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# MUSIC AND RELIGION

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A SURVEY

BY

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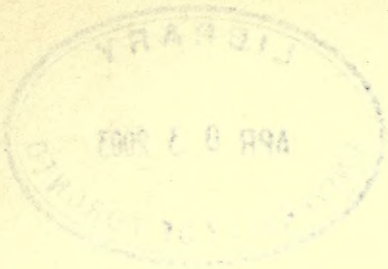

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# FOREWORD

Of the insufficiencies of this volume none could be better aware than the writer. It has been put together in scanty intervals of leisure allowed by parochial life during a time of great pressure. To attempt to satisfy the theologian and the musician with the same morsel is a task requiring no little contrivance. What to admit and what to exclude in a survey of developments embracing the whole length of human history is a sufficient problem in itself. What to explain and what to take for granted depends entirely on the type of reader who feels interested. It is too much to ask that all will be historians or musicians or philosophers. There again lies a difficulty.

The writer has endeavoured to avoid the fault of being too sketchy to be informing, or too heavy to be interesting. If he has broken any of the unities which this kind of volume demands, he can only beg the indulgence of those whose interest he has endeavoured to maintain.

For any inspiration he has to thank Dr. Eaglefield Hull, a former colleague in the region where Music and Religion play their united part. To a present colleague, Rev. Wilfrid Charlton, he is under obligation for help no less necessary if more prosaic.

# MUSIC AND RELIGION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

THE connection of Music with Religion is at once so intimate and of such long standing that it occurs to but few to consider how the connection came about, or to enquire into the causes which underlie its maintenance. To the average person the idea of Religion is indissolubly associated with Music, because Religion itself is so widely interpreted in terms of Worship. And Worship to the popular mind is so tied to musical expression that we are only too ready to admit a certain inevitableness about the situation. And there the matter lies. For to-day the popular mind does not worry itself with mysteries of the obvious and the familiar. A passion for scientific enquiry on the part of the few is balanced by a complacent attitude on the part of the many who are only too pleased to take things for granted.

A suggestive romance* written by Mr. F. M. Hueffer depicts an imaginary situation in which

* *Ladies whose Bright Eyes.*

a person of typically modern kind suddenly discovers himself translated into the early Middle Ages. At once it occurs to him what an impression he will make upon the times with his modern knowledge. But when the chance comes he finds to his supreme annoyance that he has no actual knowledge of the real character of the inventions which have simplified the conditions of modern living.

It is an amusing predicament, and it serves as an illuminating commentary upon the modern situation. As with the hero of the story, the exact connection of steam power with motion is as a closed book to the majority of those who are most dependent upon its actual working. A natural habit of indolence has been reinforced by an educational system which can hardly be said to encourage independent thought. At any rate the early inquisitiveness of youth, with its perpetual questioning, becomes almost entirely submerged. Facts as they are seem to give promise of values more immediate; reasons seem to involve an extra worry with no obvious return.

Nevertheless there is a fascination in the study of reasons and of origins which more than compensates for the mental stress involved. Moreover few subjects offer more fruitful results to the seeker than that which affords justification for the present volume. Religious origins and musical origins carry the investigator so far back

in the history of the race that he has fields of research well nigh unrivalled. Geology may take him back into regions more remote. Biology may offer an even wider scope for trained scientific method. But neither of these subjects of investigation carry with them quite the same human interest. Politics and Sociology alone can offer a real rivalry. Few however will be prepared to deny that in Religion we have a topic more absorbing even than these. Religion alone can say with confidence *nil humanum a me alienum*. Religion is attracting to-day the attention of trained investigators as perhaps never before in history. Even those whose personal interest in its more intimate suggestions is but small are finding themselves concerned. It is realised to-day ever increasingly that the world-wide phenomenon which is called religious consciousness is vital in the development of humanity. The result is that nowadays no philosophy can claim any serious attention which fails to set in the fore-front of observation so universal an aspect of self-conscious life.

