mice after much publicized labour, which inspired both the Editors of the *New Catholic Hymnal* to produce so very different and so much more forward-looking a collection, and the publisher of *Praise the Lord* to promote, only a year or two after the publication of the first edition, a quite new hymn book under the same title.

The new book shares only the title with the old one. Its 'overlaps' with the old one (we will call it *PL I*) are only such as it might have had with any other decent hymnal. There are now 334 hymns, of which many are responsive psalms and canticles. The

contribution of Gelineau himself is diminished, but it is supplemented by a considerable number of new settings, in a derivative but English manner, of passages of Scripture. In the selection of texts, 79 decisions taken by *PL 1* are agreed with; of 109 texts retained, 20 are altered and ten abridged. In the selection of music, no more than 37 decisions are agreed with: 102 melodies are retained from *PL 1*, but 65 of these are in some ways altered (usually they have been reharmonised): in eleven cases there is the addition of alternative harmonies or a descant. In several the key is changed, usually to a more familiar key from which Trotman's special compassion for basses had brought them down. The Table of Contents is radically revised, and the cover of the new edition replaces the demure plain red of the old with a picture, in blue, of what looks at first like a strikers' meeting at the factory gates but what is more probably a pious Catholic concourse.

The editors of *PL 2* are prudish about revealing the ages of living contributors, and therefore of revealing their own; but it can be fairly said that they are all young. They have grasped their task with an enthusiasm which certainly competes with that of Laycock and Petti. And they show that they have done their homework. They really do seem to know (what the *NCH* editors know, but what some contemporary editors most lamentably don't) what is going on in the hymnological world. They have not only had a hundred hymnals on the shelf: they have opened them and found out what is in them. They have not rushed to replace the old with the new before discovering what the old said. I have a point of controversy with them to which I shall come later; but as editors, they are professionals. They have been particularly fastidious about source-ascriptions. Others more precise than I may fault them; I have found nothing to worry me here. They do not mind a source-ascription of a tune running to four lines if that's necessary to get the truth told. Absolute consistency here is beyond human endurance. I suppose that they ought to have told us every time they took a harmonization from the *English Hymnal* or *Hymns A & M*: they do not go as far as that. But this delivers them from the charge of pedantry. There is much that they tell us which is illuminating. For example (I especially refer to tunes in this comment) I was fascinated to learn that that beautiful tune, LEW TRENCHARD (*EH* 591) is not so much an English Traditional Melody (which RVW thought it) as an 'adaptation of a plainchant melody in the *Receuil Noté*, Lyon, 1871'—see 269; and it had never occurred to me that NEUMARK (*EH* 458, variant at *RvCH* 541) is a German adaptation of Genevan PSALM 86 (*EH* 640, variant at *RvCH* 460); now that they mention it, you can see how many Genevan phrases are in the German tune. Well, then—they might have told us that HERZLIEBSTER JESU comes from Genevan PSALM 23, presumably by the same route, and that there's a clear connection between

NUN KOMM and AUCTORITATE SAECULI (167, 315). Thirty-fifteen, or pedantry?

As usual, a 'spot-check' of a couple of short and arbitrary sections will rapidly give the reader the flavour of the book.

One always looks to see what no. 1 will be: and in this book the opening section (5 hymns) is for Baptism—a new and quite logical idea. How excellent that the congregation is expected to join praise at Baptism! No. 1 is 'Heavenly Father, may thy love shine upon us from above,' by Benjamin Guest (1788-1869); Guest was an anglican priest and the first widely-used collection to contain his hymn was the *New Congregational Hymn Book* of 1859. The tune is SAVANNAH (*EH* 135—reharmonised by Peter Faber). Off we go, then—ecumenical principles, and plenty of editorial scrutiny in the music. (The bass is nearly all RVW).

