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CONTENTS

Editorial	33
The Literary Aspects of the English Hymnal,							
by Prof. A. J. B. Hutchings							34
Report of the 1956 Conference, by the Secretary	...						49
Correspondence	52

EDITORIAL

We are devoting this issue of the *Bulletin* primarily to the lecture by the Professor of Music at Durham which a large audience at Addington Palace heard with such delight during the Croydon Conference. We do this at the special request of the Executive; in consequence, this issue is four pages longer than usual, and we have to warn readers that the fourth issue this year will have to be shorter than usual by the same amount. But we felt that it would be doing neither the lecturer nor our readers good service if we did otherwise. We now have three testimonies to the *English Hymnal*: our Editorial of the last issue came from a generation younger than the book; Dr. Vaughan Williams's memorable lecture, summarised in the Secretary's notes herein, came from the father of the book; and Professor Hutchings, by a felicitous coincidence which he admits in the text of his lecture, was born in the year of the book's publication.

We must congratulate our Secretary on the work he did to make the Addington Conference possible. Without question it was the most distinguished yet. It seems that we are being led to hold a good conference every other year, and to dispense with the conference in intervening years. Beyond question this policy has proved its worth in 1954 and 1956.

THE LITERARY ASPECTS OF THE 'ENGLISH HYMNAL'

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR A. J. B. HUTCHINGS OF
DURHAM UNIVERSITY AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE HYMN
SOCIETY HELD AT ADDINGTON PALACE, JUNE 12 — 13, 1956.

In the preface to his edition of Shakespeare Dr. Johnson wrote: "He may now begin to assume the dignity of an ancient, and to claim the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration". I apply the quotation to the book which we honour to-day, rather than to the man among us whose musical editorship was a work of such devotion that the book, if not a perfect realization of his ideal, is neither a mere miscellany nor a compendium serving the needs of one religious denomination. Even if Vaughan Williams had composed no original tune for the English Hymnal, the stamp of personality would have been there as it is in original creative expression. May he enjoy whatever Johnson envisaged as the privilege of established fame and prescriptive veneration; but we who were born before the English Hymnal was born will not concede the dignity of an ancient to one whom we still regard as a composer of considerable promise. Vaughan Williams must love the English Hymnal because he cannot but regard it as his child; I love it because I am one of its children.

I well remember its first impact in the two parishes of my boyhood, one in North Devon and one in the rather more sophisticated Surrey. Very rarely do hymns fire the imagination of worshippers by words alone, and I am certain that criticisms of words, usually begin among the clergy and an educated minority. It isn't just the presence of the clergy here to-day that induces me to testify against those people who think the clergy an unduly conservative, or mentally inert body. Until very recently, the training of the clergy prolonged their education beyond what was possible for most of their congregations, and even to-day, how many clergy of all denominations are local leaders (especially among young people) in matters of *general* culture as much as in religion? Sir Roger de Coverley and his good parson arranged for a singing master to come to their parish church and teach the tunes of metrical psalms. There are old miners and iron workers in County Durham, who tell you that their fathers learnt to *read and write* in little Bethel while they themselves, in the same place, came to value the legacy of Greece and Rome, or to look at old buildings through the eyes of historians and artists.

During the early years of this century, many of the clergy and some of the laity had come into contact with the English Hymnal while they were members of universities or training colleges — the communities which had been almost the only purchasers of the splendid but unsuccessful 1904 edition of Hymns A and M. Having left college and come to minister in towns, suburbs and villages, these men took the wisest possible step to induce their congregations

to enjoy what they had enjoyed. They knew that the tunes would go to people's hearts, and that the words would go there only *with* the tunes. Let older men correct me if I am wrong in saying that congregational hymn practices were either unknown or very infrequent between Sir. Roger's time and the advent of the English Hymnal. Three clergymen held hymn practices in churches to which I was attached during the first world war and during the years following it. Canon Monroe was an evangelical from Trinity College Dublin; Mr. Tupper was a socialist of liberal theological outlook, and only Prebendary Manning had any anglo-catholic leanings. I mention these things because malice, to which I shall refer later, has tried to make people regard the English Hymnal merely as an anglo-catholic book. That is just untrue . . . not only to the book but to the character of Percy Dearmer.

Although music is not within the province of my talk, I have to record my conviction that the English Hymnal first made headway with churchfolk in general because it was a collection of exciting tunes. Those were the days of the first huge popularity of home radio. The relayed services from S. Martin's and other churches . . . and of course the studio . . . introduced people to many tunes which they associated with the English Hymnal even if in fact they were printed in other books. Some of those tunes were then new, for example Vaughan Williams's *SINE NOMINE* or Martin Shaw's *MARCHING*; others were revivals, like *LASST UNS ERFREUEN* and *ES IST KEIN TAG*, which S. Martin's broadcast almost *ad nauseam*, but they were then fresh for the mass of churchfolk. Very few of us had heard more than one or two of Gibbons's *Songs of the Church*, and those in extremely corrupt forms; only certain localities or certain denominations were acquainted with many a tune that is now overworked . . . for instance the Scottish *WIGTOWN* and *STRAGATHRO* (the English Hymnal was *NOT* responsible for *CRIMOND*). The Welsh tunes to "Immortal invisible" and "King of Glory": new then to most of us in the established church was the most badly overworked of all these tunes, *RICHMOND*, first-rate as it is. Supposedly new tunes became favourites, and hundreds of churches which did not immediately buy the English Hymnal for general use put it in the choir stalls as a source of alternative tunes to words in older collections.