But can Music enter into rivalry with such formidable competitors? It does so from its very connection with Religion. While it may be possible to study Religion apart from Music from the abstract point of view, historically no such task can be attempted. For it is not by accident that most of the great musicians of the past are

known chiefly from their religious compositions. Modern music both in form and spirit owes a greater debt than can be ever estimated to Religion. The same is the case with modern Law. Neither of them in actual origin were religious —at any rate in the sense in which we understand religions now. But at certain points in historical development they became so intimately attached to Religion that the mark of the connection can never be lost. However independent they may appear to be in modern developments—however destructive some aspects of modern Law to the teaching of Christianity, however subversive some phases of modern Music—this fact of connection, and of intimate connection, is too striking to be overlooked. The English judge who has to administer modern divorce legislation still wears the insignia of the Christian ministry; the advanced musician who sets out to overthrow the spiritual convictions of a thousand generations uses a medium fashioned for holy things.

For Music like Law owes much of its form and power to actual development within the Church itself. At the very beginning Religion had as little to do with social obligation as with song. Men learnt by pain of discovery what it was wise to do or to avoid in that sphere of human activity. But developing Religion gradually adopted and improved customary Law.

And so Morality became religious, and Religion became moral. Much modern Law in consequence is rooted in the old Canon Law of the Church, though not a little finds its origin in the terms of the Old Testament dispensation. Similarly with Music: though in absolute origin it was as independent of the religious sense and of religious practice as Law itself, nevertheless it could never have discovered its latent possibilities had not Religion embraced it, and Christianity adopted it for its own.

This volume will be an attempt to elucidate the position here taken up. The general line of enquiry will be first of all historical. We have at the outset to discover how the connection of Music with Religion is most likely to have begun. After that the main lines of development will be noticed in such a way as best to bring out the meaning of the situation as we find it to-day. A discursive account of the actual connection of Religion and Music throughout the whole world is not the object aimed at. The idea is to lead up through historical enquiry to an examination of the real functions of Music as a handmaid of Religion. But the enquiry will not be made subordinate to the final examination. The chief points in the historical development will be noticed as interesting in themselves, apart from what conclusions are to be gathered from their emergence.

Nevertheless it is hoped that the whole will have a practical bearing. However fascinating the study of the past, we should not be content till it has taught us the meaning of the present. That we can only learn from the past. Only as we realise it can we make true progress. The politician who knows nothing of the past is no safe guide in matters of state, simply because the inner significance of the present inevitably escapes him. There can be no true reform in any department of life which neglects to compare the present with the past. And that is as much as to say that there can be no true progress.

It will be urged that in the English Church of to-day Music finds a fuller opportunity than elsewhere of discharging those functions which are possible to it within the religious sphere. Nevertheless few English Churchmen are fully satisfied with the total musical situation in the Church to-day. There is considerable controversy as to the place of music in Divine worship, as well as to the type of music to be preferred. And standpoints are taken very often simply on grounds of personal preference without reference to the full bearing of the questions at issue. If Church music is to make progress churchmen must understand the nature of their heritage. Above all those who are primarily responsible for the services of the Church, in the organ loft, in the choir or at the altar should know the his-

tory and rationale of that medium which can make or mar the office which they perform.

The matter is one of no little complexity. It cannot be settled out of hand. Separate problems have arisen which demand special treatment. The Setting (for the Canticles), the Anthem, Psalmody and Hymnody all have their different histories and their different uses. Each has its own problem and its own difficulty. There is Cathedral music which some would abolish: there is parochial music which is another's despair. There is instrumental music which some deplore: there is congregational music which to others is no music at all. Can the claims of all and of each be justified? Can their place be defined, and their function be secured? No answer should be attempted till the actual verdict of history has been sought.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGINS OF RELIGION

It has been postulated that in origin Religion and Music are distinct. Nevertheless it is to the origins of Religion that we have to look if we wish to understand the full significance of that connection with Music which we are setting out to explore. And this is the more necessary from the fact that an American writer and composer of considerable reputation has hazarded the opinion that Religion itself is the child of Music. In his Critical and Historical Essays, Macdowell urges that Religion was born among mankind at the moment of discovery of the first musical instrument.

This suggestion gives an intimacy to the connection of the subjects under discussion far closer than the real facts of the case can be made to justify. True, it exalts the dignity of the musician at the expense of the prestige of the priest. It has therefore been welcomed by those who would like to see the traditional relation revolutionized. We might even suspect that some such desire lay behind the suggestion were it not that serious argument is attempted in its

favour. With this argument we must deal first of all.

