

# THE PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

VOLUME X.

APRIL, 1912.

NUMBER 2.

## THE LITURGICAL USE OF ENGLISH HYMNS.\*

### I.

#### THE DENOMINATIONAL DIVISIONS OF CHURCH SONG AT THE RESTORATION.

We have considered the development of the English Hymn from the metrical Psalm. As the metrical Psalm had been originally cast into the mould of the congregational Hymn, the change was in the subject matter rather than in the form. This change we have followed through its several phases, from a close translation of canonical Scripture, to a freer paraphrase first of Psalms then of other Scriptural songs, and up to the point where the purpose of turning Scriptural materials into metre met the impulse to give lyrical form to devotional poetry, and coincided in the production of Hymns, freely composed and yet more or less based upon Scripture.

The movement toward hymns was always a liturgical one. It had for its motive the enrichment of English worship rather than of English literature. The same thing was true of the Hymn movement in the period following the Restoration. But what gave it special significance was the weakened hold of the old Psalmody upon the people, the number of men who concerned themselves with the new movement, and the acceptable character of the new hymns themselves. Under such conditions hymn singing

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\* Being the second of the lectures upon "The Hymnody of the English-speaking Churches", delivered on the L. P. Stone Foundation at Princeton Theological Seminary, in February, 1910.

began to be practicable, and there followed almost at once a series of experiments in that direction, out of which has developed the now general practice of singing hymns in English-speaking Churches.

We have now, therefore, to trace these early efforts to introduce the new hymns into public worship. They lie within the same period as the tentative hymn writing with which they were closely related; beginning soon after the Restoration of 1660, and culminating with the publication in 1707 of Watts' *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, which marked an epoch in the use of hymns as well as in their composition.

During the whole of this period we may exclude Scotland from consideration; for such movement toward hymns as appeared there during these years did not get beyond the "Scripture Songs" stage, and even so far was quite ineffective.

Turning to England, it is to find the ecclesiastical situation such as makes impracticable anything like a concerted movement to introduce hymns into worship. At the Restoration the Church of England regains its established position and reinstates the Prayer Book services. The various communities already formed outside the church, principally Independents, Baptists and Friends, refuse to conform to these services, and become "dissenters". The Presbyterian elements which had maintained Puritan ideals of worship within the Church are by the ejection of their clergy in 1662 forced to take up a position alongside the dissenters. This whole body of dissent, beyond agreeing in disuse of the Prayer Book, fails to find a common basis for worship; and each of the new sects proceeds to deal with questions of worship in its own way. The breach in the uniformity of English worship thus becomes permanent. The Conventicle Act of 1664 does nothing to heal the breach, and very little in the way of suppressing the novel types of worship.

As with worship in general in the Restoration period, so

with Congregational Song in particular. It ceases to be a common stream, but divides into denominational branches. Along these branches severally we have to look for the introduction of hymns into public worship.

## II.

### THE RE-ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

In resuming the Prayer Book services and the old Psalmody at the Restoration, there was much needing to be rehabilitated. The dilapidations of the Commonwealth period told most severely against worship of the cathedral or choral type. The choirs had been scattered, and many of the organs destroyed. But even the reinstatement of congregational Psalmody in parish churches was effected with some difficulty. The authorities were indifferent, the people unconcerned and irreverent, and the ability to read and sing music was largely lost. John Playford tells us that "almost all the Choice Tunes are lost, and out of use in our Churches".<sup>1</sup> The practice of lining out the Psalm had come in, but even in London there were few parish clerks who could set the tune correctly:—"It having been a custom during the late wars and since to choose men into such places, more for their poverty than skill or ability, whereby this part of God's service hath been so ridiculously performed in most places that it is now brought into scorn and derision by many people."<sup>2</sup>

It was in connection with his efforts to improve these musical conditions that John Playford attempted to introduce the new hymns into parochial worship. He was a music publisher of prominence, with a shop in the Inner Temple, and since 1653 parish clerk of the Temple Church.<sup>3</sup> His *Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (1654) was already

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Psalms and Hymns*, 1671.

<sup>2</sup> *Ut supra*.

<sup>3</sup> The account of this interesting man in *The Dictionary of National Biography* needs to be corrected by that in *Grove's Dictionary of Music*; and the numerous allusions to him in the *Diary* of Mr. Pepys (who often "went to Playford's") add the human touch.

a standard when in 1671 he issued his *Psalms and Hymns in Solemn Musick of foure parts on the Common Tunes to the Psalms in Metre: used in Parish Churches. Also six Hymns for one voyce to the Organ*. This book is not a new musical setting of the authorized Psalter with its appendage of hymns, or indeed a Psalter of any sort. It is a selection of "Psalms and Hymns" mingling together for the first time on a common footing. The hymns are not segregated, but interspersed among the Psalms; each hymn following the Psalm tune to which it is set. The Psalms were chosen from various current Psalters, including the authorized *Sternhold and Hopkins*. The hymns number seventeen.<sup>4</sup> Of these, fourteen are taken from John Austin's Roman Catholic *Devotions in the ancient way of Offices*, published three years earlier. The remaining three seem to have been written or acquired for this book, and deserve mention in connection with early hymn writing. One in C.M. (to "Canterbury Tune") begins "O Lord my Saviour and support": one in the metre of the 148th Psalm begins "Praise to our God proclaim"; and both are anonymous. The third, entitled "A Hymn for Good Friday", begins "See, sinful soul, thy Saviour's suffering see", and is signed "W. Stroud, D.D."

None of these hymns was introduced into church use by means of Playford's book, which was not kindly received. He attributed its failure to its folio size and its not containing all the Psalms in their order, which "made it not so useful to carry to Church".<sup>5</sup> To which considerations must be added the fact that the tunes, partly from Ravenscroft and partly new, were arranged for male voices, and were beyond the reach of the skill of the period. Apart from such inconveniences of detail, Playford's general proposal of substituting a selection of "Psalms and Hymns" for the accepted system of Psalmody was too precipitate.

Having thus made his first venture with a musician's in-

<sup>4</sup>The six "Divine Songs for One Voyce" at the end of the book may be excluded as not being hymns in the usual sense of the word.

<sup>5</sup>Preface of 1677.

dependence and failed, Playford turned a publisher's eye toward the actual market. He made up his mind that what was practicable was an edition of the *Old Version* in portable size to take the place of Ravenscroft's, with some infelicities of the ancient text corrected, and with the tunes set in plain counterpoint for mixed voices. In 1677 he published: *The whole Book of Psalms: with the usual Hymns and Spiritual Songs; together with all the ancient and proper Tunes sung in Churches, with some of later use. Compos'd in three parts, cantus, medius, & bassus: in a more plain and useful method than hath been formerly published.* By John Playford.

The phrase "with the usual Hymns" creates the impression that in profiting by his experience of 1671 Playford gave over his attempt to introduce new hymns, and was now simply reprinting the hymns that had always been appended to the *Old Version*. He did, in fact, drop all but one of the hymns offered in 1671; and we may infer that they had not proved acceptable. But in his preface he still maintains the parity of Psalms and hymns, and cites the precedents of "The usual Hymns" and of Barton's *Two Centuries of Select Hymns*. In the body of his book he preserves the form of the original appendages of hymns, one before and one following the Psalms, but he deals very freely with the contents. In the group before the Psalms he retains the *Veni Creator, Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* of the *Old Version*, adds Cosin's *Veni Creator*, and provides new metrical versions of the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Commandments. The group following the Psalms, entitled "The Rest of the Solemn Hymns", begins with the *Benedicite*, followed by four of the *Old Version* hymns (the Humble Suit, the Lamentation, "O Lord in Thee", and the Prayer after the Commandments). Then follow:

*Hymn after Communion*, "All glory be to God on high" (a version of *Gloria in Excelsis*).