By this time I called myself euphemistically a baritone. Sitting in the back stalls during services, I misemployed prayer and sermon time in an examination of the new book. I had reached the literary coxcombry of Higher School Certificate boys, and discovered with relish that the Halls of Sion stood *conjubilant* with song and that the spicy breezes blew soft o'er *Java's* isle and not Ceylon's. Then one Holy Week came one of those æsthetic experiences which Heaven is good enough to grant us long after we have passed the proverbially romantic age of seventeen . . . but at that sweet age they are so intense that we imagine them to be religious. My father told me that R. J. Campbell was a tremendous preacher, and R. J. Campbell

was coming to Teddington Parish Church one week-day in Lent. I cycled over Richmond Park and crossed the Thames to hear him. For a beginning S. Alban's Teddington took my breath away . . . with its vast gleaming whiteness, and its almost sumptuous severity. But something else moved me even more . . . it wasn't Campbell's preaching because I was too silly to value a style of preaching belonging to an older generation. FOR THE FIRST TIME . . . and this is the point I have been making about tunes . . . FOR THE FIRST TIME I heard and sang these words:

His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er his body on the Tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe.
And all the globe is dead to me.

FOR THE FIRST TIME I heard Webb's harmonies to Miller's ROCKINGHAM, with the G natural in the third line; FOR THE FIRST TIME I recognized the superb finality of the verse beginning:

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a present far too small.

And with the intolerance of youth I immediately indulged in objur-gations against older hymnals which had not only butchered single lines of Watts, but had added a pedestrian extra verse after "Were the whole realm". I cycled back from Teddington the apostle of a book, and that book's local champion I have remained.

A similar experience came later that year, which was 1923. In those days young English musicians had a hero and prophet . . . Gustav Holst. Imagine my thrill at discovering that he had come to live in Manor Road, Richmond, not far from us, and in a small house like ours, one of a row. Like the stupid boy I was . . . I imagined that so great a man as Holst must dress in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day in a grand house with something called a studio or salon de musique. Great man indeed Holst was, but in the Franciscan sense. I went with his Whitsuntide singers to Thaxted. I mustn't spend time dilating on the loveliness of Thaxted, the countryside and the village, or of its church . . . possibly the loveliest in the whole country. For the first time I learnt and sang "Come down O love divine" and the tune DOWN AMPNEY; but I also made my first acquaintance with Neale's translation of the Golden Sequence. Caswall did well, and Neale's opening was pretty bold for its time. Did any hymnodist before Neale use the words "Paraclete", "seat" or "brilliancy" in so magically unselfconscious a succession? What uncanny ability Neale had in securing the very form and cadence of an original when he so desired, and of giving free rein to his invention whenever a close translation proved inelegant or pedantic! The verse that struck me most on that wonderful June day at Thaxted is well enough known in the original:—

Lava quod est sordidum,
Riga quod est aridum,
Rege quod est devium,
Fove quod est langudum,
Flecte quod est rigidum,
Sana quod est saucium

And Neale secures a perfect equivalent with no suggestion of a lecture room.

What is soiled, make thou pure;
What is wounded, work its cure,
What is parched, fructify;
What is rigid, gently bend,
What is frozen, warmly tend,
Strengthen! what goes erringly.

The "gently bend" and "warmly tend" are sheer invention. 'Fructify' is one of Neale's daring, and inspired rhymes.

Forgive the reminiscences, I began with them in order to testify to the *effect* that words and phrases now familiar had in the early years of our century. These very words and phrases . . . Watts's "dead to all the GLOBE", Neale's vocalised final syllables in "parched" and "soiled", his "fructify", or his "conjubilant" . . . these very words, I say, are touchstones of editorial wisdom and editorial folly. Let me read a passage from Dr. Phillips's *Hymnody Past and Present*, concerning the failure of the 1904 *Hymns A and M*, a book which saddled the proprietors with immense loss of time, trouble and money. "The book had a thoroughly bad press in the more widely read journals. The most widely read of all leapt upon the compilers' conscientious restoration of Charles Wesley's own text in the first line of Hymn 62; 'Hark, how all the welkin rings'. The public laughed long and loud; it is hardly an exaggeration to say that 'the welkin' gave the final death-blow to the 1904 book". To this we may now ask: "then why didn't it give the death blow to the English Hymnal only two years later?" And one answer is: "Because Dearmer had the prudence to leave 'Hark the herald angels sing', its Mendelssohn tune and the added refrain to verses of eight lines. On the next page he boldly printed the original four-line verses welkin and all, containing two fine stanzas that are neither used nor paraphrased in 'Hark the herald Angels sing'; and it is set to a delightful carol-like traditional melody, which exactly fits verses that contain such a word as 'welkin'."

In his short preface to the English Hymnal Dearmer wrote: "Hymns are printed, wherever possible, as their authors wrote them . . . the public now has the opportunity of comparing many originals with their altered versions; Few we venture to say will deny that they are altered for the worse . . . The freshness and strength of the

1 The true text reads "straighten" ED.

originals have been replaced by stock phrases and commonplace sentiments; injury has been done to the quality of our public worship as well as to the memory of great hymn writers". Now as Dearmer then goes on to justify certain exceptional alterations of originals, we ought to spend a few moments finding an explanation of his phrase "wherever possible". First we can set aside the fact that authors, like composers, sometimes sanction variants; and we need not discuss the task of finding which version came first or which its author liked most. Instead let us go on discussing common sense. Those who knew Percy Dearmer only as Canon of Westminster or as Professor of Fine Art at King's College, may do well to recall that he served some of his best years as a shrewd and forceful parish priest. He was primarily an artist, not least so in teaching congregations, especially young people and children, the essentials of Christian belief, without party slogans or clichés, but with a wealth of illustration. Such a man wasn't likely to turn the new hymn book into a museum, a collection of documents for historical study. If the aim of a book is only cultural and historical, the compiler should know that *bad* verse and *bad* music is still documentary. It may be more representative of its nation or period than is work of genius. (The observation would certainly be true of German music in the last years of Bach's life, when Bach's own sons thought him out of date). But the editor of *English Hymnal* had to set limits, beyond which banality or false doctrine could not be admitted and we can sometimes imagine Dearmer considering those limits. For instance, A. & M. completely re-wrote the last verse of Bridge's "Crown him with many crowns", and incidentally introduced the first person into a hymn which had avoided it:

All hail, Redeemer, hail,
For thou hast died for me.