Macdowell's contention leads us at once into the region of Philosophy. From that region therefore it is necessary to set out. Only in the philosophical region can the argument be rebutted. And necessity compels the opening of argument within this region. Historical information is not afforded us. We are dealing with a prehistoric situation. We are forced therefore to trust partly to inference in dealing with matters so remote—inference depending largely upon our grasp of psychological facts and probabilities, partly upon what guidance we may discover in the habits of primitive or of still existing savage types of men.

Macdowell holds that until the creation of the first musical instrument—most probably some type of drum—primeval man looked out upon the world from what he calls a purely subjective point of view. In other words, man was simply conscious: the world was part of him, and he was part of the world. He occupied a position which corresponded entirely with that of the animal creation round about him. Immediately however he found that he had created something outside ordinary nature, "an idol that spoke when it was touched," he began to feel that he was something apart from ordinary nature himself. In other words self-consciousness and the

Religious sense leaped to birth at the beat of a drum!

The idea may have been suggested by the lines of Dryden* though Dryden did not urge the priority in development of instruments of percussion.

> "When Jubal struck the chorded shell
> His listening brethren stood around,
> And wondering, on their faces fell
> To worship that celestial sound:
> Less than a God they thought there could not dwell
> Within the hollow of that shell
> That spoke so sweetly and so well."

Macdowell's argument implies that the religious sense and self-consciousness are coeval. And here he is indubitably correct. But his main thesis, however interesting, will not bear prolonged investigation. In seeking to establish his point he only succeeds in begging the question. He takes for granted that man was not self-conscious before he made his drum, and that having made a drum he made an idol of it. The second postulate is more likely than the first: but even if admitted it does not entail the first. The drum is certainly capable of a number of effects psychological as well as acoustic. But there is really no reason to suppose that humanity was drummed into habits either of religion or of reflection. It is probably quite true to say with Macdowell that wherever the savage is

* *St. Cecilia*

found beating a drum there will be found also a well-defined religion; but the inference is as unjustifiable as it is precarious to suggest that Religion in origin must therefore be connected with the chance discovery of artificial sound.

Then when and how are we to believe that man achieved self-consciousness? If we do not hold that it was other than latent in his nature, can we suggest causes more probable or more potent in the development of his potentialities?

It should be borne in mind that it is not the fashion to-day to take the Hebrew delineation of primitive man as other than the Hebrew conception of what the earliest situation was. It cannot be neglected. But on the other hand, however great our reverence for the traditions of Israel, we do not feel bound to-day to accept all the convictions of its seers in matters of cosmology, geology or history. They are no longer accepted premises. We refuse to admit, as our fathers would insist, that an Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam. We are convinced that evolutionary method has had its place in the Divine economy. We do not look to the beginning for perfection of type or for fulness of development. So it is therefore that, faced with unanswerable and converging evidence from many branches of modern science, we have regretfully abandoned the account of *Genesis* as an exact historical presentation of fact.

For the understanding of the earlier situations in human affairs we now find ourselves left to speculation and to theories of probability. Our chief material is furnished by biological enquiry which has been pursued with such enthusiasm since the time of Darwin. But this branch of knowledge has excited a suspicion that in origin we were not even so respectable as we had hoped. We seem rather in the position of pedigree searchers who come upon evidence shattering to their ambitions if they are pretentious, or which discountenances origins traditionally accepted if they are actually of the elect.

Really we know very little. Nevertheless, if the facts of human origins are not so imposing as we had expected, they are certainly less distressing than some consider they have reason to believe. Man after all has to be explained. He cannot be explained away. However close the physical filiation with the beasts that perish there is just as certainly some quality which separates humanity *toto cælo* from the rest of created things. That quality is found, as Macdowell implies, in the unique possession of self-consciousness; it is witnessed to in the unique phenomenon of Religion. On the one hand we have a spiritual attribute not attainable except by those who have obtained; on the other, a presentiment of Deity co-inherent however far back we care to trace it.

