

The Hymn Society

OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

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FROM DR MILLAR PATRICK

DEAR MR ROUTLEY,

It is time, I think, that my name should disappear from the heading of the *Bulletin*. There is no point now in keeping it there, since the responsibilities of the Editorship have passed entirely into your hands.

It was a great satisfaction to me to discover my potential successor in you, and this satisfaction has deepened since you have had full control. The Society is fortunate in having found in you an Editor so well equipped with knowledge of both the literary and musical fields of hymnody, and with such magnificent enthusiasm with which to inspire others.

It is unfortunate that there cannot at present be a meeting of the Executive to give effect to my resignation and appoint you sole Editor. In the circumstances I beg you to anticipate such a decision, and let the fiction of my now having any kind or degree of editorial responsibility come to an end.

I suggest that the numbers of this *Bulletin* up to the last one (October 1947) form Vol. I of the series, and that a new series should begin with this January 1948 number and inaugurate Vol. II.

It is gratifying to know that a deeply interested member of the Society—the Rev. L. H. Bunn of Bellingham, Northumberland, has an index of the contents of Vol. I practically complete. Members who value the Bulletins and wish to keep them will be grateful to him for this very valuable service.

With most cordial good wishes for much happiness and service in a duty which I know to be after your own heart,

I am,

Yours very truly,

EDINBURGH,

3rd December 1947.

MILLAR PATRICK.

The above letter was received just as this issue was going to press. Comment upon it, therefore, will be held over until the next issue. (E.R.R.)

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

THE present number of the *Bulletin*, like number 39, is mainly concerned with recent books, and considerable space is given to the new hymns published by the Hymn Society of America. It is hoped that members will not think this disproportionate. A review of so important a publication must necessarily be somewhat long if it is to be of any use at all; and it would be unseemly to treat with less than due attention this admirable piece of pioneer work.

The length of this review makes it necessary for the general article in this issue to be curtailed. It will, however, be completed in the next issue, and the Editor is taking the liberty, with the permission of the reader, of contributing a series of such articles which will attempt to estimate the value of the "Victorian" contribution to the music of hymnody. These will appear in the succeeding issues of the *Bulletin* when the absence of more important and interesting material permits.

VICTORIAN HYMN-COMPOSERS—I

SAMUEL SEBASTIAN WESLEY

By ERIK ROUTLEY

TWENTY years ago a premature boastfulness derided all things Victorian. Composers and critics of hymn-tunes, in their obscure corner, followed the fashion. But there were not wanting a few prophets (then, of course, called reactionaries) who predicted a rehabilitation of the Victorian era and of much that it stood for. They now begin to be justified; many of us, in this callously bureaucratic age, look with a new interest at an age which could produce the Albert Memorial because it admired Albert, and which produced the Great Exhibition because it admired industry, and are not universally thought insane for doing so. We are almost in danger of becoming romantic about it. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of us look with less superiority than formerly at the compositions of such men as Samuel Sebastian Wesley.

Remaining, it is hoped, reasonable, and still preferring MARCHING TO ST OSWALD, and ALBERTA TO LUX BENIGNA, the reader is recommended to look again at the tunes of this composer—whom E. H. Fellowes has called the greatest English musician between Purcell and Elgar. The best accessible collection of his tunes is in the *Oxford Hymnal*

(since the *European Psalmist* has now become a rarity). It contains forty-three original tunes by Wesley as well as a large number of his harmonizations of tunes from other sources. Before proceeding, compare this number with the representation in other hymnals of his tunes.

<i>Hymns A and M</i> (1916 ed.)	. . .	18
" " " (1939 ed.)	. . .	13
<i>Revised Church Hymnary</i>	. . .	17
<i>Methodist Hymn Book</i>	. . .	10
<i>Hymns of Western Europe</i>	. . .	5
<i>Congregational Hymnary</i>	. . .	4
<i>English Hymnal</i>	. . .	3
<i>Songs of Praise</i> (1931)	. . .	2

These figures leave little doubt concerning the tendency of the hymn-books which claimed to contain the best music to avoid Wesley. It is a somewhat humorous coincidence that among standard hymnals in contemporary use, that which achieves the highest musical standard (*Songs of Praise*) and that which achieves the lowest (*Worship Song*) concur in this one thing, that they each admit two of Wesley's tunes.