Restoring the original meant restoring seven lines and an anticlimactic eighth:

Crown him the Lord of Years,
The Potentate of Time,
Creator of the rolling spheres,
Ineffably sublime.
Glassed in a sea of light
Where everlasting waves
Reflect his Throne, the Infinite,
Who lives — and loves — and saves.

If Dearmer had suffered from the fingering habit, as do so many editors, he would have avoided the anticlimax by toning down the whole verse into something safely pedestrian and reminiscent, but he did not tamper with verse as verse. Like Cromwell's portrait, if it was *true*, it remained, warts and all. He knew that Mrs. Alexander taught falsehood when she wrote: "The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high or lowly and ordered

their estate" . . . so out it came. Notice that this is not an example of what Shakespeare calls "commodity". The gorge of any professing Christian should rise when a preacher says: "One prefers to believe", or alters something "Because it is more acceptable". Even when Dearmer was doing his best to discover what degree of communal worship was possible for the conscientious agnostic he had no desire to let commodity oust truth. Words came out if "they weren't true".

If an editor's fingers itch to change every expression that is not immediately understood by every uninstructed worshipper, he may ruin fine verse and falsify its teaching. Plenty of words ought to be explained as part of general religious instruction. Only a few Sundays ago a sermon taught me for the first time the word *miserable*, as used in the days when our public liturgy was being Englished, does not mean "feeling wretched" but "to be pitied", "meet for divine mercy". And several other words, like "comfort". How thankful we should be that a priest who was particularly anxious that men and women should find their religious expression in his liturgical inheritance, did not succumb to the temptation to bring old expressions up to date and publish something corresponding with the simplified editions of musical classics which merely falsify them. Even without compulsory schooling, people like what reminds them of the past; according to their lights they relish what is genuinely old; if their light is restricted they enjoy their beer in a Tudorbethan pub, or applaud Prokofieff's Classical Symphony. But I am thinking of today. In 1904 the public laughed long and loud at a mere welkin. In 1956 (this very month) someone writes to *The Musical Times* asking why Bunyan's line "Hobgoblin and foul fiend" is watered down in E.H. to "Since Lord thou dost defend". Because Dearmer had the common sense to know that "hobgoblin" in 1906 might have made people suppose the crafts and assaults of the devil to be classifiable with an old wives' tale, authorized by her Grandam. "Hobgoblin and foul fiend" are tending less and less to be regarded as mere rustic superstitions, especially by readers of Dr. C. S. Lewis, who recognize that one of the worst mistakes made by the optimistic liberal theology of our childhood was its failure to give the devil his due. Since those days, peace-loving English bus-drivers or schoolmasters have twice trained machine guns on peace-loving bus-drivers and schoolmasters, not because either wished it, but because the powers of evil are in our wisest counsels and most philanthropic acts, and will be so until men learn not to trust in any child of man, or suppose than one can stand in a bucket and lift himself up in it. The Christian Malan forces a policy which brings the horrors of Sophiatown, and we know that it could happen in America or in England, and so could Belsen. Political idealists bring slave camps in their wake: we conquer surgical tasks till we can give a man a new face, yet our mental homes are full. No longer is one called a potty medievalist for believing in the powers of darkness; no longer

is "medieval" a term of abuse; but Dearmer was wise to withhold 'hobgoblin' in 1906.

We can admire his wisdom all the more after knowing about his willingness to romanticise the past. He loved medieval colour, and old words; he admired William Morris; he was editor of the Oxford Book of Carols, and in carols we are willing enough to idealize the past. No editor of carols and folk songs need think twice about welkins and hobgoblins. Nor did Dearmer. He even allowed one or two lines at which we needn't think it unkind to be amused. For instance, William Morris's shepherds, telling of their visit to Bethlehem, are made to say: "What hap do you deem there us betid?". Haps and betids were not allowed into the hymn book for daily use, yet Dearmer boldly risked Watts's "globe", and no worshippers of my acquaintance have complained that they are reminded of geography lessons. One clergyman I know DID say he disliked George Herbert's lines:

Therefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

It's a queasy stomach that won't take the cream of the seventeenth century, but this hymn is an example of a certain school of great mystical poets whose verses were rarely intended for singing. Not all those in E. H. make good hymns.

It was Dr. Johnson who gave the label 'metaphysical' to Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, Traherne and other seventeenth century worthies, and he defined his term as applying to 'such poets as used conceits, or novel turns of thought'. Now even if no single words are quaint, novel turns of thought arrest the lyrical flow of meditation and music. Dearmer didn't include extreme examples, such as Crashaw's "Hymn to the Holy Ghost", in which the sybolic dove is invited to lay an egg within the adoring soul; but he *did* include Donne's wonderful "Hymne to God the Father" . . . wonderful to read, but not convincing when sung.