"All men yearn after deities," Homer has told us. "What people is there or what race," asks the Roman philosopher Cicero, "which has not, even without being taught, some presentiment of the existence of deity?" This is not merely an outburst of rhetoric. Modern anthropological enquiry confirms ancient conviction. As the well-known Scottish philosopher, Dr. Caird, has put it: "Man has inborn a sense of the infinite from which he cannot escape; he cannot prevent his consciousness of the finite from being disturbed by it."

There seems no reason to doubt that Religion is the response of some delicate human faculty to some world-wide suggestion. It is a response to environment; a response in which man discovers himself. Theology finds an explanation of the situation in the doctrine of Divine Immanence. God is conceived of as being above and beyond all things, and yet as upholding all things and intimately concerned in them. "In Him we live and move and have our being," as S. Paul said to his hearers at Athens, quoting the words of the Stoic Aratus. For philosophy itself, before the Christian creed was ever preached, could find no other answer to the otherwise unfathomable problem which confronted it.

This sense of Religion in which human consciousness discovers itself is reinforced in the

human breast by two main factors working through the emotional depths of personality. There is, first of all, the marvellous object lesson of nature, stirring to wonder and awe. Dr. Illingworth has rightly insisted upon the importance of the effect on human consciousness of what he calls the sacraments of sunrise and sunset. And it is clear even to-day that the sense of Religion is most strong where nature is most impressive. The hill country generally boasts more religion than the cities of the plain. And here the second factor also operates. Nature is more exacting. Side by side with the sense of wonder is the universal sense of dependence. Schleiermacher indeed traces Religion in its origin to this one cause—the oppressive sense of need—more urgent in earlier days than now, and even yet more pressing among the mountains than in the plains. It is more reasonable, however, to accept the joint operation of a double cause. As external creation suggests and human nature demands, so in the coalescence of suggestion and demand the theory and practice of Religion originates.

Have we to await the beat of a drum before the suggestion of Creation and the need of man discover themselves? Macdowell brings forward the case of primeval survivals in the Andaman Islands, in Ceylon, Borneo and Patagonia. Here are to be found savages possessing no form of

musical instrument. Here also, says Macdowell, they have no religion whatever, except the vaguest superstition.

But that qualifying clause destroys the whole position. The outward manifestation of the sense of Religion may be in the last degree superstitious. It may express itself in demon worship, in ancestor worship, in the worship of stocks and stones, or of the host of heaven. But there lies behind it all that incommunicable something which distinguishes human nature from all other natures in creation. Religious practices however vague are only the reflection of some inward conviction which man is perpetually trying to explain to himself.

To trace mankind's endeavours to interpret the religious sense in terms of mind, endeavours mirrored in religious practice, is one of the most fascinating of studies. But it lies beyond our present purpose. What we have to realise is that Religion is really an emotional response, and that it seeks an emotional outlet. This characteristic will be more marked with primitive than with modern forms. As Religion advances the Will and the Intellect begin to take a fuller part in its expression. But Religion can never be rational in the full sense of the word. It is emotional at the core if only because our human personality clusters round an emotional centre. "Feeling" is the central and essential thing in

life: "willing" and "reasoning" are subsidiary albeit highly important and essential processes.

The religious sense therefore expresses itself in a distinct emotional attitude, as it draws its strength from emotional sources. All that the will and the intellect can do is to strengthen and purify. They are not the source of fear or joy or love. These things unregulated have often led to surprising and curious manifestations in primitive times, manifestations which growing civilisation has not always held in check. The religious sense is found at times prostituted to the baser emotions, and practices appalling to the modern mind have often found place in the religious exercises of humanity. The cult of Krishna in modern India is only an indication of widespread practices in the earlier world such as Christianity had to struggle with in its earliest converts, like the prophets of Israel in that nation's past.