Wesley is known to all churchgoers, of course, as the composer of AURELIA; that is, he is known by one of his most commonplace and dreary tunes. AURELIA has killed "The Church's one foundation" for many, and in some quarters is used for many other hymns as well. The other tune of his admitted by S.P. is HAREWOOD, which happens to be a good example; but neither is particularly characteristic of the composer, and neither is among his best.

It is, as a matter of fact, unusually difficult to name any particular characteristic that is native to Wesley's hymn-tunes. The greater part of them lack the kind of distinction that causes a reader to look out for more from the same source. The only characteristic which one can reasonably attribute to Wesley, his versatility and freedom from the bondage of mannerisms, is one which only emerges after study of a large number of his tunes. It is this which places Wesley above his contemporaries and gives safe ground for the judgment that he is the greatest of Victorian hymn-composers. There are only a few of his tunes, and those the least known, of which you would say "Only Wesley could have written that"; like any first-class craftsman, Wesley can compose to fit any mood, and can make his tunes any shape, and although here and there he fails to produce a finished piece of work, there is no mood in which one can definitely say that he is at his best. His three greatest tunes (here I give my personal judgment—others might care to differ), WIGAN (140),¹

¹ Numbers without initials refer to the *Oxford Hymnal*.

HEREFORD (*A.M.* 698), and GRACE DIEU (29, *Rv.C.H.* 536) are all in entirely different moods, and all contain that kind of essential simplicity that makes it equally true to say that anybody could have written them and that only a great artist could have written them.

But there are several subsidiary characteristics which emerge as one looks at the tunes individually, and it is interesting to see how he attacks various problems and satisfies diverse requirements.

(a) MELODIC ARCHITECTURE.—One of the most remarkable things about Wesley's tunes is the variety of *shapes* in which they appear. The safe general rule—that a tune should have its melodic climax not earlier than half-way through—is well enough as a guide for beginners, but Wesley has no hesitation in following other guides when he feels them appropriate. He follows the conventional pattern in COMMUNION (*A.M.* (1939) 277),¹ HAREWOOD (*S.P.* 464), and GRACE DIEU (29), and in many others. They are tunes of a conventional kind. But elsewhere things are very different. Look, for example, at CLEVEDON (41), ALCESTER (190), and ULM (249); these are all four-line tunes with the highest melodic note in the very first line. BEDMINSTER (317), a tiny tune for "We love the place," is similar. HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING (2), a quiet and lyrical tune with a strange repetition in the first two lines, and the better known ALLELUIA (136, *A.M.* 316) have their climaxes earlier than half-way. The safety of the general rule observed above is perhaps indicated by the fact that none of these is among his best tunes. They all give the impression of disappointment towards the end. They indicate Wesley's independence of spirit—but other and happier evidences of that quality in him will come our way shortly.

One of Wesley's happiest gifts was that of writing felicitously in a small compass. The best examples of this are BRIXTON (223) and HORNSEY (*A.M.* 499, *E.H.* 136). Wesley could handle a very short metre, or one ending with a short line (such as 888.4) with great skill. TIME (32) is a perfect example in 888.4; it will be noticed how Wesley manages to sum up the whole tune in the last line, making up in content what the line has lost in length. (As a piece of craftsmanship compare it with, *e.g.*, Dykes's ST CUTHBERT (*A.M.* 207), where the composer obviously gave up, without a struggle, the problem of returning to his keynote.)

One of the greatest defects in Victorian tunes is the tendency to exalt harmony at the expense of melody, and to allow too many repeated notes in the melody. Many examples readily occur to the mind—the first line of PAX TECUM (*A.M.* 537), the fifth of LUX BENIGNA (*A.M.* 266), and the first *four* lines of

an unbelievable tune by Calkin called FATHERHOOD (*Cong. H.* 401). Wesley often uses repeated notes in his tunes—but one feels in most cases that he is, so to speak, using them, not just letting them happen. Nobody objects to the repeated notes in PRAISE, MY SOUL, or ORIEL, because they are an intelligible part of the architectural scheme of the tune; and this is the case with Wesley most of the time—though not always. AURELIA is objectionable chiefly on account of its repeated notes and its tendency to wander round G; FAITH (*M.H.B.* 365; not in *O.H.*) has a disastrous finish on a string of E flats, and the same can be said of ASHBURTON (211), a disappointing tune which begins excellently and looks for the first four lines as if it will be *the* tune for these rather intractable words. CLEVEDON (41), already mentioned, sags badly in the third line, and ALLELUIA (136) spends too much time on and below low F.