Wilt thou forgive that sin, by man begun,
Which was sin, though it were done before

It is too sententious to be lyrical, especially when, at the end of each stanza, the poet makes a pun upon his own name:

When thou hast done, thou hast not Donne,
For I have more.

There's a fashion for Donne among composers, but I've heard no thoroughly successful setting of those words. Again, though the folk at my church sing Herbert's "Teach me my God and King", and like the tune, they don't sing it to those words as lustily as they do to the carol "A child this day is born". The reason is obvious if I read only one of Herbert's verses

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

. . . and so on with the tincture metaphor, the room-sweeping metaphor, and the metaphor of the philosopher's stone which turns all it touches to gold; but Dearmer wouldn't *tamper* with metaphysical verse any more than with bad verse. Only last Sunday there came a hymn which vindicated his opinion that alterations are nearly always for the worse, in the lines "Fading is the world's best pleasure, all its boasted pomp and show". The lines didn't occur last Sunday. The original was better:

Fading is the worldling's pleasure
All HIS boasted pomp and show
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

Opening E.H. at random, my thumb hits on No. 348 and those following, from the first six of which I collect the words "dower", "naught", "savour", "diadem", "guerdon", "Conspire" (in the sense of agree), "harbinger", "transport" (meaning delight), "tribulation", "mercy scat". Provided that such words are not dragged in to make rhymes or to give adventitious religiosity or atmosphere to basically vulgar expression . . . provided that they don't, in Sheridan's immortal jibe, "encumber what it is not in their power to fertilize" . . . they are attractive precisely because they now belong almost to worship. Like plainsong, they are specifically religious, and we associate them with the Bible especially with the Psalms. They can't ring true unless they come from a mind soaked in the language of the Bible and of public worship, and therefore the talent of Charles Wesley, Montgomery, Doddridge, Baker or Neale, testifies as much to piety as to learning and artistry.

Neale in particular made the language of Crammer and Cosin his own. I have already mentioned two instances of Dearmer's preferring Neale to other good translators. Under the Trinity hymns there is one of Neale's wonderful translations from the Greek (No. 613). Only Neale, I think, would have used the words "veil", "Thrones", "tribute" and "frame" with the apparent ease of this verse:

And yet thyself they cannot know,
Nor pierce the veil of light
That hides thee from the Thrones below,
As in profoundest night.
How then can mortal accents frame
Due tribute to their King?
Thou, only, while we praise thy name,
Forgive us as we sing.

Lest I seem to give ununixed praise to the editors, I will express my

wish that Neale had been used even more. As far as I know no original hymns by Neale occur in E.H. for the first time since his own publication; and yet some of them are most singable. Woodward included "There is a stream" in *Songs of Syon*, and as there may be members even of this Society who don't know the hymn, I shall read it. Woodward puts it to the six-line version of Gibbons' ANGEL'S SONG . . . and as Gibbons sets this to one of the most rapturous parts of the Song of Solomon . . . "O let me feel thy kisses warm", I cannot but feel that it suits Neale's longing for Heaven more than Wesley's athletic "Forth in thy Name". Besides I'm bound to say that I think Gibbons' six-line version to be an improvement. However, here is Neale:

There is a stream whose waters rise
Amidst the hills of Paradise,
Where foot of man hath never trod,
Proceeding from the Throne of God.
Let us bear sickness here, or strife,
So we may reach the spring of life.

There is a rock that nigh at hand
Gives shadow in a weary land.
Who in that stricken rock hath rest
Finds waters gushing from its breast.
O grant us when this toil is o'er
Their lot who thirsty not evermore.

There is a people who have cast
The strife and toil away at last,
On whom serene, in worship sweet,
Day doth not glare nor scorching heat.
Give us to be eternally
With them whose radiance is of Thee.

I no more understand the omission of that first-rate hymn than I understand the omission of Montgomery's "Hark, the song of Jubilee". I also wish the Neale had been used for the Sarum processions, which Grammer tried hard to translate so as to fit what he called "the old note", meaning the lovely plainsong melody to the versions of *Salve festa dies*, formerly sung at Easter, Ascension, Whitsun, Trinity and so on, including the Dedication Anniversary. Our language just doesn't suit hexameters, and it would be churlish to blame Maurice Bell, Canon Lacey, or Dearmer himself, for being so barely successful where Grammer failed. I'm afraid there must be very few churches which actually do use it, and therefore people are grateful that the E.H. of the *Salves* brought us another tune from Vaughan Williams, though I gather that he doesn't care much for it himself. The chief trouble with hexameters is that a whole number of otiose particles have to eke out each line. Take even the first line.

Salve festa dies, toto venerabilis ævo.

To produce a hexameter from that, the translators had to push in a patently redundant "thee", and the ugly phrases "blest day" and "that art" . . . I choose the Ascension Day version, because Dearmer is the translator.

Hail THEE festival day, blest day that art hallowed for ever.
Day when OUR God ascends, high in the heaven to reign.

I wish Dearmer had done as he did with "Hark the herald" and "Hark how all the welkin" — *supplied* the hexameters for the plain-song, but given Neale as an alternative, with a metrical tune. Neale took the bull by the horns, and how grand and direct his rendering is!

Hail festal day, for evermore ador'd,
Wherein God conquer'd death and upward soar'd.

In *Songs of Syon*, this is set to Gibbons' Song 22 with the direction *slow*.