*Hymn for Sunday*, "Behold we come dear Lord to thee" (by John Austin).

*Morning Hymn*, "Now that the Day-star doth arise" (Cosin's version of *Jam lucis orto sidere*).

*Hymn on Divine Use of Musick*, "We sing to thee whos wisdom form'd (it had appeared in Dr. Natl. Ingelo's *Bentivoglio and Urania*, London, 1660).

Remembering that Playford was adapting himself to current taste, both his freedom in dealing with the old hymns of the Psalter and his restraint in introducing new hymns show how slight a hold hymns of any sort had upon the people. The actual influence of Playford's book was by way of prolonging the period of Psalm singing. It became the standard setting of the *Old Version*. During the rest of the XVIIth and for much of the XVIIIth century it was the dependence of these who clung to the old ways, reaching its twentieth edition in 1757. During this long period Playford's appendages of hymns kept their place in his Psalter, and his Psalter was carried to church by great numbers of people. But it cannot be affirmed that they made much more use of the new hymns than their fathers had made of the hymns originally printed in the Psalters. An addiction to the continued use of the *Old Version* became, in fact, the particular form in which indifference or opposition to hymns expressed itself.

But at the opening of the XVIIIth century two books appeared that aimed at the introduction of hymns into parochial worship; in the one case as supplementing the use of the *Old Version*, in the other that of the *New*. The more ambitious of these two books was the private venture of Henry Playford, who had succeeded to the business of his father, John Playford, and was ambitious to carry forward his father's work. He published in 1701 *The Divine Companion; or, David's Harp New Tun'd. Being a choice Collection of new and easy Psalms, Hymns, and Anthems. The words of the Psalms being collected from the newest versions. Compos'd by the best Masters and fitted for the use of those, who already understand Mr. John Playford's Psalms in Three Parts. To be used in churches or private families, for their greater advancement of Divine Music.*

This book was designed as a supplement to the *Old Version* used in the churches, with a view to its being bound up with John Playford's musical edition first published in 1677. Its plan and purpose, however, were taken from the earlier Playford book of 1671. It opened with six Psalm versions set to tunes by Dr. Blow. These were followed by twelve hymns set by various composers, to which in later editions more hymns were added. At the end was a group of anthems. In the hymns John Austin predominates, as he did in 1671; but Crashaw, Herbert and Drummond are also represented.

The *Divine Companion* had a temporary success; that is to say, its reprinting was several times called for. This success is to be attributed mainly to its tunes rather than to the richness of its hymnody, but the words of the hymns set to the new tunes cannot have been altogether overlooked. To what extent or in what quarters they may have been introduced into parochial worship does not appear. Such use was readily accomplished in parishes where lining was practised. Not one of them played any part in the future hymnody of the Church of England. It may be, on the other hand, that Playford's book exercised a certain influence in keeping the idea of hymn singing before the mind of the Church of England.

The other of the books referred to as appearing at the opening of the XVIIIth century was much more modest in form, but it had a more substantial backing, and was to prove much more influential. It was directly connected with the current movement to improve Psalmody represented by the *New Version* of Tate and Brady published in 1696.<sup>6</sup> Even the party of progress in Psalmody was no doubt more immediately concerned to get a more literary version of the Psalms than to introduce hymns. The *New Version* first appeared without music and without even "the usual hymns", but in all probability a provision of suitable tunes and a small appendage of hymns was a part of the

\* See the January number of this *Review*, pp. 65 ff.

original scheme. At the end of the second edition of 1698 there is an announcement of "A Supplement to the New Version", to contain "The Usual Hymns", "Select Psalms done in particular Measures", with "A Collection of the most usual Church-Tunes". It contains also a promise of "Additional Hymns for the Holy Sacrament, Festivals, &c."

The *Supplement to the New Version of Psalms* by Dr. Brady and Mr. Tate appeared in 1700 (London, printed by J. Heptinstall), in sheets with a view to binding up with the *New Version*. In respect of hymns, the standpoint of the *Supplement* differs little from that of Playford's *Whole Book*. It has sixteen hymns in all. Ten are simply fresh paraphrases (in the fluent style of the *New Version* itself) of "the usual hymns". The "additional hymns" promised in the advertisement are six:

1. *Song of the Angels at the Nativity*. "While Shepherds watch'd their Flocks by Night."
2. *For Easter-Day [First Hymn]*. "Since Christ, our Passover, is slain."
3. [*Second Hymn*]. "Christ from the Dead is rais'd, and made."  
*Three Hymns for Holy Communion*.
4. Hymn I. "Thou God, all Glory, Honour, Pow'r."
5. Hymn II. "All ye, who faithful Servants are."
6. Hymn III. *The Thanksgiving in the Church Communion-Service*. "To God be Glory, Peace on Earth."

These also are paraphrases, five of Scriptural passages, one of the *Gloria in Excelsis*; and the Scripture texts are noted here as carefully as by William Barton himself. This little group of hymns, marking no advance in principle over Playford's, was yet of much more significance in the history of the Hymn; owing to its association with the *New Version* which looked toward the future rather than with the *Old Version* which was a survival from the past. These hymns were thus sown on comparatively good ground, and if they did not spring up immediately and if they did not multiply, they, at all events, were not trodden under the feet of the Psalm singers.

The *Supplement to the New Version* was authorized for

use in churches by the Queen and Council on July 30, 1703. It became a very popular little book, often reprinted, but not a constituent part of the Psalter, as the appendages of the *Old Version* had been. It is the exception rather than the rule to find the *Supplement* even bound in with the XVIIIth century copies of *Tate & Brady*, which have survived in great numbers. It follows that the hymns of the *Supplement* could not have been sung as freely as the Psalms in churches using *Tate & Brady*, unless they were lined out. But they evoked a limited interest, which it was attempted to quicken by adding three hymns to the sixth edition of 1708.<sup>7</sup>

This group of hymns in the *Supplement* marks the limit of anything in the nature of an authorized provision for hymn singing in the Church of England during the period under review. It was sufficient to establish the principle that hymns were allowable as supplementary to the Psalms. The actual practice of parochial hymn singing which it represents must seem small, when we remember that *Tate and Brady* was only then making headway into London churches, and for long afterward was hardly known beyond the bounds of that diocese. These hymns served for a beginning in a time of apathy and musical decadence, and were destined under happier conditions to be taken up and enlarged in number, and even to be embodied within the sacred covers of the Prayer Book itself as a recognized feature of Church of England worship.

The *Supplement* does not, of course, stand for the whole body of hymn singing within the Church of England at the time. There was no likelihood of interference with the general or occasional use of other hymns from the various books that were, as we have seen, available; and it is altogether likely that they found such use by some of progressive spirit. And we have also to take account of the ad-

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<sup>7</sup> They were the *Benedicite* and a recast of "O Lord, turn not thy Face away", from the *Old Version* appendage, and the "Hymn on the Divine Use of Musick" from Playford's Psalter of 1677.

vances toward hymn singing on that Puritan side of the Church which had least regard for the Prayer Book system, under the leadership of such men as Barton, Baxter, and Mason, and the Puritan recurrence to the hymns appended to the *Old Version*.