But Wesley could use this device to great effect. After all, a repeated melodic note can have significance. Beethoven and Chopin have shown us the urgency and pathos that can be achieved by hammering away insistently at a single note; what is wrong is to use insignificantly a device so charged with pathetic force. Wesley's tune to "Abide with me," ORISONS (10), is one of the most remarkable things in all hymnody. On paper, it looks trivial, and at a first hearing it sounds sentimental. One wonders, however, if there is any other tune ever written whose impression of sentimentality is superficial and whose real craftsmanship and even grandeur only become apparent after several hearings. It is doubtful whether this tune has ever been sung anywhere (it would be interesting to hear from anyone who has heard it); but for these words it is in fact the ideal tune—simple and moving, and kept within a compass narrower even than that of the celebrated EVENTIDE. Its repeated notes are not trivial, they are passionate.

PATMOS (236), for "Lead, kindly Light" (another hymn of intensely intimate appeal) is not to be compared with ORISONS as a piece of music, but it uses the same device—a passionate repeated note—in its first line. The dominant ninth at the beginning of the second line is a little too much, but the rest of the tune is simple and straightforward enough.

KENSINGTON (299) has a bold unison effect in lines 5 and 6, with repeated notes again; but this time, although they are clearly "part of the tune," they seem to lack appropriateness; the words of the hymn "The spacious firmament" are bold and outward-looking, and call for a firm melody with plenty of movement (such as the familiar ADDISON's). And yet even here the impression given is that Wesley is using this device deliberately (even if some of us lesser musicians think misguidedly), not that he has run out of inspiration.

¹ Slightly altered (not for the better) at *O.H.* 326.

"HYMNS OF HOPE AND UNITY"

(HOWELL ELVET LEWIS)

By CANON G. W. BRIGGS

THE name of Elvet Lewis has long been honoured, not only by ourselves as his fellow-members in the Hymn Society, but in very wide connections. His hymns appear in a number of hymn-books. The present collection is for the most part new, though some of the hymns have appeared in various religious papers.

That great-hearted man, Bernard Manning, writing about the hymns of Charles Wesley, laid particular emphasis on his amazing variety of metre. Whereas Isaac Watts had generally confined himself to a few standard metres, Charles Wesley broke out into endless variety. Perhaps it was because Watts has a more limited choice of tunes than Wesley: or perhaps Wesley was more versatile. Be that as it may, Manning would certainly have remarked on the great variety of metre in this little collection. Arithmetic, I regret to say, is one of my many weak points: and I must confess that I find it difficult to count any but the simplest metres. Among these thirty-five hymns there must be at least half as many different metrical forms. Some are so far out of the ordinary that one wonders where the writer gets the tune: but Welsh hymn-tunes are so varied that doubtless he has a tune in mind.

The general tone of the hymns is worthy of their title. They are as wide as the Christian Faith; moreover, they might merit John Wesley's claim for his own book:

"Here is nothing turgid or bombast on the one hand, or low and carping on the other."

How far they will survive no man can tell, any more than one can predict the future of any hymn. Sometimes hymns survive on their general merits: sometimes because they meet a particular need. There is here a hymn on the Bible, and Bible hymns are none too common:¹ and a wedding hymn—and we all know the need of a good wedding hymn. To myself I think number 33 "A Church's Journey" and 35 "Consecration of Ministers"² appeal most: but other men will have other choices.

Elvet Lewis needs no lessons in technique, for he is an old hand at the game. Like all other hymn-writers he sometimes lets his accent fall on the wrong word. Bernard Manning claimed that Charles Wesley was free from this fault—or

¹ The excellent hymn on the Bible written by the author of this article for the Bible Society's celebration in Westminster Abbey this year should not be overlooked.

² In this hymn Dr Lewis informs me that a verse has been omitted in error from the published edition. The full text will appear in the forthcoming *Congregational Praise*.—EDITOR.

comparatively free! But it can be found in Wesley, as in lesser mortals, for no writer is entirely free from it. There is one curious line which I think must be a slip. In number 11 "Easter Morn" verse 3 and line 4 there is an extra foot. Of course there is no reason why a writer should not insert an extra foot or a dozen feet if he feels so inclined, but it makes it a bit awkward for the tune! I cannot help thinking that it is an oversight—but an oversight easily remedied.