I have deliberately dwelt with editorial policy with regard to old words and phrases, often noting a significant comparison between the nineteenth century and the early twentieth. When the supplements to A. and M. appeared, most of their contents proved to have been written and composed by men and women of the same half century as the collection; but when E.H. appeared, most that was new and exciting was treasure trove from all centuries of Christendom *except* ours. I believe it was hardest to choose among modern, simple, subjective and naive hymns than among the treasures dating from before the evangelical missions of the nineteenth century. There could be no inclusion of representative, but worthless, stuff merely to make a documentary historical anthology and I think it noteworthy that the very hymns over which the editors made the greatest concession — the very hymns they liked least — are those now least often heard. Mine is what used to be called a working class parish, and its most famous vicar was the good Dr. Dykes. So-called missions are almost a local disease yet I have never heard in Durham or elsewhere "Ho my comrades", "I hear thy welcome voice", "I long to be like Jesus". I need thee, precious Jesus", "Safe in the arms of Jesus", or even the far less offensive "There were ninety and nine". Nor has anyone, let alone the young, asked for "I think when I read that sweet story of old", "Little drops of water", "There is a happy land", or even "We are but little children poor" for nobody now is born in "very low estate". Yet I must in justice pay tribute to those hymns in E.H. which do not smack of a great literary past, hymns that are quite unambitious as poetry.

At the risk of platitude, I mention the futility of discussing hymns as literature by the criteria one would apply to secular verses. Many hymns are didactic, yet they would fail if their teaching were not limpidly expressed. "A verse may find him who a sermon flies" says George Herbert, and thousands who can't recite one of the creeds, thousands who could not explain it even if they could recite

it, could sing by heart "Firmly I believe and truly", or Mrs Alexander's lines:

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in.

All one needs know of the doctrine of redemption is taught in that hymn. It is perfect of its kind. The same could be said of Bright's Eucharistic hymn: "Once only once". In his recent autobiography, C. S. Lewis says that, having become at least a Theist, he thought it his duty to witness to beliefs, so he attended his parish church. Yet, he adds: "The idea of churchmanship was to me wholly unattractive . . . the Church was, to begin with, a wearisome get-together affair. I couldn't yet see how a concern of that sort should have anything to do with one's spiritual life". (By the way, I must make it clear that Lewis is deliberately showing us how pride, the first and greatest of the seven deadly sins, attacked him even after he had taken a step at the bidding of conscience). He goes on: "Hymns were, and are, extremely disagreeable to me. Of all musical instruments I like the organ least". What particularly riles him about hymns is that "their writers tend to draw the sense out from verse to verse instead of saying all there is to say, and then stopping". But Lewis surely sees this is exactly why music is used in worship pagan or Christian, and why blank verse, rather than prose, was used in tragedy. What matters is the drawing out, and it takes inspiration to do it well. When Macbeth is at bay and the English armies are marching up Dunsinane Hill to his Castle, he doesn't shout "Up guards and at 'em" but "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow". I have heard nobody say that his soliloquy holds up the action by drawing out one idea from line to line. The lines are a meditation upon the emptiness of pride. We say that the verse glows into lyricism. Only verse or music, not narrative prose, could thus seize upon one idea, and make it impressive by prolonging it. The narrative, the recitative, may load the gun; but the aria, the songish part, fires it and makes a music drama worth while, does what music can do much better than words without music. If our public worship contained neither meditative words nor music, it could be summarised in two exclamations, *Kyrie eleison* and *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* and services would last two minutes, but music prolongs supplications, praise, affirmations of belief, aspiration and reflection. We see it in the psalms, whose antiquity may make them tolerable for Dr. Lewis when their metrical equivalents are not. But I'm sure Lewis is exceptional, and most of us are grateful for modern hymns which, instead of trying to be clever, literary, or sententious, using words which remind us only of our own age instead of God's providence to our forefathers, and the future glory we are called to share can modestly

and simply draw out one idea from verse to verse as did most great hymns of the past.

In their attempts to fill up crannies of the kalendar and to provide for latter day types of what are called "special services", the editors did not always escape comparison with Mr. Osbert Lancaster's notorious Dr. Palinurge. But a search reveals some little treasures. Since nobody had supplied a hymn for that unpromising couple, S. Philip and S. James, Dearmer himself did:

So God doth bring the world to spring
And on their holy day
Doth the church proclaim her apostles' fame
To welcome the first of May.

The same simple effective naivety is found in Laurence Housman's hymn for S. Mark's Day:

And so may all whose minds are dark
Be led to truth by good Saint Mark
And after this their earthly strife
Stand written in the Book of Life. (228)

On the opposite page is another Housman hymn for S. George's Day, an occasion which might have drawn bombast from a poorer pen. I wish there were more hymns of this sort about Mary the Mother of Jesus, who has five days in the Prayer Book accorded to her honour. We seem to have lost unreasonable prejudices which once made protestant people think it superstitious to honour the most good, gracious and wonderful of created beings, but despite our wish to atone for past bad manners, our enormous medieval legacy, or the Mary hymns we might borrow from the papists, include few that are worthy or translation of language or locale. Too many merely address her by pretty titles such as one associates with a pagan goddess but not with the greatest of women. One does not shrink from inspired hyperbole, for it occurs in great hymns from the "Bend O lofty tree thy branches" of Fortunatus to Charles Wesley's superb outcry:

Hear him, ye deaf; his praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come,
And leap, ye lame, for joy.

But once we have used the tremendous phrase "Mother of Jesus", other apostrophes seem tawdry, and I wish therefore that the editors had not included Keble's angelus hymn, with such lines as "Lily of Eden's fragrant shade" (216).

There is a dignified and beautiful antithesis on the opposite page . . . Bishop Ken's "Her virgin eyes saw God incarnate born", to FARLEY CASTLE -- one of the most successful adaptations from Harry Lawes. Apart from Saints Day hymns one could instance a number

of simple yet dignified additions for particular occasions which, with the tables given at the end of the book, leave those responsible for the choice of hymns with no excuse for choosing badly.