No. 2 is 'Praise to God, almighty maker'—eight verses (too long if you are holding the baby), by William Robinson, presumably the late Principal of Overdale, the Churches of Christ College in Birmingham (cf CP 312). The editors admit some surprising failures to make contact with the authors and relicts for copyright purposes (page xii) and Robinson was one of those they missed. No. 3 is 'O come, good Spirit'—six verses of 6 x 10, *much* too long under the above head, by Gabriel Huck, full of good and biblical doctrine, with a brand-new tune by Stephen Dean in a slightly uncertain modal manner. No. 4 is 'O praise ye the Lord' with Parry's tune (*AM* 376)—very good, if surprising just here. No. 5 is Gelineau Psalm 22/3. We then move to Confirmation, and no. 6 is 'Breathe on me' to Derek Kidner's tune from the *Anglican Hymn Book* (a good tune): no. 7 is 'Come down,' to DOWN AMPNEY. No. 8 is the 'Cranmer' 'Come Holy Ghost,' to TALLIS'S ORDINAL with two descants and an alternative equal-voices version. No. 9 is Bridges' *Veni Creator* (*EH* 154) with the Mechlin tune oddly harmonised by Richard Dubois. And no. 10 is 'My God, accept my heart,' to BELMONT.

So the first ten hymns take a quick look round the different traditions of hymnody in both words and music. No needless contempt of the 19th century (no. 2 goes to Stainer's ALL FOR JESUS); a clear decision against the popular Cosin version of *Veni Creator*. Two reharmonisations, two descants, one responsive Psalm. One quite new tune.

Turn to a later section—'The Faith of God's People,' 278-290. What have we here?

279—'Lord be thy word my rule' (*AM* 327) to MARIA JUNG UND ZART (*EH* 443)—exquisite! There are some really inspired collocations of text and tune in this book, and this is one. Then 'Jesu, grant me this,' with SONG 13—the long notes taken out but the melody otherwise authentic. 281—'Thou art my life' (*SP* 670) with LOWENSTERN—too little known, and beautiful. The tune is reharmonized. 282—'Lord, we are blind,' by David Edge, from *Dunblane*

Praises, to Norman Cocker's RIPPONDEN, from *BBC*: again, admirably mated. 283—'Lord of our life and God of our salvation,' austere set to a (no doubt deliberately) inauthentic version of *CHRISTE DU BEISTAND* (*EH* 160): this was the tune of the German original, but is it a very good runner? 284 is a canticle based on Psalm 146, text by Michael Cockett, music by Dom Gregory Murray—adventurous, but I think wholly successful (Murray is *always* singable). 285—'He who would valiant be' (Dearmer) to *MONKS GATE*. 286—'O God, our help' to *ST ANNE*. 287—'Blest are the pure in heart' (chance missed here of going back to Keble's magnificent original) to horrid *FRANCONIA*. 288—'Lord of all hopefulness' to *SLANE* as in *SP*; 289 'Be thou my Vision' to a new tune by Stephen Dean, *MO BHOILE* (lifemanship: only the elect can pronounce it)—words as in *BBC*, tune arty-folksy-Irish; and 290 is 'There is no Yes and No,' by Michael Cockett again—a song with chorus to a tune by Gregory Murray, *BEGUINA*, which is in the style the editors call 'pop' and is a very good example indeed.