### III.

#### THE EJECTED PRESBYTERIANS.

The subject-matter of Congregational Song was one of the very numerous issues raised by the Presbyterian divines in the Church of England before the Savoy Conference of 1661 called by Charles II "to advise upon and review the said Book of Common prayer".<sup>8</sup> They took the Puritan attitude of seeking for "a purer version" than the accepted *Sternhold and Hopkins*. The XIIth of their exceptions against the liturgy was as follows:

"XII. Because singing of Psalms is a considerable part of Publick Worship, we desire that the Version set forth and allowed to be sung in Churches may be mended, or that we may have leave to make use of a purer Version."

In Baxter's "Reformed Liturgy", which seems to have been presented at the same time,<sup>9</sup> there is something like a bill of particulars:

"Concerning the Psalms for Publick use. We desire that, instead of the imperfect version of the Psalms in Meeter now in use, Mr. William Barton's Version, and that perused and approved by the Church of Scotland there in use (being the best that we have seen) may be received and corrected by some skilful men, and both allowed (for grateful variety) to be Printed together on several Columes or Pages, and publickly used; At least until a better than either of them shall be made."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For the King's warrant for the Conference, see *The Grand Debate between the most Reverend the Bishops, and the Presbyterian Divines, appointed by His Sacred Majesty, as Commissioners for the review and alteration of the Book of Common Prayer, &c.* London, Printed 1661, p. (iv.): more fully in E. Cardwell's *Conferences . . . connected with the revision of the Book of Common Prayer*, Oxford, 2nd ed, 1841, pp. 298 ff.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Cardwell, *op. cit.*, p. 260.

<sup>10</sup> *A Petition for Peace: with the reformation of the Liturgy. As it was presented to the Right Reverend Bishops, by the Divines appointed by His Majesties Commission to treat with them about the alteration of it.* London, printed Anno Dom. MDCLXI., p. 41.

In view of the actual status of Psalmody in the Church of England, and of the terms of the King's warrant, it is not surprising that the bishops should have answered the Presbyterian exception and desire by saying, "Singing of Psalms in metre is no part of the Liturgy, and so no part of our commission."<sup>11</sup> But the Presbyterians chose to regard this as quibbling, and replied:

"If the word *Liturgy* signifie the publick Worship, God forbid we should exclude the singing of Psalms: And sure you have no fitter way of singing than in Meeter. . . . We hope you make no question, whether singing Psalms, and Hymns were part of the Primitive Liturgy, and seeing they are set forth, and allowed to be sung in all Churches of all the people together, why should they be denied to be part of the Liturgy? We understand not the reason of this."<sup>12</sup>

In "The Grounds of Nonconformity of the Ministers who were Ejected", afterwards drawn up by Calamy, among "other things . . . by some possibly less regarded" was that in order to subscribe to the Prayer Book "They must Consent to the Mistranslation of the Psalter".<sup>13</sup>

These extracts make it abundantly plain that the Presbyterians had much zeal for Psalm singing, and that they demanded authorization for a more correct version of the Psalter. But they make it equally clear that an insistence that Congregational Song be confined to canonical Psalms or even to Scriptural songs was no part of the Presbyterian position or demand. They raised no objection to the hymns of the *Old Version* bound up with the Prayer Book, whether paraphrases or "of human composure". On the contrary the "Reformed Liturgy" drawn up by Baxter, but laid before the Savoy Conference with the general consent of the Presbyterian divines,<sup>14</sup> as a desired alternative to certain parts of the *Book of Common Prayer*,<sup>15</sup> contains this

<sup>11</sup> Cardwell, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

<sup>12</sup> *The Grand Debate*, p. 79.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Calamy, *An Abridgement of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times*, etc., 2nd ed., London, 1713, vol. i, p. 234.

<sup>14</sup> Calamy, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 158.

<sup>15</sup> The petition was that "the several particulars" of this liturgy "be inserted into the several respective places" of the Prayer Book, "and left to the Minister's choice to use the one or the other." *A Petition for Peace*, p. 22.

rubric at the end of "The Order for celebrating the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ": "Next sing some part of the Hymn in meeter, or some other fit Psalm of Praise (as the 23. 116. or 103. or 100, &c.)."<sup>16</sup> The hymn referred to is the Thanksgiving at the end of the *Old Version* ("The Lord be thanked for his gifts"); and the rubric reflects the accustomed use by these divines not only of this hymn but of others appended to the Psalter, with a special predilection for the metrical paraphrases of Prayer Book canticles.

"Those that published the Old Church-Psalms", Baxter said in the preface to his own posthumous *Paraphrase on the Psalms of David in metre, with other Hymns* (London 1692), "added many useful Hymns, that are still printed with the Psalms in Metre." And he makes clear the actual limits of the Presbyterian position by saying in explanation of the literalness of his own version of the Psalter,—“I durst not venture on the Paraphrastical great liberty of others; I durst make Hymns of my own, or explain the Apocryphal; but I feared adding to God’s Word, and making my own to pass for God’s.”

Baxter was in fact the leader at once of the Presbyterians and of the movement to introduce hymn singing into the churches. He was, as has already been said, "the only begetter" of William Barton's *Centuries of Hymns*, which began to appear in 1659, but he occupied ground far in advance of Barton's ventures. He held that hymns had been sung from the beginning; that "doubtless Paul meaneth not only David's Psalms, when he bids men sing with grace in their hearts, Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: Yea, it is past doubt, that Hymns more suitable to Gospel-times, may and ought to be now used: And if used, they must be premeditated; how else shall congregations sing them? And if premeditated, they must in some way be imposed; How else shall the Congregations all joy in the same."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>17</sup> Preface *ut supra*.

It is not likely that most, or perhaps many, of Baxter's colleagues shared to the full these advanced views of his singularly independent mind and temper: nor did his influence establish a distinctive Presbyterian usage of hymn singing. The years following the Ejectment of 1662 were years of poverty and distress, if not of actual persecution, for many of the ministers who had been driven from their parsonages and livings. The Conventicle Act and the Five Mile Act interfered with the assembling of Presbyterian congregations. The groups of people who still gathered about their ejected pastors for the simple rites of worship, so far as they ventured to sing at all, doubtless satisfied their craving for a purer version of the Psalms by employing some one of the current Psalters of the more literal type.

With the Revolution of 1688 and the Toleration Act of William and Mary in the year following, Presbyterian worship came under the sanction of the law, and in a single generation hundreds of Presbyterian meeting houses were built throughout England. They conformed to a common pattern. Internally the great canopied pulpit dominated: beneath it a desk for the precentor, or, more often, "the table pew", with the Communion Table in the centre, and around it the seats which were then or later occupied by the singers on non-sacramental occasions.<sup>18</sup> In the failure to establish any church organization, no general principle regulated the congregational song, and no book was provided for common use by the congregations. Psalm singing prevailed, and the Scottish *Psalms of David in Meeter* of 1650 seems to have been adopted pretty generally. The pastors were free to supplement the Psalms with hymns, and, in the prevalence of the practice of "lining", could accomplish it without providing books for the congregation. Among the ministers of the later or meeting house era of Presbyterianism there was much diversity of sentiment and practice in the matter of hymn singing. Matthew Henry,

<sup>18</sup> Cf. A. H. Drysdale, *History of the Presbyterians in England*, London, 1889, p. 443.

who, like Baxter, took great delight in Psalmody, both in public and private, favored hymn singing but preferred scriptural Psalms and hymns to those wholly of human composition as likely to have more of matter and less of fancy.<sup>19</sup> He prepared and printed in 1695 a little volume of *Family Hymns*, altered and enlarged in a second edition of 1702. It was designed to encourage Psalmody in the home and thus to improve the singing in church, and was introduced by him into his own services.<sup>20</sup> With the exception of *Te Deum*, the hymns are taken from Scripture, current translations being freely used. Verses out of several Psalms are gathered together to make up a hymn, in the manner of Barton, with whose standpoint Henry's book may be said to agree.