I am sorry to sound a note of annoyance before I finish. The editors set out not only to make an adequate companion to the Book of Common Prayer but whatever the denomination with which they were chiefly associated, provided that most English, Scottish, Welsh and American congregations could conscientiously use them. "City of God" was written by a unitarian and the City envisaged by its author was certainly not the church. That did not prevent its inclusion in E.H. to the glory of Incarnate God and His Church. Yet how badly the E.H. is explored in some of the very churches which use no other book! "Abide with me" having become THE hymn for funerals and football matches and "O God our help" THE hymn for Remembrance Day, we are given "Immortal, Invisible" during the broadcast service on Passion Sunday, Palm Sunday and again on Easter Day . . . and this from E.H. churches. On Trinity Sunday at my church we sang "Holy, holy, holy" . . . and enjoyed it tremendously. S. Oswald's really let rip. Why, because we had *not* sung it for exactly a year . . . the previous Trinity Sunday . . . Yet that was a hymn of which I grew utterly sick as a boy when it came almost weekly at school and often in church. It is a great hymn and a fine tune, if sung as Dykes wrote it and not jogged along carelessly. So is "Immortal, invisible", which some may think it wise also to keep for Trinity Sunday and not more than one other occasion. I'd like to keep "City of God" for Whitsunday or ordinations, or the Dedication Festival. Clergy and choirmasters are to blame if hymns which were gloriously fresh to us 50 years ago are allowed to become stale. If they will not find what's provided, hold hymn practices, to persist with a good hymn till it is known and loved, and then use it sparingly, if possible making it *proprium de tempore*, they should not blame the book. The section called "General Hymns" looks numerically smaller than corresponding sections in other books, but under "Confirmation" you will find Wesley's "O thou who camest from above", which could be used generally, or properly at Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. Bridge's "My God accept my heart this day", Maude's "Thine for ever", and in the Missions section, "O Jesus I have promised". These all swell the section called, "General Hymns" in A and M. and so do hymns which E.H. gives under such headings as "Thanksgiving", "Times and Seasons", "Missions" etc.

Another habit which enrages me is the supposed adoption of E.H. by people who continue with bad, ironed out versions of the tunes, playing them and singing them at a dull iniformity of speed, whether they are solemn chorales to grandiose words or lilting triple tunes like the one to "Hark my soul how everything". You may say this is a musical matter, but it concerns words; it isn't fair to treat the words of "Disposer supreme" as you treat a semi-carol like "Jesus good above all other". If FRCOs and B. Muzzes. don't give two

hoots how they approach what is after all the chief music of parish people and sneer because they are interested only in choir music and fine organs, they have no business in a parish church. Most churches would be better without their nasty sounding and unsightly organs and organists who are not really interested in local, parish, simple worship at all.

I come regretfully to the most unjust of all criticisms of the E.H., although I do not think it is believed by most members of this Society. Dr. C. S. Philips was a fine man, particularly to be honoured for his ministrations to the School of Church Music when it was still at Chislehurst and for his excellent manual called "Hymnody Past and Present". For some reason, difficult to understand from a high churchman, he failed to disguise his dislike of E.H. He so persistently and tirelessly coupled together the phrases "English Hymnal" and "Anglo Catholic" that I am forced to believe he did it quite deliberately. Before the last war I persuaded two parish churches of very moderate and broad ceremonial tradition, as well as the dissenting headmasters of two grammar schools, to adopt the E.H. I am familiar with all the usual objections to E.H. made by the man in the pew, to say nothing of the women in the pew, who does not want to leave an old hymn book and is so alarmed to find that Hymn 165 is no longer "O God our Help", nor Hymn 437 "For all the Saints". I say I have heard many complaints, but never have I heard the objection that E.H. was anglo-catholic. If *The English Hymnal* were a party book, then its tendency would be most evident in its eucharistic devotions. This is certainly the case with *Songs of Praise*, which prints none of Wesley's communion hymns, and very few by anyone else, without altering them. But almost every communion hymn in *The English Hymnal* is to be found in one of the standard collections used by the free churches. Indeed there are only two exceptions as far as I know. I have not seen in any free church books a translation of *Lauda Sion Salvatorem*; its words smelt so little of Rome that the protestant Mendelssohn used them without alteration for a cantata. I cannot conceive its exclusion on doctrinal grounds from any protestant book. Before the Reformation it was used at Corpus Christi, but it is simply a thanksgiving for the Sacrament, not an exposition of sacrificial doctrine. The other exception is a hymn by Dearmer himself. No. 313, "Holy God, we show forth here", set to the first of the chorales in *The Mastersingers* probably because he wanted the tune. It makes an excellent motet for a carefully trained parish choir, and so by the way, does the other *Mastersingers* chorale, which Woodward used for the same purpose in *Songs of Syon*. But Dearmer's hymn to his Wagner tune is precisely of the sort that high churchmen and anglo-catholics do *not* favour. It smacks of tendencies which we think dangerous, such as treating of the eucharistic meal as if it were no more than an agape. Besides, in the opera we associate the tune with a hymn for S. John the Baptist's Day which English companies usually put to the words:

When to John our Saviour Christ
Came as man to be baptized.