You see, perhaps, the general drift. Many pages are 'good middle of the road' hymns anybody can sing, and virtually always worth singing by the standards of *EH*. Every so often, something fresh and interesting: now and again, inspiration. A list of living authors is encouraging (perhaps not exhaustive: some are new names to me): John Arlott, Albert Bayly (2), Patrick Brennan, Stewart Cross (as in *HS*), I. J. E. Daniel, Valerie M. Dunn, David Edge, J. Clifford Evers, Melvin Farrell, John Ferguson, ('Am I my brother's keeper?'), Michael Gannon, Walter van der Hass, Clifford Howell, Gabriel Huck, Fred Kaan (2), Douglas Lord, Sister Margharita, David MacRoberts, Gregory Murray (one translation), A. J. Newman, Anthony Nye, Frederick Pratt Green (2), Geoffrey Preston, James Quinn (8), Brother Raymond, Edith M. Reed, Sister Teresa, Sister Teresine (2), James Thiem, George Tomlinson, F. W. Weatherell, Peter Westmore, the Bishop of Norwich, persons pseudonymously called 'John Icarus' and 'J. Smith,' and one of the editors, John Ainslie. That is an impressive procession, and there are not many bad gaps. Donald Hughes appears once, with 'Creator of the earth and sky.' The same goes for the tunes: the number of contemporary composers is rather fewer, and one is misled into thinking that the editorial team took a disproportionate share in composition by the failure of the music-sources index to distinguish between compositions and arrangements or reharmonizations. Herbert Howells's *MICHAEL* is there (278), and Peter Cutt's *BIRABUS*—curiously wedded to 'Bethlehem of noblest cities,' and half a tone too low. Kenneth Finlay's one tune is, not (as one always expects), *GLENFINLAS*, but *ARDGOWAN* (*AM* 33). John Gardner's *ILFRACOMBE* sets *FPG*'s 'Glorious the day'; Joubert's *MOSELEY* sets 'For the beauty' (as *HCS*); William Llewellyn has a place with his masterly festive version of *DIADEMATA*: Harold Spicer, of Manchester College, Oxford, has one tune; Cyril Taylor's

ABBOTS LEIGH, of course; George Thalben-Ball's *JUBILATE* from *BBC*; Eric Thiman's *SHERE*, from *BBC*; John Wilson's *RERUM CREATOR*, from *HCS*; and your Editor has crept in twice (but you will be hard put to find the second, which is mis-numbered in the index). Martin Shaw has three, Sydney Nicholson one (*CHISLEHURST*), *RVW* has the two obvious ones plus *MARATHON* (*SP* 302) and several arrangements.

Pages which especially interest and delight me are many. 58 and 63 are two splendid Offertory hymns, by Brother Raymond and M. F. C. Willson; and a third is 62, 'Reap me the earth' by 'Peter Icarus' with a good tune by John Ainslie—very rhythmic and dance-like. Indeed the whole Eucharistic section is full of poetry and full of joy: Andrew Young's delicious 'Lord, by whose breath' is always pleasant to see. 'Bread from the earth' (53) is eye-catching, but possibly too romantic to wear well. 'Lord, I am not worthy' (73), a canticle with refrain by Peter Westmore very simply set by Laurence Bévenot, a musician to reckon with, on this and other evidence: 'Love is his word,' Luke Connaughton with tune by Anthony Milner, is good: 'Brothers, sisters,' 83, words and tune by James Thiem, is a good example of a popular-style Eucharistic hymn. 'Come Lord Jesus' (129), words and tune by Stephen Somerville (who is also in *NCH*) is striking—I wish he had ended his verse-section on the dominant chord. At last we have a really good simple hymn on the Transfiguration (173), from Prinknash Abbey (which here and elsewhere shows itself a far from negligible musical source). It is a relief not to need to be embarrassed by 'thy glory fills the *night*' in Armitage Robinson's otherwise good hymn on this subject—which none the less stands next (174). No. 199 is a real eyeful: a good Easter hymn by that most reliable author, James Quinn (The Catholic Church's answer, perhaps, to Pratt Green) set to a tune clearly written for pedal-harpsichord by David Kingsley: three staves, G minor, lots of 16th-century false relations and a running left hand part in the Alleluias. A very good exercise for the organist, and a convincing piece of *pastiche* if ever I saw one. A lovely tune to the macaronic carol, 'Of one that is so fair and bright' by Francis Duffy (233); a most interesting new style of rhythm and orthography in two settings by Laurence Bévenot of 'Jesus, glory of all who seek' (words by Ralph Wright: 244); and a quite remarkable chorale-like tune called *CORPUS CHRISTI FLATS*, by Malcolm Russell (333) to which one's immediate reaction is—well, no: *SHARPS*, of which there are enough to satisfy any Bach enthusiast.