I have been glad to know Elvet Lewis in his advanced years, and it is a real pleasure to read his work.

ADDENDUM TO THE REVIEW

None of the hymns appearing over Dr Lewis's name in existing hymnaries (except only "The light of the morning" from *Hymns of Western Europe* to which a new verse is added) appear in the book reviewed above. For completeness we append here a list of Dr Lewis's hymns published in the *Congregational Hymnary*, several of which have found their way into other collections and at least one of which has earned world-wide renown.

- "Whom oceans part, O Lord, unite" (569)
- "Lord of light, whose Name outshineth" (523)
- "The days that were, the days that are" (658)
- "Jesus calls the little children" (739, for children)
- "For joys of service, Thee we praise" (648)
- "Lamb of God unblemished" (298, for Communion)
- "Friend of the home" (280, for Baptism)
- "Draw us to Thee" (132, translated from Frederick Funcke)
- "God calleth yet" (356, translated from Tersteegen).

The following are in *Hymns of Western Europe*:

- "Gethsemane let me recall" (62)
- "I linger sadly near" (90, translated from Evan Evans)
- "The light of the morning is breaking" (241)

"TWELVE NEW HYMNS OF CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM"

IN October 1943 there met in New York a special Committee of the Hymn Society of America, together with the Society's Executive, to carry out a task whose result may well be far-reaching in American hymnody. They drew up a list of a hundred poets and hymn-writers and invited these to submit each a hymn on the subject of Christian Patriotism. Thirty-five authors accepted the invitation, and from their hymns a dozen were selected at a meeting in November 1944 and published in 1945. We have now before us the musical edition of this little book, published this year by the American Hymn Society, and a few words must be written about it here.

Anyone who is interested in hymnody will applaud this venture. This is the kind of thing a hymn society exists for. It is quite true that no Society is needed to stimulate the writing of hymns and tunes: surely no age has ever been so prolific in new hymns and tunes as is our own. What is

sadly needed, however, is that the right people be stimulated to write, and that really good new hymns should be encouraged and given publicity. We often write in these pages of the gaps in present-day hymnody. Four hundred years of English hymnody have still failed to close those gaps and to minister adequately to all the needs of a modern congregation. Here, in the matter of Christian Patriotism, is such a gap, and here is the American Society making a valiant, and by no means unsuccessful, effort to close it. We must do something of the kind over here.

Christian patriotism is a delicate subject. In our own age patriotism has been the subject of much thought and writing, and Christian teaching on the subject has not been as clear as it might be. Some, confusing it with jingoism, have discredited it. Others, thinking it a kind of politics, have abused it. From such confusion it is inevitable that little first-rate hymnody could emerge. Watts was perhaps not at his best when writing a hymn for Guy Fawkes's day, and Kipling's really moving "Recessional" contains too many "difficult" lines to be quite satisfying as a hymn. One man who was healthy on patriotism in his writings has produced a fine hymn—G. K. Chesterton; and we still have the passionate if slightly erratic "When wilt Thou save the people?" But we have not many more, and we persist in singing William Blake with little thought of what he can have intended by his "arrows" and "chariots," and with a certainly incorrect interpretation of the "satanic mills."

Now a hymn of Christian Patriotism is required, by definition, like any other hymn, to occupy itself principally with the thought of God, and to be founded in Christian doctrine. These requirements are particularly difficult in this branch of hymnody for reasons that are not far to seek. First, the temptation to address the hymn to the country, or to man, and to make of it a hortatory national song, is almost too strong to be resisted even by such obvious craftsmen as those who have compiled the book under review; and second, the Christian doctrine on the subject is so unexpected and in some places so scandalous that as a matter of fact few hymn-writers have succeeded in going beyond pious aspiration. Christian doctrine as extracted from Scripture is utterly revolutionary without having any use for the weapons or thought-forms which most revolutionaries of history consider necessary for reform. Christ seems to have been shockingly complacent about Caesar and the social order of his time; Paul and Peter are uncommonly unenthusiastic about proposals for inverting the status of master and servant. Christian teachers seem to count courtesy higher than violence and loyalty higher than grievance. And yet on the other hand, the vision of a perfect society is given