Religion therefore we may reasonably conclude does not originate in mere musical discovery. It is a concurrent and inevitable accompaniment of human life. Its causes are deep and far-reaching; essential and not accidental. Music is not even necessary to it. Awe, joy, aspiration, desire—all these are possible both in origin and expression apart from Music. Nevertheless the attraction of Religion to Music was

inevitable in Religion's practical manifestations. Music is so powerful a vehicle of emotional feeling, quick to generate as well as to express the deepest and most elemental passions of the heart. It will differ in type according to the emotional attitude of the worshippers; it will take its tone from the actual forms of worship springing out of that attitude. Fear, inducing propitiatory rites, will have a music of its own. Joy in life such as characterized those sections of humanity to whom nature was propitious, will find a corresponding manifestation. The music of Greek religion differs from that practised still by aboriginal tribes whose religion corresponds with the difficulty of their circumstances. Finally, in the most developed religions, such as that of Israel, and pre-eminently of Christianity, where adoration takes the foremost place as the expression of the worshippers' sense of the Divine love, Music has a character equally distinct and unmistakeable.

# CHAPTER III

## ORIGINS OF MUSIC AND ITS CONNECTION WITH RELIGION

THERE are three natural channels through which simple emotional experience declares itself—silence, motion and sound. There is the silence of tense excitement, of surprise or joy, of grief and awe. It is often involuntary; often again it is voluntary. In the latter case it is perhaps true to say that it is a more modern expedient than its companions. It is an educated medium deliberately chosen.

Motion on the other hand, like sound, bears marks of the very earliest origin. Leaping for joy, stamping with rage, running from fright, are natural and spontaneous manifestations of excitement. Gesticulation, more common with some races than with others, is only another type of the same emotional outlet. Clapping unites motion and sound. But on a higher plane than all these obviously primitive and spontaneous types of action we find the rhythmic movement of the dance. And here we have a medium with uses passing beyond the simple expression of

emotional depths to the actual suggestion of emotional possibilities.

In the life of ancient peoples the dance held a position far more central than it holds to-day. This is a fact of considerable importance to realize in view of the enquiry which we have in hand. The dance was not a mere pastime, but a thing of intrinsic value as well in war as peace. It held a high place also in religious life. In one sense of course it is impossible to separate the activities of early peoples into religious and secular. The whole of life was accepted on a religious basis. Both social custom and martial observance were endowed with religious significance. Nevertheless there were the special observances of religion proper, and among them the dance held a conspicuous place. Not only was this so with the savage and pagan: it was equally the case in early Israel. David's dance before the Ark was not an act unusual in character. It was a customary religious exercise. With music the dance took its place as a fitting medium of praise. So in Psalm 150 we read the familiar exhortation:

> "Praise Him in the cymbals and dances,
> Praise Him upon the strings and pipe."

To-day we are witnessing in certain directions a recrudescence of the use of dance forms to convey emotional suggestion as well as to express

emotional feeling. Why the dance actually lost its place within the sphere of the activities of the higher religions is not at all difficult to understand. It lent itself, to a degree impossible in the nature of things for music to lend itself, to the encouragement of those passions which higher religious forms have always denounced; although they were and still are considered of deep religious significance by certain more primitive races. The dance must have played no inconsiderable part in the identification or confusion of the emotions of sex with those of religion—a condition of things often occurring in the past and not always escaped in the present. With the inrush of many semi-converted people into the Christian Church in the 4th century a tendency is observable to re-introduce rhythmic movement into Christian worship. It was, however, sternly repressed; though there appears to have been some such ritual recrudescence in one part at least of Christendom during the Middle Ages, and the practice is not unknown in America.

We come finally to emotional expression by means of sound. As with motion this may be simple or it may be complex. Complexity of structure only came with time: like the dance, it came into being gradually as a medium of more sustained effort. That it was finally to win for itself a position of superiority would be beyond

any expectation of primitive humanity. To them without any doubt the dance was a medium of greater potentiality. Music was adopted largely as an expedient *pour mieux sauter*. Nevertheless the dance exhausted its possibilities long before music had really discovered itself. Nor does there yet seem to be any indication of a term being put to music's triumphs.

The most primitive medium of sound is found in the ejaculation or the cry. There, joy and sorrow, surprise and anger, hatred and love could all find momentary expression. They correspond to the sudden and unpremeditated physical activities which preceded the dance.

It is hard, perhaps, to connect even the earliest music, which of course was vocal, with such seeming inadequate origins. Imitation of sounds in nature, so eagerly attempted by the child, would doubtless have an effect in the musical progress of the race. But actual musical expression most probably arose, like the dance, from a sustained sense of joy. The origin will be found in the love song of the wooer and of the mother. Not impossibly we may indicate another contemporary source—the lament of the mourner. It is keening and crooning which seem to offer the most obvious explanation for sustained vocal effort.