On the other hand James Pierce of Exeter, whose Arian leanings were not yet suspected, held the strictest views in the way of confining Church Song to the inspired Psalms, discontinuing even the use of the doxology. In his *Vindiciae fratrum dissentientium in Anglia*<sup>21</sup> he argued for the use of "plain tunes", and, strenuously, against the employment of instrumental music. Pierce's attitude toward hymns was exceptional rather than characteristic of the Presbyterianism of the time; and it is quite likely that any who shared in it may have sought an Old Testament Psalmody as a refuge from rising Christological perplexities.

The temper and tone of current English Presbyterianism was better represented in the persons of the Presbyterian divines of Dublin and the south of Ireland. It had indeed been carried there by the eminent Joseph Boyse, just as the Scottish type had been transplanted in the North of Ireland. By his hymn writing Boyse is entitled to a

<sup>19</sup> J. B. Williams, *Memoirs of the Rev. Matthew Henry*, London, 1828, p. 110.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>21</sup> London, 1710. In English, as *A Vindication of the Dissenters*, London, 1717. In 1786 Mr. Brand Hollis reprinted from it *A Tractate on Music* (London), for distribution in the First Church of Boston, with a view to meeting the movement to procure an organ for that church.

place among the predecessors of Dr. Watts, but in view of the lack of permanence<sup>22</sup> in his contributions to Hymnody, he is more interesting as one of the early leaders in Presbyterian hymn singing. He published in 1693 *Sacramental Hymns collected (chiefly) out of such passages of the New Testament as contain the most suitable matter of Divine Praises in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. To which is added one hymn relating to Baptism and another to the Ministry. By J. Boyse, with some by other hands.* This appeared at Dublin, and in the same year at London from the press of Thomas Parkhurst, the printer of Matthew Henry's *Family Hymns*. It contains forty-one pieces by Boyse, one by George Herbert, and two by Simon Patrick; and in the baptismal hymn immersion is the only mode recognized. In 1701 he published at Dublin *Family Hymns for morning and evening worship. With some for the Lord's Days. . . . All taken out of the Psalms of David.* To each volume is prefixed the recommendation of six Dublin ministers, a significant testimony as to local sentiment and usage.

Of Boyse's resolute Presbyterianism there can be no question. But if we take the whole body of Nonconformist meeting houses in England at the beginning of the XVIIIth century, it is by no means easy to make partition of them between Presbyterians and Independents, who showed so marked a disposition to affiliate. This uncertainty applies to the sentiments of the congregations, to the affiliations of the ministers who occupied the pulpits, even to the terms of the trust-deeds by which the meeting houses were held. And it applies, of course, to the hymn singing. Presbyterianism was not destined to establish itself in England, and its meeting houses were about to fall into the control of men of Arian theology. The congregational song of these meetings was first to come under the domination of Dr. Watts, and then to develop into a

<sup>22</sup> Two stanzas by him were included in James Martineau's *Hymns for the Christian Church and Home*, London, 1840, (No. 42).

Unitarian Hymnody. Apart from this stream of Church Song, thus diverted from its original channel, the early Presbyterian hymn singing seems to have no part or representation in the great Hymn movement of the XVIIIth century, which it is customary to trace to its source in Independency. But the actual facts seem to be that behind the early Nonconformist hymn singing there was no Independent leader before Watts so influential and so outspoken as Richard Baxter, and that the Presbyterian divines had an inadequately recognized share in laying the foundations of modern English Hymnody.

Too little notice has been taken, for instance, of the efforts of Samuel Bury, a Presbyterian leader in Suffolk. He made a careful study of all available sources of hymns, and (apparently some years before Watts first printed his hymns), published *A Collection of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, fitted for morning and evening worship in a private family*, but containing also sacramental hymns. He prefixed a long list of his sources, including among others Barton, Baxter, Boyse, Crashaw, Dorrington, Burgess, Herbert, Patrick, Mason and Shepherd, Tate and Brady, and Woodford. His work stands in the shadow of his great contemporary and looms small there; but in view of the fact that Bury's book reached a third edition in 1713 and a fourth in 1724, it could not have been without influence upon the situation.<sup>23</sup>

As pointing apparently in the same direction, mention may be made of a movement to better congregational singing in the last years of the older London Presbyterianism. Moved by the unsatisfactory conditions of public worship and especially of the neglect and unskillful performance of Psalmody in Nonconformist churches, a Society

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<sup>23</sup> The fullest notice of Bury's book is in J. Conder, *The Poet of the Sanctuary*, London, 1851, p. 35. For Bury himself, see *The Dict. of Nat. Biography*, and the references there, especially Murch's *Hist. of Presb. and Genl. Bapt. Churches in W. of England*, 1835, pp. 107 ff. The date of Bury's book is unknown to the writer. It seems to be referred to in the advt. at end of Henry's *Family Hymns*, 1702.

of gentlemen in the (then) Presbyterian Meeting at the King's Weigh House in Little Eastcheap employed a teacher of Psalmody and established a course of Friday lectures. The Psalmody Lectures were published by them in 1708 as *Practical Discourses of Singing in the worship of God: preach'd at the Friday Lecture in Eastcheap. By several Ministers.* Of the six lecturers all but one were Presbyterian ministers.<sup>24</sup>

This movement was not primarily to encourage the introduction of hymn singing, but it tended strongly that way. The opening lecturer declared: "I conceive that whatever Songs are Scriptural, are the proper Object of singing. . . . For I can by no means be of their mind, who in the public Congregations would confine us to that collection of the *Jewish Psalmody*, which is call'd the *Psalms of David*."<sup>25</sup> The fourth lecturer approves Mr. Stennett's hymns as "those excellent Composures wherewith" he "hath oblig'd the Christian Church".<sup>26</sup> The fifth lecturer commends Mr. Watts' views of a New Testament Hymnody in the Essay prefixed to the *Hymns* of 1707, which he has "seen since the composure of this Discourse".<sup>27</sup> The last lecture is a review of the part played by Psalm singing since the Reformation, and the frequent quotations from *Tate & Brady* suggest that the lecturer<sup>28</sup> was content to sing their *New Version* of the Psalter.

This interesting movement<sup>29</sup> began before the publica-

<sup>24</sup> They were Jabez Earle, William Harris, Thomas Reynolds, John Newman and Benjamin Gravener. That the sixth, Thomas Bradbury, was Independent, aided perhaps to broaden the reach of the movement. He was a singular selection. He knew nothing of music, was without poetical taste, became the great opponent of Dr. Watts' scheme for improving Psalmody, refused to allow Watts' Psalms or hymns to be sung in his presence, and used Patrick's version to the end of his life. Cf. W. Wilson, *History and Antiquities of Dissenting Churches* . . . in London, London, 1808-14, vol. iii, pp. 527, 528.

<sup>25</sup> Mr. Earle: p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Mr. Reynolds: p. 103.

<sup>27</sup> Mr. Newman: p. 154.

<sup>28</sup> Mr. Gravener.

<sup>29</sup> J. S. Curwen in his *Studies in Worship Music*, 1st Series, London, n. d., p. 88, credits it to the "Independents".

tion of Watts' *Hymns*, and was inspired by the same distress at the conditions of Nonconformist Psalmody. Originally independent of him, it came to accept his leadership. W. Lawrence, the teacher of Psalmody at the Weigh House, had made a Ms. collection of tunes for "The Gentlemen of the Society" supporting the Friday Lecture. Upon the appearance of Watts' *The Psalms of David imitated*, the collection was at once adapted to it, and published the same year as *A Collection of Tunes suited to the various metres in Mr. Watts' Imitation of the Psalms of David or Dr. Patrick's Version, fit to be bound up with either* (London, by W. Pearson for John Clark, 1719).<sup>30</sup> The Gentlemen of the Friday Lecture continued their good work for congregational singing many years. But Lawrence's book has already brought us to the period at which Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns began to dominate the worship of the old Presbyterian Meetings.