here and there with great precision and in quite unmistakable terms. Jesus discourses at length upon the conditions one is to expect in the Kingdom of grace, and part of our Christian heritage (upon which at present we tend to cast quite unmerited scorn) is bound up with the naïve and picturesque imagery of the Apocalypse. For what it is worth, the vision we gain from the Bible is of a Kingdom of ceremony and courtesy combined with rejoicing and abundant, healing, redeeming vitality. The details we are left to fill in for ourselves, and the tendency of the present age is to disregard the framework and preoccupy ourselves with unco-ordinated details.

Enough of this. This is not the *Expository Times*. But we have here some clue to the weakness of so much "patriotic" hymn-writing. How does this new venture of the American Society help us?

We may say at once of all the hymns in this little book that they are the work of men who love their country and are neither ashamed to say so nor incapable of saying so in good and graceful English. There is good craftsmanship here—and so we should expect from the cream of American hymnographers. Our judgment of the music will become clear as we deal with the hymns *seriatim*, but here we record gratitude for the high standards maintained by all the compositions. We cannot say "Amen" every time, nor can we pass over the occasional blemish. But we hope it is not the practice of this journal to be ungenerous in such matters. In dealing with the hymns, we propose to take the liberty of quoting in full the first verse of each hymn, to indicate the metre and the temper of the words.

1 God of a universe within whose bounds
Thy vast creation moves in ordered space:
Sons of a nation born in faith and wounds,
We seek from Thee our true appointed place.

KATHERINE L. ALLER. (Five verses.)

This is a hymn on the large scale, making plenty of use of "big" words. It is not entirely free from clumsiness: in the verse quoted it is a pity that "God of a universe" is balanced by "Sons of a nation"—a vocative by a nominative in apposition to the subject. In reading it for the first time one halts in order to pick up the syntax—and this is a thing which hymns ought at all costs to avoid. A similar false parallelism is apparent in verse 3:

By all the grief man's strife with man entails,
By all the woe that stalks oppression's train,
By Thy great sacrifice which still prevails:
Free us from lust for all unworthy gain.

The force of "by all the grief" cannot be the same as that of "By Thy . . . sacrifice"; the grief is the evidence for the prayer, the sacrifice its ground. But the hymn has many good lines; these blemishes just prevent its being first class.

The tunes given are Barnby's LONGWOOD and TOULON, which is the four-line version of OLD 124TH. The Barnby is scarcely worth perpetuating, and the other tune is a mutilation, though a fairly successful one. It is a pity that a new tune was not forthcoming for these words.

3 ¹ O God of all our fruitful years
And of the years to be,
In this our day of need and hope
We bring our vows to Thee.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK. (Four verses.)

This is a very different kind of hymn. (The wide variety of treatment is one of the attractive things about this collection). It is of ideal length, and the language is very simple. It is one of the best things in the book. Let us have one more verse, the second :

Not unto us the laurel crown
For triumphs that are ours ;
Without Thy help all lowly laid
Would be our vaunted powers.

The tune is WINCHESTER OLD, and again we quarrel with the choice. The tune requires something more rugged. Something smoother, such as ST PAUL (ABERDEEN) occurs to us as more suitable.

4 God of all peoples everywhere,
We raise to Thee our burdened prayer ;
Father of all, of every race,
Our sin obscures Thy radiant face.

RALPH and ROBERT CUSHMAN. (Five verses.)

This is very fair but not so good as the preceding hymn. The third line of the verse quoted above, with its double genitive, is rather weak, and the following contains an undesirable "bump" in the sense :

Make love of self give way, to heed
The broadened boundaries of need !

and this is, at the present time of day, an inadmissible rhyme :

Unveil the evil that we laud,
Bring in the Brotherhood of God,

especially as it is the closing couplet. And what is the "Brotherhood of God" ?

The tune here is GRACE CHURCH, known in England as ST POLYCARP, from a melody of I. J. Pleyel. It is a rather depressing tune. On the whole we are not satisfied with the tunes chosen for these hymns from ancient sources.

5 Who will build the world anew ?
Who will break tradition's chains ?
Who will smite the gods of gold ?
Who will chant the Spirit's gains ?
Who will hail the Gospel's power ?
This his day and this his hour.