Collocations of text and tune which most people will find interesting, and many satisfying, are 'O praise our great and gracious Lord' (*EH* 461—most admirably revived) to *KINGSFOLD* (77), 'From all that dwell' to *HERMANN* (91), 'Hail to the Lord's Anointed' to *GOSTERWOOD* (164), 'Hail to the Lord who comes' (four line verses) to *LAWES PSALM* 32, 'Come, Holy Spirit' (Luther) to

LONDON (214); all these seem to justify themselves. I am less happy about TRURO for *Vexilla* (taken over from *PL I*) and MUNDAYS for 'Joseph, husband of that immortal bride,' both of which cause serious mis-accentuations.

At a few points I have hesitations:

16. Should S. S. Wesley's tune WRESTLING JACOB be renamed PENIEL? That's confusing because there is at least one other PENIEL.

87. The wrong reading in the first line of ANGELS' SONG (corrected at the last minute in *NCH*!) is perpetuated.

89. CORONA by Hylton Stewart has been reduced to the rhythmic shape of DIADEMATA; is this legitimate? The original is a rather vexatious 'stop and start' business, but the editors have, I fear, been too ruthless.

103. The editors don't like long initials in psalm tunes: but Lawes's WHITEHALL seems sadly disfigured without them.

110. I cannot myself think that RVW's song 'The Call' is a possible hymn tune, especially when it is so drastically revised as it is here.

118. Surely the second verse should end with a semicolon.

125. Are we all wrong in reading '*Conditor alme siderum*' for 'Creator' as here?

177. After reading Bernard Manning I can't tolerate for one moment 'When I behold the wondrous cross.'

249. The printer's style has let the editors down here. No indication for which saints' festival this hymn is to be used!

301. Can there be any point nowadays in printing the full text of 'Come, ye thankful people, come'?

Well—that's a pretty short list of quibbles. So far as I can see the proof-reading has been as sound as the decision-making. It is not my business to offer personal comments on texts and tunes which impress me unfavourably, although perhaps I will say how little I enjoyed singing the tune of 265 at the Bristol conference. There is much here that needs close acquaintance and cannot be subjected at this stage to critical review.

I have said nothing yet about the Responsive Psalms, of which the main section is to be found at Nos. 22-44, followed by six Alleluias, 45-50, and accompanied by several canticles and psalms elsewhere in the book. These are short sections of psalms set out for singing by a cantor or choir with congregational response. Musically they are adventurous in varying degrees and styles. In principle they are entirely to be welcomed: those who are fortunate enough to have a liturgy should make haste to see how singing of this kind can enrich it. The composers in the section 22-50 are Sebastian Wolff, Alan Rees, Laurence Bévenot, Stephen Dean, John Ainslie, Bill Tamblyn, John Ainslie, and John Mattheson. I am told by those who should know that the use of responsive psalms is a practice which encounters as much resistance among Catholics as it does among Anglicans. It is a quite different

technique from singing the psalms in course at Matins and Evensong, and is inalienably associated with the Eucharist. If there is one point at which the godly exercise of Congregational Practice should begin, it is here. Since every one of these settings is brand-new (except one antiphon by Gregory Murray), practice will be needed. But this, pre-eminently, is how to get Scripture into the bones of a congregation.

I am reminded by this observation to say that there is surprisingly little plainsong in this book; and I suppose this is because of a strong feeling that plainsong doesn't go with English words. Having been brought up on it thus (on this view) corrupted, I have not yet seen this point, and am somewhat surprised not to encounter at least *Vexilla* and *Pange Lingua*: indeed, what plainsong we have is somewhat awkwardly harmonized, to a mind brought up on Arnold. But against this must be set the very interesting examples of what may be called a 'new English plainsong,' most of which come from Prinknash, for which see 173, 304, and 308-312.

But now I come to my major point of controversy with these editors. It is in the matter of their own musical contribution (and that of their circle of arrangers). Their compositions are modest and usually full of character and strength. Their harmonizations very often give me pain.