#### IV.

##### THE SEPARATISTS.

We now turn to consider the situation in those religious bodies which had already formed dissenting communities outside the walls of the Church of England, and entered upon the Restoration period with traditions already acquired. There were marked divergences in their attitude not only toward Psalm Singing but toward Congregational Praise itself as a Christian ordinance. Two of these bodies, the Arminian Baptists and the Society of Friends, on the one hand, had taken up an attitude of actual hostility toward singing in public worship. The other two, the Calvinistic Baptists and the Independents, had struggled against the spread of the same hostility within their ranks, and during the period now under review emerged from the struggle to become jointly instrumental in introducing the English Hymn into actual liturgical use.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Hymns Ancient and Modern: Historical Edition*, London, 1909, pp. lxxxv, lxxxvi.

At the left we may group together the General or Arminian Baptists and the Society of Friends, as sharing the opinion that singing by the congregation should have no place in the public worship of God.

### 1. *The General Baptists.*

To explain the origins of the great "Controversy concerning Singing", and the attitude of the General Baptists in England toward Congregational Song, we must go back to about the year 1606,<sup>31</sup> when John Smyth, pastor of a congregation of Separatists at Gainsborough, led his people in a flight to Amsterdam. Once there he found that his real sympathies were not with the principles and practices of the congregation of English exiles already on the ground, but rather with the Dutch Mennonites. He developed intense antipathy to infant baptism, and, failing to secure believers' baptism at the hands of the Mennonites, in 1608 baptized himself, thus becoming "the Se-Baptist of Church history".<sup>32</sup> He formed a separate congregation with anti-Calvinistic principles, adopting not only the theology of the Mennonites, but many of those peculiar practices of their worship that anticipated the Quaker meeting.

In setting forth *The Differences of the Churches of the Separation* (n. pl., 1608), Smyth held that the New Covenant is spiritual, proceeding out of the heart, and that reading out of a book is no part of spiritual worship, but an invention of the man of sin. "We hold that, seeing singing a Psalm is a part of spiritual worship, it is unlawful to have the book before the eye in time of singing a psalm."<sup>33</sup> These principles reduce the possibility of singing in worship to the instance of an individual feeling impelled to compose and utter a spontaneous song. And Robert Baillie

<sup>31</sup> Henry M. Dexter, *The true Story of John Smyth*, Boston, 1881, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Ed. Arber, *Story of the Pilgrim Fathers*, London, 1897, p. 137.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted from the copy in Bodleian Library by R. Barclay, *The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth*, 2nd ed., London, 1877, p. 106.

testifies that such was the practice in Smyth's congregation.<sup>34</sup>

After the formation of the denomination of General Baptists in England as the result of the labors of Smyth and his disciples, Thomas Grantham, as their mouthpiece, published his *Christianismus Primitivus* (London 1678). In this he held that the New Testament recognizes no promiscuous singing, and no singing by the rules of art, but only the utterance of Psalms and hymns sung by such as God hath fitted thereto by the help of His Spirit for the edification of the listening church. If all sing, there were none to be edified; if pleasant tunes are used, that would bring music and instruments back; if other men's words are sung, that would open the way to the similar use of forms of prayer also.

At a General Baptist Assembly in 1689 it appeared that a small minority of congregations had begun "promiscuous" singing of Psalms. The Assembly called upon them to show "what Psalms they made use of for the matter, and what rules they did settle upon for the manner". In response there was produced

"Not the metres composed by Messrs. Sternhold and Hopkins, but a book of metres composed by one Mr. Barton, and the rules produced to sing these Psalms as set down *secundum artem*; viz., as the musicians do sing according to their gamut,—*Sol, fa, la, my, ray, &c., &c.*; which appeared so strangely foreign to the evangelical worship that it was not conceived anywise safe for the churches to admit such carnal formalities; but to rest satisfied in this, till we can see something more perfect in this case, that as prayer of one in the church is the prayer of the whole, as a church, so the singing of one in the church is the singing of the whole church; and as he that prayeth in the church is to perform the service as of the ability which God giveth, even so, he that singing praises in the church ought to perform that service as of the ability received of God; that as a mournful voice becomes the duty of prayer, so a joyful voice, with gravity, becomes the duty of praising God with a song in the Church of God."<sup>35</sup>

This judgment, received with "the general approbation of the Assembly", is interesting not only as showing that

<sup>34</sup> *A Dissuasive from the errors of the Times*, London, 1645.

<sup>35</sup> J. J. Goadby, *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, London, n. d., pp. 347, 348.

the great majority had not advanced a step beyond the position of Grantham in 1671, but also for the circumstances that occasioned it, as showing the movement of the time beginning to penetrate the isolation of a peculiar sect. It seems to have got no farther within General Baptist circles during the period under review. There is apparently no record of a change of practice until well toward the middle of the XVIIIth century. In 1733 the General Assembly received a complaint from Northamptonshire that some of its churches "had fallen into the way of singing the Psalms of David, or other men's composures, with tunable notes, and a mixed multitude; which way of singing appears to us wholly unwarrantable from the Word of God". But the mood or judgment of the Assembly had at length changed. It admitted that congregational singing was an innovation, practised by "some very few", yet was not a sufficient ground for excluding them. The Assembly could find no clear statement in Scripture as to the manner of singing. It would that all were of one mind, "but as the weakness of human understanding is such that things appear in different lights to different persons, such a concord is rather to be desired than expected in this world. It expressed on the whole an unwillingness to dispute the question, or to impose upon all the general opinion and practice."<sup>36</sup>

It may be inferred that the influence of Dr. Watts had begun to be felt by General Baptists, but their actual associations were closer with the later Wesleyan movement. And it was by means of the fervid influences of the Methodist Revival that General Baptist churches were to be multiplied and to become hymn singing churches.

## 2. *The Society of Friends.*

The Society of Friends took up a position that opposed singing as practised in the public worship of the time and led to the exclusion of all song from their own meetings. Whether, with Hodgkin,<sup>37</sup> we regard George Fox as an

<sup>36</sup> Goadby, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Hodgkin, *George Fox*, London, 1896, p. vi.

original thinker, or conclude with R. Barclay<sup>38</sup> that his tenets and practices were to a large extent borrowed from the Mennonites and Arminian Baptists, there can be no doubt of the wide area of opinion and practice held by them in common. There is no appreciable difference between the General Baptist and the Quaker position as regards Church Song. It is to be remembered also that Fox's movement was, like that of the General Baptists, an immediate revolt not from Laudian Episcopacy but from Puritan theology and practice. While he "was to bring people off from all the world's religions, which are vain, . . . and prayings, and singings, which stood in forms without power",<sup>39</sup> and while he held up mass book and common prayer and directory to unpartitioned scorn, it was the *Directory* which immediately confronted him, and the Puritan Psalmody which constituted the "singings" audible by him.