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK. (cf. No. 3.) (Three verses.)

¹ An alternative tune has a separate number : the first hymn is numbers 1 and 2.

This is a hard-hitting and frankly hortatory song. Two lines address the Deity, otherwise it is composed of brief, crisp rhetorical questions. Of its kind it is very effective ; but it is possible to doubt whether it comes within the bounds set by the ancient definition of a hymn. Like all such pieces, it will be offensive, as it is intended to be, to those who do not share the author's outlook. The reference to "tradition" in line 2 as an oppressor will not be palatable to all, nor will this line :

Caste and creed have had their day.

But it has passionate sincerity and conviction, and that we respect.

The tune is a new one, EYRE, by Mary Eyre MacElree, and it suits the words very well. Again, some may quarrel with the bold modulation from C major to E flat in the fifth line—but like the hymn, it is the kind of thing you take or leave. It is homogeneous and excellently suited to its subject, and we are not entitled to demand more of a commissioned tune.

6 God who hast set us in This time ¹
Of storm and wreck and tears,
Be near, be near, that we may bear
The burden of the years.

HERMANN HAGEDORN. (Four verses.)

This is a very neat little piece ; it is a simple prayer to God, basing all the aspirations of men's hearts on the presence of God. It is economical in construction, using in the first three verses the formula "God who hast. . . . Be near . . ." It is perhaps a pity that verse 3 ends at a semicolon, and that verse 4 is therefore not a complete sentence. But it is all quite well done, and the hymn avoids the common error of trying to say too much.

The tune is, and should not be, DUNDEE (FRENCH).

7 Where winds of heaven's sweet freedom blow
Around the hills of peace,
My homeland wakes within my heart
A love that shall not cease.

MAY A. ROWLAND. (Six verses.)

This is a very intimate and personal composition—the only one in this collection written in the first person singular. It is also one of the minority that mentions not only the name of God but also that of Christ. The best verse is the fourth :

In evil times when foes assail
And watchmen grasp the sword,
In danger's hour that land is safe
Whose stronghold is the Lord.

This verse imparts an air of universality without which the hymn would be too private for congregational use. As it is, it could probably be shortened with advantage, and the

¹ Misprinted in the title, but not in the text, "God who has . . ."

opening verse, quoted above, is not a propitious start. Is it altogether felicitous to describe even the happiest of earthly countries as blessed by "heaven's sweet freedom"?

The tune is RICHMOND, which has the advantage of being adaptable. One assumes that the older tunes chosen had to be well-known tunes in order to help the hymns to popularity. But even RICHMOND could have been bettered here. The tune that immediately occurred to the writer as he read the words first was BALLERMA.

8 Shed Thou O Lord Thy light
On this strong land;
Firm in the ways of right
Strong may she stand.
Make her to all earth kin,
Teach her to share;
Cleanse her of inward sin,
Lord, hear our prayer.

GEORGIA HARKNESS. (Three verses.)

The brevity of many of these hymns is most commendable. This one is another prayer for the country, in simple but well-chosen words, without great originality, but well adapted to the needs of simple folk.

The tune, MIDLAND, is new (Robert Pugh). It is a sound enough tune, but the objection to it is that it is written unambiguously in four lines of ten syllables, thus giving no support to the rhyme-scheme of the hymn. This is rather a pity, but it is clear that to write a tune faithfully reproducing the rather choppy metre of the original would be very difficult if the composer wishes to avoid triviality. Part of the blame must, therefore, go to the author.

9 America, the Promised land,
The child of all the nations,
Thy fathers left their native strand
And faced the desolations
Of wilderness and stormy sea
To find a land that should be free.

CAROLINE HAZARD. (Three verses.)

This is a narrative poem in celebration of America's history, and you have to hold a certain view of history in order to appreciate it. The implication of the first verse is that nobody worth mentioning lived in America until men came from Europe to colonize, and they are represented as treating it in the same way that the Israelites treated Canaan:

With loyal hearts and strong right hand
They made of thee the Promised land.

God is mentioned once in the genitive case, but the general tone of the whole hymn is rather too arrogant for our taste.