The musical editor of any hymn book suffers a temptation to tinker with established tunes; and of course he sometimes has a duty, and often a right, to do so. Who wants to sing DARWALL'S 148TH with Darwall's semi-literate bass? Isn't Monk's bass for MELCOMBE better than Webbe's? And were not RVW himself and his assistants quite remarkably tasteful and appropriate in their work in *E.H.*? Agreed. But if there is one quality in this book which might shorten its life, it is the restlessness, the impatience, and occasionally, I am bound to say, the aggressive permissiveness, of some of its harmonizations. Sometimes they seem to be needlessly ugly: why those parallel fifths between bass and treble at the end of VENI CREATOR (9), or those between bass and alto in PICARDY (71)? Fifths again, bass-treble, at 'Patri' in *Credo III* (330); fifths and octaves in the penultimate bar of UT QUEANT LAXIS (306): this is not *organum*, or authentic archaism; it is unnecessary and vexatious mixture of styles.

Or again, I find the harmonizers have an unsure touch in the use of false relations and unprepared suspensions, there is much difference between the false relations in 199 and those (which seem to me unwise) in AUCTORITATE SAECULI (315). I am astonished at the freedom with which the harmonizers admit the 6/4 chord in ancient tunes—bar 7 of AU FORT DE MA DETRESSE is a somewhat disturbing example. There is another distressing one in the penultimate bar of RENDEZ A DIEU (69).

The editors decided that when a whole line or phrase was repeated in a tune they would give the organist the chance of

varying the harmonies by printing an optional variation the second (and third) time the phrase comes round. They place a special sign over the reharmonized phrase to indicate that the harmony of the original phrase will do as well. In *GWALCHMAI*, for example, the harmonizer has provided three different ways of rendering the 'A' phrase. Now this raises an important aesthetic point. There are some who favour, and some who very much disfavour, the practice of reharmonizing unison verses in hymns. I am myself of the former group: but it should be obvious to anybody that the effect of a single verse in a festive setting (as we have in 'Crown him with many crowns' in this book) is very different from the constant repetition of variations. Is the repetition of variations more or less tiresome than the repetition of unvaried phrases? The answer is probably that if the variation is genuinely in the spirit of the original—if it was written by the composer, or if the composer could perfectly well have written it—then it does not disturb the ear. If it is a new piece on an old garment, then there is an aesthetic crisis. Consider the last phrase of *IN BABILONE* (212): it's a monotonous and dreary tune, in all conscience (how did RVW ever sanction it in *EH*?)—but the composer has had to invent a very restless series of mini-modulations to vary the monotony. In my book, the tune would be scrapped anyhow. It isn't always done clumsily—*PSALM 68* (251) is a model of how an old tune can be modestly and cogently harmonized. A jolly carol like *VRUECHTEN* (205) comes off very well in the imitative style given to it by Paul Inwood and F. Laloux. Again, is the somewhat opulent chromaticism applied to *GUTE BAUMEN BRINGEN* (70) really in character? It might do for one final verse, but it hardly stands up to four.

Often enough the reharmonization consists of only a small adjustment—hardly worth crediting to the arranger, as in *NOEL* or *QUEM PASTORES*. But there are evidences of excessive enthusiasm, of unstylistic passing notes and progressions, which make one want to ask the arrangers why they thought their versions more agreeable than versions which already exist. Was it to avoid copyright difficulties? If so, then roll on Mr Wrayford's millennium! But why was it necessary to produce another version of Handel's postlude to *GOPSAL* (224)? Why, come to that, was it necessary to write a new tune to *Angelus ad Virginem* or 'Christ who knows all his sheep'? One wishes that the editors had been as attentive to the existence of good existing versions as they were to the existence of good existing texts and tunes.

It is clear, however, that they expect both congregations and choirs to sing hymns in unison, because in their preface they encourage organists to vary harmonies and thus show 'initiative and musicianship.' In principle, I am among those who agree: but I am far from sure that the arrangers have not been tempted to overload many of their arrangements. A plainer style would often have been far better.