The early Friends were not opposed to all singing in public worship. Among several references thereto in Fox's *Journal* is one of 1655 to the effect that "Tho: Holme & Eliz: Holme: att a meetinge in Underbarrow: were much exercised by y<sup>e</sup> power of y<sup>e</sup> Lorde in songes and Hymms & made melody & rejoyced: & y<sup>e</sup> life was raised thereby & refreshed in many: in y<sup>e</sup> meetinge."<sup>40</sup> Three years later Fox wrote: "Those who are moved to sing with understanding, making melody to the Lord in their hearts we own; *if it be in meeter*, we own it."<sup>41</sup> By an official pronouncement of the Yearly Meeting of 1675 "Serious sighing, sencible groaning and reverent singing" are recognized as divers operations of the Spirit and power of God,

<sup>38</sup> *Op. cit.*, chap. v.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Hodgkin's *George Fox*, p. 35.

<sup>40</sup> *The Journal of George Fox, ed. from the MSS. by Norman Penney*, Cambridge, at the University Press, 1911, vol. ii, p. 326. All the references to singing in worship seem to have been left unprinted until this edition appeared (see vol. i. p. 442); a fact not without suggestiveness.

<sup>41</sup> G. Fox and Huggerthorne, *Truth's Defence against the refined subtilty of the Serpent*, 1658, p. 21.

and not to be quenched or discouraged, unless immoderate.<sup>42</sup> This evidently refers to the utterance of an individual, under the direct motion of the Spirit. As formulated by Barclay in his *Apology*,<sup>43</sup> (11th proposition, § 26) the singing of Psalms is a true part of God's worship, but the formal customary way of singing in the congregation has no Scriptural nor even Christian ground. To put expressions of the religious experiences of blessed David into the mouths of the wicked and profane is to make them utter great and horrid lies in the sight of God. Acceptable singing must proceed from the Spirit indwelling in the heart. Artificial music, whether of organs or the voice, has no New Testament warrant.

The singing thus recognized has been compared to that of the singing evangelist introduced in the Moody and Sankey campaigns,<sup>44</sup> but seems more akin to the inspirational utterances of the early Christian assemblies. Such as it was, it was strongly opposed by some from the first,<sup>45</sup> and soon died out. "Conjoint" singing of Psalms or hymns taken from a book or the lips of a precentor, was never at any time tolerated in the Friends' meetings. It ranged in Fox's mind with images and crosses, prescribed prayers and sprinkling of infants, as one of the vain traditions and worldly ceremonials from which it was his peculiar mission to deliver men. So far as the actual practice of the meetings is concerned, the result would have been the same in any case, as the repudiation of the musical art by the early Friends must soon have made congregational song quite impracticable.

With this attitude of opposition to the established Psalmody, the Friends, of course, have had no part in its transition to our modern hymn singing. Members of that body have not hesitated to contribute hymns to the common stock, but only in the last half century or so has a movement be-

<sup>42</sup> See R. Barclay, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

<sup>43</sup> "Printed in the year 1678" (n. p.); pp. 288, 289.

<sup>44</sup> R. Barclay, pp. 461, 462.

<sup>45</sup> R. Barclay, p. 462; Fox's *Journal*, vol. 1. p. 442.

gun in England and America to introduce general hymn singing (even the hymnal with musical notes) into the Quaker meeting.

### 3. *The Particular Baptists.*

Among the Particular (or Calvinistic) Baptists there was, to say the least, nothing like unanimity in agreeing with their Arminian brethren concerning Congregational Song.

The very full records of the Broadmead Church of Bristol left by Edward Terrill are silent on this point from 1640 to 1670. But from 1671 to 1685 they show that congregational singing was statedly practised, under all the menaces of persecution.<sup>46</sup> There was, however, a second Baptist congregation in Bristol; and, when in 1675, a joint meeting was proposed, some of its members "were ready to sing Psalms with others beside the church", but a minority "Scrupled to sing in metre as [the Psalms] were translated", and asked permission to keep their hats on or to retire while this was doing.<sup>47</sup> From this and other facts we may infer that there were considerable differences of sentiment and practice among the Particular Baptists of the time.

It was in one of the congregations which had declined to sing that the use of hymns as distinct from Psalms began.<sup>48</sup> The innovator was its pastor, Benjamin Keach, a young man who had originally shared the sentiments of the General Baptists, among whom he was reared.<sup>49</sup> In 1668 he became pastor of a congregation of Particular Baptists of Southwark, which prospered under him and built a meeting house on Horsley-down.

<sup>46</sup> *The Records of the Church of Christ meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-1687*, London, 1847, pp. 159, 222, 228, 230, 232, 233, 236, 237, 238, 248, 253, 256, 291, 305, 312, 339, 421, 443, 465.

<sup>47</sup> Broadmead Records, p. 242.

<sup>48</sup> Thos. Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, London, 1838-40, vol. iv. p. 299.

<sup>49</sup> Crosby, *op. cit.*, vol. iv. p. 270.

Keach was convinced that Congregational Song was an ordinance of Christ, and undertook to realize his convictions among his own people. He first obtained their consent to sing at the close of the Lord's Supper. In the Epistle Dedicatory to his *Breach Repaired*, dated April 3, 1691, he fixes the date as "16 or 18 years" earlier, which gives from 1673 to 1675. After some six years of this practice, his church agreed to sing also on "public Thanksgiving days"; and about 1690 they agreed to sing the praises of God every Lord's day.<sup>50</sup>

The songs thus introduced were not metrical Psalms, but hymns suitable to the occasion, in manuscript and mostly or altogether composed by Keach himself.

A very small minority of Keach's congregation had opposed the movement, and this more frequent use of hymns precipitated a bitter controversy; the dissenters being led by Isaac Marlow, who in 1690 printed *A Brief Discourse concerning Singing in the Publick Worship of God in the Gospel Church*. (London, printed for the Author.) Hercules Collins in the appendix to his *Orthodox Christian*, published in 1680, had urged the duty of congregational singing, as had Keach himself in his *Tropes and Figures* (1682) and *Treatise on Baptism* (1689). John Bunyan also in his *Solomon's Temple Spiritualized* (1688), speaks of it as a divine institution in the public worship of the Church, to whose members it should be confined. At the First General Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1689 Keach challenged that body to debate the matter. The debate seems to have been entered upon but not concluded, the Assembly thinking "it not convenient to spend much time that way".<sup>51</sup>

The controversy thus opened continued for several years. Keach responded to Marlow in his *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship or, Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ*

<sup>50</sup> p. viii.

<sup>51</sup> Goadby, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

(London 1691), a treatise of 192 pages with an appendix against Marlow covering 50 more. Marlow replied in *The Truth soberly defended* (1692); and other writers on both sides entered the fray. The points actually at issue were afterwards<sup>52</sup> stated by Marlow as three: (1) whether the only vocal singing in the Apostolic Church was not the exercise of an extraordinary gift of the Spirit. (2) Whether the use of a set form of words in artificial rhymes is allowable. (3) Whether the minister sang alone, or a promiscuous assembly together, sanctified and profane, men and women (even though the latter were enjoined to keep silence in the churches).

By 1692 the controversy had become so heated and abusive that the General Assembly took it in hand, and appointed a committee of seven to examine the pamphlets. Upon their report the Assembly rebuked the pamphleteers, and urged the people neither "to buy, sell, give or disperse" certain pamphlets, including Marlow's *Truth soberly defended*.

Crosby's statement that "a stop was thus put to the troubles that threatened the baptized churches upon this controversy"<sup>53</sup> is clearly unjustified. Marlow and his followers set up an independent congregation without singing; and in 1696 he published his *Controversie of Singing brought to an end*, and which in fact served only to renew it. The General Assembly had decided nothing except that the peace should be kept, but in omitting to decide against singing they left the churches free. And Crosby is no doubt right in saying that "many of them from that time sung the praises of God in their public assemblies who had not used that practice before".<sup>54</sup>

The deeper issues raised in this "controversy concerning singing" tended to relegate the question between Psalms and hymns to a position of inferior interest and importance.