Nan Dearmer's life of her husband makes quite clear that he never was an anglo-catholic, and that he deliberately tried to make his friends stress the idea of the eucharist as a meal of fellowship rather than as what Dr. Rattenbury calls "the verbal and ceremonial equivalent of the crucifix" that dominates the Holy Table under the Lutheran and Roman obediences. Now here is an interesting point. As a high churchman, bound by conscience to the ideals upheld by Andrewes, Laud, Cosin, Ken and so on, I treasure most among the other non-jurors, the Wesley's "Victim Divine", though I admit that no tune I know matches it. Let me recall the last verse of "Victim Divine", as given in the Methodist and other free church books, and also in E.H.

We need not now go up to Heaven
To bring the long-sought Saviour down;
Thou art to all already given;
Thou dost e'en now thy banquet crown;
To every faithful soul appear,
And show thy real presence here.

Dr. Rattenbury has rightly said that Wesley had no intention of teaching anything like transubstantiation. But here is curious point. Hymns A. and M. printed and prints "Real Presence" with capitals, and if the E.H. were a tendentious book it would surely do the same. The Methodist Hymn Book gives 'Thy' a capital and makes minor alterations to Wesley's original . . . for instance "and *speaks* salvation all around instead of "and *spreads* salvation". Dearmer faithfully followed the 1745 edition in wording and the use of capitals. Wesley did not spell 'real' with a capital so neither did Dearmer. The editorial preface which offered the book "to all broad-minded men" was no piece of commendatory chicanery. If the Scottish Kirk, or churches in the Methodist, Calvinist, or Congregational tradition were forced for one year to use the E.H. which was to be specifically a companion to the B.C.P., Dearmer could with a good conscience serve *Songs of Praise*, beloved by modernists and liberals.

I therefore return to the theme of my opening remarks. Men of very different churchmanship regard the E.H. as an entity, a book with a distinct personality. Some secular anthologies, for instance Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, have achieved the same distinction, but it is rarely found in collections of hymns except those which are much smaller, like the Yattendon Hymnal, much more restricted in purpose, like the Wesleys' *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, or much more limited in appeal, like Woodward's *Songs of Syon*, which would be the most admirable of books if all worshippers had embraced the discipline of the Cowley Community and shared the editor's taste for medieval verse and Lutheran music. The E.H. does not derive its distinctive character merely by association with

a church party. It is valued even by men and women who hold no allegiance to the faith and order of the anglican church, simply because its splendid justification of its titles makes it seem *their* book as well as an anglican churchman's companion to his Prayer Book. They recognize it as an entity in the sense that Palgrave called his book "A Golden Treasury of the best Songs and Lyrics in the English Language". It is still a best seller because he was as catholic as a high standard permitted. Yet he betrayed his own distinctive poetic experience, the spirit and ideals of his age and friends. So does every true artist. So did Dearmer, Vaughan Williams and the rest of the compilers of the E.H. They showed artistry, scholarship, wide knowledge, tolerance and understanding of other men's needs, sincere religious experience and the shrewdness to tell when the expression of that experience rang true and when it did not. I heartily thank this Society for letting me pay tribute to their achievement and to honour the triumphant arrival of its jubilee year.

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE HYMN SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND HELD AT ADDINGTON PALACE

JUNE 12TH -- 13TH, 1956.

The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland held its annual conference at Addington Palace, the home of the Royal School of Church Music on June 12th and 13th.

After the Annual Meeting of the Society, the members attended St. Michael's Church, Croyden, for Choral Evensong. The Rev. J. W. Poole, M.A., Vicar of Merstham, Surrey, preached the Conference Sermon from Revelation xiv, 3, "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne . . . and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

The Conference met to celebrate the Jubilee of The English Hymnal and the two main lectures dealt with (a) the literary, and (b) the musical features of this pioneer hymn book of the twentieth century. On Wednesday morning Professor A. J. B. Hutchings, of Durham University, spoke on The Literary Aspects of The English Hymnal Collection. A large audience, including the students at Addington, received the lecture eagerly and responded to the speaker's witty punctuations with fervour. The Rev. Dr. Alan Kay expressed thanks for a lecture that sparkled by the brilliance of its presentation and by its critical and crystal clear appreciation of a hymn book that has made history.

Dr. R. Vaughan Williams, O.M. joined the company for lunch

and, in the afternoon, spoke for an hour on The Musical Beginnings of The English Hymnal. He recalled the day in 1904 when he sat in his study in Westminster and Mr. Dearmer was announced. That was their first meeting. All he had previously known of him was that he was a parson in London, regarded by some as a crank, who frequently allowed tramps to sleep in his drawing room. Dr. Dearmer's main question was, "Will you edit the music of a new hymn book?" He replied that he knew very little about hymn tunes. "You see," he said humorously, "I had only been a Church Organist." After that meeting a Committee was formed. Each member put down £5 to cover expenses expecting their work to be completed in two months. It took two years, and Vaughan Williams bill for expenses was £250. His ignorance of theology often troubled him. On one occasion the word "thistles" in the text of a hymn both puzzled and worried him and he referred the matter to Dr. Dearmer. "Can't you see," said Dearmer, "that 'thistles' is a misprint for 'thither'!" Dr. Dearmer's work was thorough, honest and adventurous, and Vaughan Williams realised that his editing of the tunes must have the same threefold quality. Most 19th and 20th century hymn books did not trouble to find out who were the authors of their hymns or the composers of their tunes. The English Hymnal would remedy that defect. As a boy he had been taken to Church and sung a dull hymn to an equally dull tune. He found later that this tune was called INNSBRUCK and that it was really a first class tune but it had been misrepresented. He decided to give that tune, and many others which had suffered similarly, to the Church in its more original and vital form. The square, four four, tunes set to so many common metres in Psalter made for monotony and dullness in worship. They needed treatment and called for attention. By using the round form, triple time, it was possible to infuse new life into dull tunes. Luther and Wesley (his use of HELMSLEY, for example) had been determined not to let the devil have the best tunes, and Vaughan Williams felt that in English folk tunes, there was fountain of good melody for the Church. He said he found sources which were good "to steal from" and, "I stole like anything." With Athelstan Riley's help he introduced French Church melodies setting them out in the Plainsong form: Plainsong was the one form of music he did not feel competent to deal with and W. J. Birkbeck undertook that work. The first territory to be explored was that of the "gathering" note, or the "long initial", as it is called in England, to the metrical psalm tunes and thereby gave back to them their dignity and their full value for worship. 18th century tunes like RICHMOND, COLESHILL, UNIVERSITY and STROUDWATER had been ignored by the Church of England and they were therefore given a place in the English Hymnal. Welsh tunes like BRYN CALFARIA, ABERYSTWYTH and many others had also lacked recognition or found a place until they appeared in The English Hymnal. The book made possible also the re-scoring after a proper pattern those