Now that is all I have to say in that tone of voice. Having so recently reviewed *NCH* I am in the greatest danger of making invidious comparisons. I think a balance has been struck; I was tetchy with those about their tinkering with words, and I have been irritable with these about tinkering with tunes. It is quite clear that the two editorial bodies have different ideas of what the singing church is. *PL 2* (like *PL 1*) had the guiding hand of a parish priest: *NCH* did not. Liturgy and doctrine are perhaps rather more comprehensively served in *PL*—which is a little longer than *NCH*. *NCH* has rounds and games: *PL* has a discreet touch of 'pop' and responsive psalms, and some essential liturgical pieces near the end. *NCH* is musically more adventurous and exacting: it has more 'big names' in its composers' index. *PL* is perhaps more restrained, doesn't mind some hymns saying 'thou' and some 'you,' gives hardly more ground to debased taste, and has more material which could be called really simple. They are equally good, equally enthusiastic, equally visionary, equally able to meet the need of those who wish for good taste in worship. *Praise the Lord* is more like the hymn books I'm used to; *NCH* may be more like the books the next generation wants. There is no judging that. But with all my heart I congratulate the editors of *PL* on a piece of work done with taste, verve, and, in these times, quite astonishing swiftness.

E.R.

TWO NOTES FROM SCOTLAND

(i) AMAZING GRACE

Mrs Margaret Dickie writes:

We had a heavy shopping list and decided to do it all in a very staid Department-store. In the book shop the young man was singing 'Day by Day' from *Godspell*; in the Food Hall it was 'Jesus Christ, Superstar'; all the other departments were broadcasting 'Amazing Grace'. The bus conductor was whistling it. Something must be done about it. Why was this the only hymn-tune we had ever heard of?

As to the hymn itself—surprising how few books could offer it. Not even Sankey & Moody, or *Redemption Songs*. At last we found it in (a book salvaged from a white-elephant stall) the Billy Graham Song Book—not in the British but in the Australian edition. As there given it is the first hymn tune we have seen with no title and no composer.

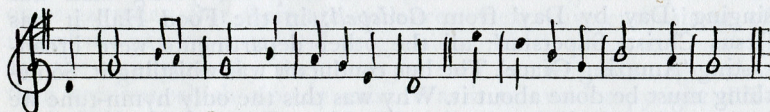
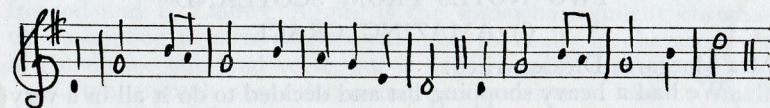
We began a morning's hard telephoning. First—the most knowledgeable piper of my acquaintance. How ancient was the tune? 'About six months or a twelvemonth to my thinking.' Then on the telephone to a friend on another matter, I suddenly remembered that he too had been a piper. Could he throw any light on the problem? He could. At the turn of the century, on Prince Edward Island in Canada, there was a sect called the Macdonaldites,

followers of the Revd Donald Macdonald of Glengarry. The Minister and Elders had edited and perhaps composed a small hymn book for the use of the sect. Many of them were Wee Frees. Another call to a Gaelic-speaking Free Kirk Minister. No. They were still adamant. Not even yet would they use the 'Paraphrases from Holy Scripture' in the public worship of Almighty God. (There are still those who cut them out of the Bible with Metrical Psalms—or glue the pages firmly together). But, he added, it was always possible to sing such hymns 'socially' on purely secular occasions.

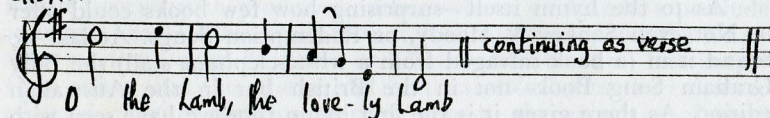
We heard of an old man who had sung something very like it as a psalm tune in Stornoway. Did it come from Scotland to Canada and Australia? Or the other way round? We remember hearing of a song lamenting exile from the island of his heart: and the isle of the poet's love and longing was not Lewis but Prince Edward Island.