<sup>52</sup> In his *Controversie brought to an end*, 1695.

<sup>53</sup> *History of the Baptists*, vol. iii. p. 270. Cf. Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, London, 1811-1814, vol. ii. pp. 374, 375.

<sup>54</sup> Crosby, vol. iii. p. 271.

Many Baptist congregations introducing singing confined themselves to Psalms without question. It was so generally at Broadmead, but the records show the singing of a hymn as early as 1678, written and handed up by Edward Terrill.<sup>55</sup> A late comer into the controversy, the famous John Gill, in his *Discourse on Singing of Psalms*, 1734 (2nd Ed. 1751), denies not that hymns may be useful, but care must be taken to conform them to Scripture and the analogy of faith; and on the whole he judges them "in a good measure, unnecessary".<sup>56</sup>

But the foundations of hymn singing in Particular Baptist Churches had been permanently laid by Keach, and a beginning of Baptist Hymnody made.

Keach printed some of his hymns as early as 1676 in his *War with the powers of darkness* (4th Ed.), and three hundred of them as *Spiritual Melody* in 1691. The *Sacramental Hymns* which Joseph Boyse printed at Dublin in 1693 has sometimes been regarded as the first Baptist hymn book. But the immersionist type of the baptismal hymn contained in that book will not serve to detach Boyse from his dearly loved and heroically defended Presbytery.

The Lord's Supper furnished a natural occasion for the introduction of evangelical hymns. And Joseph Stennett, who in 1690 became pastor of a Seventh-Day Baptist Church in Devonshire Square, London, began to use these sacramental hymns of his own composition. They circulated without, through Ms. copies made "by some Persons who heard them dictated ["lined"] in Publick".<sup>57</sup> Other congregations expressed a desire to use the hymns, and in 1697 Stennett published them as *Hymns in commemoration of the Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, compos'd for the celebration of his Holy Supper*. They reached a second edition in 1705, and a third in 1709. He published also in 1712 a tractate of twelve *Hymns compos'd for the celebration of the Holy Ordinance of Baptism*, of

<sup>55</sup> *Records*, pp. 389, 390.

<sup>56</sup> 2nd ed., p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> "Advertisement" in the *Hymns . . . for the . . . Holy Supper*.

which there was a second edition in 1722. Stennett had been in contact with the "controversy concerning singing", and as a preface to his earlier book printed a justification of Congregational Singing from the hand of one who had been trained in opposition to it, but had changed his views. Stennett's hymns were admired and used beyond the bounds of the Baptist denomination; some indeed have continued in use to our own day.<sup>58</sup> How they affected the Eastcheap Lecturer has already appeared. It is of more moment that they attracted the attention of young Isaac Watts, under whose influence Baptist Hymnody was about to pass. His appropriation of several of Stennett's lines into his own work entitles Stennett to be regarded as one of the models from whom Watts worked out his own conception of the English Hymn.

#### 4. *The Independents.*

There is no reason to doubt that the early Independents as a class were in substantial accord with the general Puritan position as to the singing of Psalms. Such certainly was the case with the church of the exiled Separatists at Amsterdam. When John Smyth of Gainsborough developed there his peculiar views of spiritual worship, they found little sympathy. Ainsworth in his *Defence of the Holy Scriptures, Worship and Ministerie used in the Christian churches separated from Antichrist against the challenges, cavils and contradiction of Mr. Smyth*, in 1609, professes himself unable to understand why Smyth should not use Psalm-singing in the services of his church, and he speaks for the whole body of the earlier exiles in saying, we "do content ourselves with joint harmonious singing of the Psalms of Holy Scripture, to the instruction and comforts of our hearts, and praise of our God".<sup>59</sup> In 1612 Ainsworth prepared a complete metrical Psalter for the use

<sup>58</sup> That most widely familiar, "Another six days' work is done," appeared in neither of the above publications.

<sup>59</sup> *Defence*, quoted in B. Hanbury, *Hist. Memorials relating to the Independents*, London, 1839, vol. i. p. 181.

of the exiles, accompanying it with tunes and also with a prose rendering for comparison and with annotations for critical study. Some of these versions in Ms. may have been already in use; the printed Psalter was used both in the Amsterdam church and in Robinson's at Leyden, and was by the Pilgrim Fathers out of the Leyden congregation taken to New England.

It cannot, however, be said that when Smyth and his followers formed themselves into a Baptist congregation, they left behind them no elements of controversy as to the propriety of congregational Psalm-singing. The extreme spirit of individualism developed, and the Puritan ingenuity in raising "cases of conscience" led to much difference of opinion among the Independents on this as on other questions. The hesitation of the Westminster Assembly in dealing with the subject was doubtless with a view to including the largest possible Independent support. The prevalent opinion among them perhaps asked no more than that the subject be left free, especially as regards the choice of a specific version. But there were troublesome minorities that objected to congregational singing *per se*, or like that represented by Mr. Nye,<sup>60</sup> who took Barrowe's earlier position of protest against translating the Psalms into English metre,<sup>61</sup> though it is not clear how they proposed to make the singing of a prose version practicable. Some of these controversialists were especially active at the time. John Cotton essayed to cover the whole ground of controversy in his *Singing of Psalms a Gospel-Ordinance*, printed at London in 1647, and again in 1650. No doubt he includes Old England and New, Baptist and Independent, describing his view of the general situation, in his opening sentence: "To prevent the godly-minded from making melody to the Lord in Singing his Praises with one accord, . . . Satan hath mightily bestirred himself to breed a discord in the hearts of some by filling their heads with foure heads of

<sup>60</sup> *Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, Edinburgh, 1841, 1842, vol. ii. p. 121.

<sup>61</sup> See Hanbury, *Memorials*, vol. i. p. 61.

scruples about the Duty." These scruples related to singing with the voice as against singing in the heart; as to who may properly be allowed to join in it in public worship (women, carnal men, &c.); as to the subject matter of praise; and as to metrical versions and invented tunes. Cotton's defence adds nothing, and was not intended to add anything, to the general doctrine of Psalmody held by the Reformed Churches, which it essays to vindicate on the usual Scriptural grounds.

The "controversy concerning singing" had spent its force before the period of the Restoration, and seems to have ended in a general adoption of Psalm singing in Independent congregations. Several churches are on record in the preceding years as resolving to maintain or take up the "Singing of Psalms".<sup>62</sup> And in June, 1663, Dr. Goodwin and Mr. Nye, as well as Mr. Caryl, in their interview with Charles II, were able to report that "we have in our churches all parts of worship, as preaching, praying, reading, and Singing of Psalms, and the Sacraments".<sup>63</sup> None the less the controversy had produced the familiar effect of stripping from the controverted practice its earlier delight. A conviction of duty is, after all, an inadequate basis for song.

And then, too, the Independents felt the full stress of the persecutions that followed the Act of Uniformity. The Conventicle Act bore hardly upon established congregations with well known places of meeting, to whom the houses of great Puritan families, which often provided shelter and even places for worship to the Presbyterians, were not open. During the enforcement of these Acts, their services could be held only in secluded places and at unexpected hours, with a careful guard at the door to give notice of interruption. It is obvious that under such circumstances, and with the necessity of avoiding observation by neighbors and passers by, the singing of Psalms would be the first of the "parts of worship" to suffer. Speaking of one

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Curwen, *Studies in Worship Music*, 1st Series, pp. 83, 84.