The tune, RAWSON, by Robert W. Morse, is another new tune. It is a broad, flowing melody with a pleasing freedom of rhythm. It sags badly in the fifth line—six B flats preceded

and followed by an A; but it suits the rather swashbuckling mood of the words.

10 God of our History
Our fathers worshipped Thee
With one accord.
They were from many lands,
Of many creeds and clans,
But Thee with lifted hands
They all adored.

M. WILLARD LAMPE. (Four verses.)

When the reader has recovered from the abominable rhyme in the fifth line he finds in this a tolerable poem. The metre is against it, but it was clearly written with the tune of the National Anthem in mind. We would rather sing it to the tune DORT by Lowell Mason, which is provided as an alternative. We have been rather starved of Scripture so far, so it is pleasing to hear the voice of the prophet Micah, in the last verse:

God of our destiny,
Be this old litany
Our staff and rod:
"Do justly" while we may,
"Love mercy" day by day,
"Walk humbly" all the way
With Thee, our God.

But there is a slight ambiguity in the second line, especially as the text prints a comma after the word "litany," suggesting that God is to *be* the prayer. And there is a case for the contention that it is more valuable to "do justly" when it seems impossible than to do it "while you may." The hymn as a whole is not free from bathos, and is not one of the best in the book.

12 God of the Spirit-wind whose rushing quickened
Men of all nations to faith in Thy word,
Waken our courage as theirs was awakened,
Breathe out Thy spirit on us, O Lord.

EARL MARLATT. (Four verses.)

Probably this was composed for the tune RUSSIA, which is given as an alternative; in that case the absence of a caesura in the first line is a pity. The poem has some good lines, but is unequal, and verse 3 lets the rest down rather badly. This line:

Fashion one vision more golden than others.

is not good hymn-writing. Verse 2 is picturesque in metaphor—"Fusing our wills. . . . Steeling our hearts. . . . Temper our souls." It is bold but slightly halting. This is, of course, another very difficult metre to "bring off."

The new tune to the hymn is THORN HILL by Robert Pugh. It is virtually in 11.10.11.10, and has reminiscences of Barnby's LONGWOOD in line 4 and Dykes' STRENGTH AND STAY in line 3.

It is, however, a stronger tune than either of those, and we have no quarrel with it.

14 Long ago a prophet sang
Of a nation that should be
Servant unto God and man,
And should set the nations free.
God our Father, by Thy grace
May our country fill that place.

WILLIAM P. MERRILL, *author of* "Rise up, O men of God."
(Four verses.)

Here at last is a hymn that really grows out of Scripture. The whole hymn employs the thought and the language of the "Servant Songs." This is perhaps the most appealing of all the hymns in this book. The first four lines of each verse are expository, and the last couplet turns to prayer. The third verse is excellent:

Patience will that servant need
Not to weary or relax,
Not to break the bruised reed,
Not to quench the smoking flax:
Grant us, Lord, in this dear land
Grace to know and understand.

We are really grateful for this.

A new tune, PROPHET, by Austin C. Lovelace, is provided. Its rhythm is interesting, but its melody can, without injustice, be called commonplace. Here again (cf. No. 5) is a modulation to the flattened mediant at the fifth line, an effect which can be too easily overdone. The alternative tune is Hopkins's ST ATHANASIUS, which is a pure waste of paper.

16 Rise up, O world, the light is on the hill:
Face valiantly the work that lies ahead.
Thine is the task to do the Master's will:
To this great day His mighty hand has led.
God's bugles blow, the dawn of light is here.
Stand on thy feet and put away thy fear!

WILLIAM L. STIDGER. (Four verses.)

As it began, so the book ends with a hymn on the massive scale, with great rambling lines and a general air of Albert-Hall spaciousness. We are afraid that the persistent "O world" in the same place in each verse spoils it for us: "O world" is not a euphonious combination when thrice repeated. Nor, of course, should a hymn be addressed to the world. God is mentioned obliquely, but not addressed nor placed in the centre of the picture. Regarded as a national song it has its points, but it is difficult to handle this metre well enough to avoid the impression of rambling. It can be done—"Christians, awake," "Eternal ruler of the ceaseless round," and Dugmore's "Almighty Father, unoriginate" are examples of good technique in it. But this just fails to be satisfying because it lacks their directness of language and clarity of thought. The sense is liable to overflow from one couplet to the next with an exhausting effect, and couplets

like this do not give the impression of crispness that is so essential when the stanzas are as long as these:

Have hope, O world, 'tis thine to seek and find
The everlasting secret of the skies.

