

**ENGLISH HYMNOLOGY,  
REPRINTED (WITH ADDITIONS  
AND CORRECTIONS) FROM  
THE MONTHLY PACKET**

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Louis Coutier Biggs

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**LOUIS COUTIER BIGGS**

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# English Hymnology.

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MONTHLY PACKET.

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE following papers were written shortly after my publication of the 'Annotated Edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern.' Among the many kind judgments passed upon that work, more than one expressed regret that so much labour should have been exclusively given to one collection of hymns. Moreover, I became sensible of many errors and defects in my former work. These were chiefly pointed out to me by correspondents, though I must gratefully acknowledge the helpful criticism bestowed on my work by the reviewer in the *Church Choirmaster and Organist*. While most of my reviewers were content simply to praise my work, only one (so far as I know) assailing it with unmixed censure,<sup>1</sup> the *Church Choirmaster* showed me where and how I was wrong. On several points, the following pages will be found to set right such mistakes as I have detected in the 'Annotated Edition.' I much regret that I have not been able to wait for the appearance of the enlarged hymnal of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. I should also have been glad to publish with these articles a reprint of the 'Songs of Other Churches,' the series now appearing in the

<sup>1</sup> The *Athenæum*, whose reviewer must have been strangely ignorant of the subject of hymnology. Will it be credited that he supposed me to be the sole compiler of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' that he accused me of undervaluing Keble because I quoted Lord Nelson's statement that some versions altered by the author of the 'Christian Year,' which had been given in the 'Salisbury Hymn-Book,' would be found, with the original text restored, in the enlarged and revised edition? But most wonderful of all, I am charged with 'flunkeyism,' because I have mentioned the Prince Consort's love for the hymn, 'Rock of Ages,' in the note where reference is made to translations of it in German.

*Monthly Packet*, and which, I hope, will, on their completion, be presented separately.

Among recent hymn-books deserving of notice, perhaps the most interesting is the 'American Church Hymnal' now authorized by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. It is a large collection, 520 hymns; yet evident care has been used to exclude anything objectionable. Unfortunately, the arrangement of the hymns according to their subjects is not very clearly made out, nor very consistently maintained. Moreover, it is burdened with a larger proportion of the old-fashioned psalmody than would now be quite acceptable to the altered tastes of our own English congregations.

The question has recently been raised, how far it would be expedient to authorize a single hymnal for the use of the English Church. I cannot help feeling that such a step would be most injurious to the interests of the Church. In the first place, it would be impossible to satisfy all parties in the Church without extending the collection far beyond the usual limits. This would increase the expense of printing and binding, and prevent the book from being a cheap one, in spite of the enormous number of copies which would be required. Next, it is obvious that the work could not be compulsorily introduced everywhere at once without manifest injustice to those who had recently adopted other books. Some years must be allowed, as for the introduction of the New Lectionary, and when these were expired, the book would already require an appendix. Again, difficulties about copyright would arise, and would prove almost insuperable. A small compensation may suffice from a compiler whose work, after all, will probably have but little effect in diminishing



the sale of the older hymn-book. But the question is wholly altered when we have to deal with compilers whose work is to render all books that have previously appeared useless and worthless.

A compromise might possibly be made in the following manner. Such of our older hymns as could be reprinted without question as to copyright might be authorized by Convocation for use wherever they would be acceptable. Gaps might be left in the numbering of these, and it might be ordered that after a certain date no new hymnal should be introduced into any church unless its hymns, corresponding in number to the authorized hymns, were identical with them, and distinguished in type, if this were thought necessary, from the other hymns. Thus for special occasions it would be easy to select hymns which would be identical in number in the several different collections, and when additional hymns were authorized, they might fall into their places between the others. The first set of authorized hymns might be numbered by tens; the next might be 5, 15, 25, etc. Both authorized and unauthorized hymns might be increased in number without disturbance of the original book, and without the drawback of appendix or supplement. My apology for suggesting this plan must be the difficulties which would surely attend any attempt to establish an authorized hymnal in the ordinary way.

The numerous correspondents who have helped me in the compilation of this book will, I hope, accept my sincere thanks for their kind and welcome aid.

*Chickerell, Weymouth,*  
*S. Bartholomew's Day, 1872.*

*The Reprint of the "SONGS OF OTHER CHURCHES" will be published as soon as One Hundred Copies are subscribed for, at Six Shillings per Copy. Subscribers' names received by Rev. L. C. BIGGS, Chickerell, Weymouth.*

# ENGLISH HYMNOLOGY.



## I.

### *INTRODUCTORY.—MORNING AND EVENING HYMNS.*

THE general revival of Church hymns forms a most interesting feature in the great restoration which GOD is now being pleased to work in our holy English Church. We are placed in the midst of a great and still increasing spiritual movement; we are living in an age which shows itself active to renew, not merely the sculptured tracery, the external beauty, of the Church's fabric, but also the ancient graving of her doctrines, the towering harmony of her praise. And though in some details the waywardness of man may have marred the noble work, yet surely its existence and advance must be matters of deep thankfulness to us all. Nor is the luxuriant and fruitful growth of our hymnology by any means a small part of these blessings. Hymns possess a wonderful power, for evil or for good:—for evil, when they are made the vehicle of false teaching, as they were by the early heretics;<sup>1</sup>—for good, when they attune men's hearts to thankfulness and praise, and meanwhile unite them, in the bonds of peace and truth, more closely with the HEAD of the Church.

It is the purpose of the present series of articles briefly to review the best of our English hymns, glancing incidentally at anything which may help to illustrate them, assigning them, as far as possible, to their sources, and noticing where the hymns, as generally known, materially differ from the original compositions of their authors. The hymns which it is intended to consider will be chiefly those adapted to form a part of public worship, though some of them may perhaps be regarded as more suitable for private devotion. The classification

<sup>1</sup> Especially by Bardesanes the Gnostic, and later by Arius and Apollinarius. Instances nearer home are not wholly wanting.