<sup>63</sup> Letter of Wm. Hooke, quoted in J. Waddington, *Congregational History, 1567-1700*, London, 1847, p. 579.

of the periods of persecution, Neale says that in the meetings "they never sung Psalms".<sup>64</sup> Equally suggestive is a record under date of April 1, 1682, of a church once meeting at St. Thomas's, Southwark: "We met at Mr. Russell's, in Ironmonger Lane, where Mr. Lambert, of Deadman's Place, Southwark, administered to us the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and we sang a Psalm in a low voice."<sup>65</sup>

These conditions of restraint ceased with the Revolution of 1688, which brought freedom of worship and a beginning of a meeting-house building era to Independents as to Presbyterians. The lengthy sermon and protracted extemporaneous prayer were the main features of worship in the Independent meeting-houses. They left little opportunity for Psalm singing, and there is no evidence that the new conditions put new heart into it. The singing was still confined to canonical Psalms. While *Sternhold and Hopkins* had been largely given up, no other version was received in common. Some who craved a "pure" version favored Barton's, and others the *Bay Psalm Book* of the New England divines. Nathaniel Homes, afterwards one of the ejected ministers, had called attention to it as early as 1644 in his *Gospel Musick*, reprinting its preface with approval. Three English editions had already appeared and more were to follow, though not necessarily for exclusively English use. Among those who turned toward a modified Psalter Patrick's version became the favorite.

The singing of hymns in Independent meeting-houses began in the last decade of the XVIIth century, introduced there as elsewhere by divines who had become restless under the limitations of an Old Testament Psalmody. With the right of each congregation to regulate its own worship and the prevalence of the practice of lining out the words, the use of hymns required merely the agreement of pastor and people. With the fraternization of Independents and Pres-

<sup>64</sup> *History of the Puritans*, part v. chap. ii.: ed. 1837, vol. iii. p. 265

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in *Worship Music*, p. 84.

byterians, and the frequent occupancy of Independent pulpits by Presbyterian divines, it would be difficult to distinguish a separate origin of hymn singing in either body. It would be still more difficult to show that the impulse came from the Independent side.

In all likelihood the *Family Hymns* of Matthew Henry, already referred to as published in 1695, mark the first step toward a change in either body, though not a long step, since the New Testament hymns were not added till the second edition of 1702. The publisher's advertisement at the end of the 1702 issue shows quite an array of hymn books available at that date, and gives a clue as to what had been and was then in use. There is Mason's *Spiritual Songs* in its seventh edition, with the *Penitential Cries* of Shepherd, in its fifth edition: the Presbyterian Boyse's *Sacramental Hymns: A Collection of Divine Hymns, upon several occasions, suited to our common tunes, for the use of devout Christians, in singing the praises of God*, published in 1694, and gathered from six authors, including Baxter and Mason: *Select Hymns, taken out of Mr. Herberts Temple: A Collection of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, fitted for morning and evening worship in a private family*: Baxter's *Poetical Fragments* in its third edition: and Barton's *Six Centuries of Select Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in its fourth edition.

This list is substantially a catalogue of the earliest hymn-books of the Independents, as also of the Presbyterians. Simon Browne, in the preface to his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, London, 1720, mentioning the books of Barton, Mason and Shepherd, adds: "Beside some collections from private hands, and an attempt to turn some of Mr. Herbert's poems into common metre, these I have mention'd were all the hymns I know to have been in common use, either in private families, or Christian-assemblies, till within a few years past."<sup>66</sup>

To these must be added Stennett's *Sacramental Hymns*,

<sup>66</sup> p. 16 of preface.

and also a volume of 168 *Hymns composed on several subjects and on divers occasions* (date unknown) by Richard Davis, the Independent minister of Rothwell, to which some hymns by others were added in a second edition in 1694. These rough hymns, possibly not known to Browne, were acceptable in Davis's Rothwell congregation and in his evangelistic work through the midland counties, and went further.<sup>67</sup> They were commended by John Gill,<sup>68</sup> and were reprinted in London as late as 1833.<sup>69</sup>

These books make it evident enough that there was a beginning of Independent hymn singing before Watts. We have indeed his own testimony that some ministers had already commenced to use "evangelical hymns".<sup>70</sup> But such use was exceptional; the books marking the tentative efforts of progressive individuals rather than the general practice. In the great body of the meeting-houses the singing of Psalms obtained exclusively, though not perhaps very jealously. And this occasioned the remark of Enoch Watts, that "a load of scandal" lay on the Independents "for their imagined aversion to poetry".<sup>71</sup>

In view of the new leaven about to be introduced into this situation, and of the fact that from among the Independents was to arise the principal agent of the effective transition from the old Psalmody to the new Hymnody, it is interesting to get as vivid a view as may be of the actual practice of Psalm Singing by the Independents at the beginning of the XVIIIth century, which constitutes the background against which the work of Dr. Watts is to be set.

<sup>67</sup> This early book of Davis was distinctively from the Independent side. He and all his works were repudiated by the Presbyterian members of the London "Meeting of Ministers" and by Presbyterians generally. Cf. R. W. Dale, *History of English Congregationalism*, London, 1907, pp. 479 ff.

<sup>68</sup> See preface to 7th edition, 1748.

<sup>69</sup> *A Brief List of Hymn Books* for sale by Charles Higham, London, 1893.

<sup>70</sup> Essay prefixed to 1st edition of his *Hymns*, 1707.

<sup>71</sup> His letter in Th. Milner, *Life of Isaac Watts*, London, 1834, p. 178.

There is no difficulty in reconstructing its salient features. The congregational leadership was in the hands of a precentor, generally of most meagre attainments. The singing was still dominated by the universal practice of lining out the Psalm. Very few tunes were used, and in rendering these all the notes were reduced to "a constant uniformity of time". Each note was dwelt upon so long as "puts the Congregation quite out of breath in singing five or six stanzas".<sup>72</sup> Musical ignorance and incapacity accompanied by indifference seems to have been very general, but the Psalmody as practised hardly related itself to music. The people carried no Psalm books to church, had neither text nor note before them, and must often have failed to catch or comprehend the line as the precentor gave it out. Instrumental music was excluded by common consent.<sup>73</sup> Many of the people took no part in the Psalmody; most of these failing through apathy, but some consciences even at that date had not come through the "controversy concerning singing", and refrained for cause.<sup>74</sup>

The apathy of the people doubtless extended to many of their leaders, who as a class were no longer of the educated type of the pastors furnished by the Ejectment. To some extent the people's apathy was even a reflection of the exclusive interest of the average Independent minister of the period in the sermon and prayer. Dr. Watts' own impressions of the Independent Psalmody as set against his ideals of the ordinance of Congregational Song are recorded as follows in the preface to his *Hymns* of 1707:

"While we sing the Praises of our God in his Church, we are employ'd in that part of Worship which of all others is the nearest a-kin to Heaven; and 'tis pity that this of all others should be perform'd the worst upon Earth. . . . To see the dull Indifference, the negligent and the thoughtless Air that sits upon the Faces of a whole Assembly while the Psalm is on their Lips, might tempt even a charitable Observer, to suspect the Fervency of inward Religion, and 'tis much to be fear'd that the Minds of most of the Worshippers

<sup>72</sup> Watts, preface to *The Psalms of David imitated*, 1719.

<sup>73</sup> *Practical Discourses of Singing*, (already cited), pp. 137, 191.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, Sermon iv.

are absent or unconcern'd. . . . But of all our Religious Solemnities *Psalmody* is the most unhappily manag'd. That very Action which should elevate us to the most delightful and divine Sensations doth not only flat our Devotion, but too often awakens our Regret, and touches all the Springs of Uneasiness within us."

*Philadelphia.*

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