We took down over the telephone the tune and although not the same as the Top of the Pops it was recognisably similar, and certain changes would have to be made to suit the range of the chanter. The verses were endless and my friend remembered the chorus—

O the Lamb, the lovely Lamb!
the Lamb on Calvary.
The Lamb was slain and rose again
to intercede for me.



CHORUS



But we learned something else that seemed relevant. In the Prince Edward Island community were a number of Gospel singers from the U.S.A. Was it they who brought the tune with them?

The success story began very innocently. The band of the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards were to make a LP record of pipe music. They expected or hoped to sell about 4,000. To get the right amount of material it was necessary to add some short pieces. The Band had never played 'Amazing Grace' before. Why did they

choose it? Because 'the Bandmaster liked the tune.' No word of its being a *pipe*-tune. After its first being played on the air the BBC were besieged by requests that this particular tune should be issued as a single. Half a million have been sold in this country alone, and the response from abroad is already overwhelming.

Editorial note: 'Amazing Grace' is No. 41 in Book I of the *Olney Hymns*, by John Newton. Mrs Dickie rightly notes its neglect in English hymn books. I find it, however, in a Scottish hymn book—the *Selection of Hymns for Public Worship in Christian Churches* by William Lindsay Alexander (of Augustine Congregational Church, Edinburgh), published in 1849: it is No. 249 in that book. It is No. 894 in *Sacred Songs and Solos*; but not with the familiar tune. It is No. 50 in *Hymns of Faith*, 1964, with its tune (unascribed); it was not in that book's predecessor *Golden Bells*.

Among American hymn books that give it with its tune are these: *The Methodist Hymnal* (1940 and 1966), the *Mennonite Hymnary* (1940), the *Mennonite Hymnal* (1969), the *Hymnbook* (Presbyterian, 1955: not in previous edition), the *Psalter Hymnal* (Christian Reformed Church, 1959), the *Advent Christian Hymnal* (1967) and the *Hymnal of the Moravian Church* (1969).

The accepted source of the tune is *Virginia Harmony*, 1831, and it is referred to in Dr Harry Eskew's authoritative article (*Bulletin* 122); it is very probable that it had a Scottish or Hebridean origin. The Celtic influence in the Southern American tunes—Welsh, Scottish and Irish—is very marked, as we have had occasion before to notice. The probability is that a Highland tune re-emerged in the Southern States in this form, and that it was transported by people of that culture to the Prince Edward Island community which Mrs Dickie mentions.

Nothing at present can rescue this delightful tune and thoroughly respectable text from the terrors of pop-stardom; but time will do its good work in the end.

(ii) SELMA

An interesting conjecture about the origin of SELMA (*EH* 290), usually described as an 'Isle of Arran melody' comes from Dr David Johnson of Edinburgh, a leading authority on old Scottish music. He writes:

May I offer a theory about R. A. Smith's SELMA? *The Scots Musical Museum* (6 vols, 1787-1803), partly edited by Burns, contains three pseudo-Gaelic songs, all with words taken from sections of Macpherson's Ossian poems, called 'The Maid of Selma' (No. 116) and 'Song of Selma' (Nos. 119 and 256). The music of all three seems to be by the same person, and all three tunes are attributed in various sources to James Oswald (1711-89). The last of the three, No. 256 in the book, seems to me to have vague similarities in melodic outline, etc., to Smith's tune, and I think it

possible that Smith could have used it as a starting point for his own neat effort in S.M. The volume of *The Scots Musical Museum* in which it appears came out in 1790 and probably remained in print for some time, so it is likely that Smith would have known it. There was a great boom in anything to do with Burns all through the 1790s and 1800s. I have no idea where the 'traditional melody from the Isle of Arran' comes into all this. There is a modern reprint (1962) of the *Scots Musical Museum* if anybody wants to look this up.

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