A new tune is given, FOWKES, by Frank K. Owen. It fits the words well, and proceeds on its spacious way with just the needed touch of arrogance that a slight deviation from strict quadruple rhythm always gives so effectively. It has a good climax in the last line, and for its purpose could scarcely be improved upon. Having recently conducted a search for tunes old and new in this metre we recognize the achievement of anyone who can set it to music effectively. The other tune given is FINLANDIA, a tune about which feeling runs so high, both in favour and against, that we forbear to make further comment.

This book, then, is an admirable achievement of which America may well be proud. We have thought it worth while to subject it to detailed criticism because we regard it as a really important event. To sum up, it must be said that the book is printed primarily for use in America, not in England, and that the foregoing criticisms are made by an Englishman. The hymns really fill a need, and one or two can be regarded as contributions to the hymnody of the world Church. We tend to make the same estimate of the book that we made of the 1943 Hymnal in *Bulletin* No. 34: the contribution represented by the hymns is slightly greater than that represented by the music. But—if this is what America is writing at present we salute our Christian brethren there with great respect and gratitude.

"ENGLISH HYMNS AND HYMN-WRITERS"

By ADAM FOX

THIS book was briefly noted in our last issue, and a warning was there given against regarding it as an authoritative work. In fairness to the author it is necessary to justify that warning. The chief blemishes are in that part of the book which deals with the Scottish Psalters, and have been pointed out by Dr Patrick. On page 14 the impression is given that Scotsmen are still singing Sternhold and Hopkins, and no mention is made of the 1650 Psalter, whose tercentenary will shortly be suitably celebrated in Scotland. It is also misleading to imply, as the author does, that the Genevan Psalter supplied Sternhold and Hopkins with "many of the later Psalms": Kethe's Genevan Psalter of 1561 borrowed freely from, and indeed founded itself on, Sternhold and Hopkins. These errors are a pity; without them the book would have been as useful as it is ornamental.

H. F. LYTE

The centenary of the composition of "Abide with me" and of the death of Henry Francis Lyte has been well and widely celebrated during the closing months of 1947. Among other activities may be recorded a brief programme devoted to his hymns by the B.B.C. on 20th November, and an evening service and a "Sunday Half Hour" on Sunday 23rd November. An exhibition organized by Mr Maxwell-Lyte in London has attracted great interest and remained open from 7th November to 6th December. The Rev. H. J. Garland has given, in several places, a lecture illustrated by lantern slides, and intimates that he is prepared to repeat it during the New Year for the benefit of any who would so desire, and are able to provide a lantern and expenses. (The Rev. H. J. Garland, Millom, Cumberland is the address with which we are furnished). No more fitting crown to the celebrations could have been desired by the hymn-writer or his friends than that the hymn "Praise, my soul" should have been sung at the Royal wedding.

CORRESPONDENCE

A REQUEST

A Note Book of The School Hymn Book of the Methodist Church is being compiled. The author will be most grateful to receive any particulars with regard to the following hymn-writers :

P. Armitage ; A. M. Barry ; A. Bradshaw ; M. C. Brown ; H. Chesterman ; M. Cropper ; F. W. Danielson ; R. Davis ; F. B. Earle ; N. D. Ellsworth ; M. T. Frere ; E. W. Haigh ; J. Heys ; S. W. Meyer ; L. M. Ogelvie ; V. Sage ; I. F. Seydon ; G. Star ; D. H. Stone ; N. Talbot ; R. J. Weston ; F. M. White.

Kindly address : Rev. W. S. Kelynack, M.A., c/o The Epworth Press, 25-35 City Road, London, E.C.1.

SUMMER CONFERENCE

A Conference of the Society will be held at Mansfield College, Oxford, from Monday 12th July, to Thursday 15th July, at which one of our chief duties will be the celebration of the bicentenary of the death of Isaac Watts. Members who wish to be present are asked to communicate with the Editor as soon as possible. Accommodation in Mansfield is strictly limited, and if a large number of applications appear it will be necessary to secure other accommodation for sleeping. This may be impossible if applications are left too late. Please, therefore, be prompt. Full details of the programme will appear in the next *Bulletin*.