mutilated versions of German chorales which had appeared in 19th century Anglican books. As musical editor, he wanted the book to be both practical as well as a compendium, or thesaurus, of the finest hymn tunes of the world. But he was not his own master in the choice of all the music. Certain popular tunes, though they were poor tunes had to be included. Bad tunes, however were segregated to an appendix, which he called the "chamber of horrors." He set tunes in as low a key as possible because hymns are essentially for the congregation to sing. Minims were used for older tunes, and crotchets for more modern tunes, and pauses, breath marks and metronome numbers were added as a guide to the proper use of the tunes. The revised and enlarged English Hymnal of 1933 has been criticised as not being so good. Between 1906 and 1933 a great amount of research was done, more material was gathered, some better words inserted, and the result was a better work.

It was a great experience to sit and listen to the one surviving member of the original Committee of The English Hymnal, this grand old man of English music. At eighty three years of age his heart and mind has still the spirit of a boy. His humour and lively twinkle of the eye adds a spell that binds an audience to him. All music has connotation in life, he said in a closing word. That was truer for us because it was true for him. Music has connotation in his own life. It was easy to mistranslate Bunyan and say, "Who would true music hear, let him come hither." In his own inimitable manner the Rev. Dr. Erik Routley expressed the gratitude of the large audience to the lecturer.

The third lecture, given by the Rev. Horace Spence, M.A., was on the History and Aims of The Royal School of Church Music. His opening question was germane to the whole Conference, What is the use of The English Hymnal without the Church and the Choir to use it? The answer was obvious but it gave him the opportunity to relate the history of Addington Palace as the home of The Royal School of Church Music. Way back in history the Evangelical Revival and the Oxford Movement had their effects upon worship. Seeds then sown have profoundly influenced the use of music in the Church. More recently the Archbishop's Report of 1922 had been effective and The Royal School of Church Music was born out of it. The late Sir Sydney Nicholson gave up his organistship at Westminster Abbey and devoted all his resources to founding it. After more humble beginnings, and settlement in earlier homes with their limited accommodation and uncertainty of tenure, by a great venture of faith, at a capital cost of £40,000, a move to Addington Palace was made in 1952. With such premises at its disposal by a fifty years' lease, and at a cost of £12,000-£15,000 per year. The Royal School of Church Music can plan to serve the Church by providing the best of Christian music. Already 4,500 Choirs from all over the world are affiliated to it, amongst which are 20 Free Church Choirs, and new Choirs are joining at the rate of 40 a month. Each year

1,000 boys go through the Choir or Choristers' Courses. The students in residence are all qualified musicians and their course is the equivalent of a post-graduate course. The A.D.C.M. (Archbishop's Diploma in Church Music), the highest award in terms of Church music, is obtainable but only by the most competent and qualified musicians. The School however provides a number of different, short term residence courses for Ordinands, Lay Readers, School Teachers, Organists and Choirmasters from town or country parishes. To deal with the multitude of courses provided, and the vast host of people served all over the world, a large and competent staff is employed. Mr. Gerald H. Knight, the Director is at present abroad visiting choirs in different places all over the world. With justifiable pride the lecturer, who is the Clerical Commissioner of the School, said: "There is nothing like this in the world, no other Church has such a School." Mr. K. G. Finlay, a former student under Sir Sydney Nicholson expressed appreciation.

The closing session of the Conference was the Hymn Festival in West Croydon Methodist Church, on Wednesday evening. The Minister, the Rev. D. R. Evans, M.A., presided and the Rev. Cyril Taylor, M.A., the Warden of The Royal School of Church Music, introduced a representative selection of hymns from The English Hymnal. His introductions reminded one of his two series of Broadcasts at 10.15 p.m. on Sundays, called "The Way To Heaven's Door." By apt reference, and with felicitous phrase, Mr. Taylor gave to each hymn in turn a third dimension and made it stand forth from its place in the hymn book. The singing was led by a Choir from The Royal School of Church Music, conducted by Martin How. With Derek Holman at the organ there was a team which became a single unit of praise and which interpreted very finely whatever hymn it sang whether it was Plainsong, or Bach's setting of LOBE DEN HERREN, the Welsh GWALCHMAI, or the very English MONKS GATE. Nine hymns were sung, each of a different pattern. The Conference ended in line with St. Paul's injunction: "singing and making melody in your heart unto the Lord."

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of the Hymn Society Bulletin.

Sir,

If members of the Hymn Society in America feel a deep sense of shame at the tune allotted in their Bulletin to Dr. Fosdick's new hymn on The Home, I hope this letter may do something to assure them that there are many in this country who share it.

Yours truly,

CYRIL V. TAYLOR.

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