Originally song was monotonic in character, the steady repetition of a single tone only varied

by the rising and falling of the voice. Subsequently it would be caught up in the dance, gaining thereby liveliness and motion, and under stress of excitement a wider range of tone.

How soon such music became united to actual words there is no way of determining. But that the advance took place under the actual influence of the dance seems sufficiently clear from the characteristic feature of verbal song. The fact of metre which corresponds in origin with the rhythm of dance movement makes it clear that song had to adapt itself to the demands of motion. Poetry itself, though it has long been emancipated from the actual sphere of music, still bears the mark of its derivation. Majesty of thought and beauty of diction still owe allegiance to rhythmic construction.

In fact the influence of the dance on music is not likely ever to be fully estimated. Adopting the most primitive forms it made it articulate in words. Subsequently it helped forward the union of song and instrumental music, making so perfect a combination that a separate existence became possible for them as united branches of the same art. Thus there was created a medium of religious expression which finally superceded its foster-parent. But further still, instrumental music itself only began to disclose its immense possibilities through the necessity of supplying the demands of later dance forms. It is only

during the last three centuries or so that the music of the instrument has been discovering that it can convey a message of its own. Symphony, sonata and fugue all are derived ultimately from the music of the dance revived since Renaissance times.

So history repeats itself. That which gave tone and form to early vocal effort becomes finally the promoter of music's independent life.

The origin of the music of the instrument is wrapped in some obscurity. Dates, of course, in the nature of things, are impossible. Accident must have suggested what nature did not actually provide. Some urge the priority of the wind instrument, others that of the instrument of percussion. The latter suggestion seems the most reasonable, though there are those who are not yet persuaded that the wind whistling over a broken reed did not provide the first suggestion. The musical history of the child, however, would seem to be in favour of percussion, and the actual evidence of antiquity is tolerably conclusive in the same direction.

Of course we are not concerned here with the actual discussion of instrumental development. It suffices to know that drum, pipe and strings actually did come into existence in one form or another, and probably in that order. What is of interest is to notice that the earliest instrumental music appears to have been connected with re-

ligious exercises in a very marked degree. Such seems to be the bearing of the tradition almost universal among the races of the world that in origin it was divine. The only serious breach in the tradition is made by the Hebrews who maintain a secular origin. But this was not in any way because their idea of music was a low one; it was because their conception of the Divine was so high. Jubal, not Jehovah, was "the father of all such as handle the harp or pipe." Nevertheless by irony of circumstance music in Israel's hands became more fully the handmaid of religion than in any other nation in the world.

The connection of the music of instruments with actual religious worship would be secured not in connection with song, but in connection with motion. It is true that they had religious uses other than those connected with actual worship. They were used to call the attention of the Divinity to His servants' presence, or to scare away malignant spirits. Such uses for drum and trumpet are found among savage and heathen races to-day.[22] The Chinese beat the drum to frighten the dragon who swallows the sun or moon at the time of eclipse. In Africa the trumpet is blown at such seasons. In Thibet demons are exorcised, as in Israel Jehovah's attention was called by the blast of the trumpet. And so our own church bells are reminiscent of primitive practice. Themselves descendants of

the drum, by our ancestors they were held to have special powers in storm and plague. The passing bell originally was rung to protect the dying soul from evil spirits.

However, the normal use of the early instrument would be as an adjunct to actual religious worship—to accompany the dance or the procession, or to induce feelings of special consequence to the spirit of worship. So cymbals and trumpets were used among the Hebrews. And modern travellers bear witness to the powerful effect which the monotonous beating of the tom-tom produces, as an adjunct to the religious ceremonies of savage tribes. The feelings produced by the beating of the great sacrificial drum of the Aztecs, which could be heard eight miles away, must have been beyond description. Even upon the civilised westerner the drum has a mesmerizing effect, a fact of which the modern Salvationist and the Orange Protestant cannot be unaware.

The drum would hardly have lent itself well to the motion of the dance. Among African tribes to-day it is found as an accompaniment of a regular processional movement round a restricted space. It would be in its derivative forms of cymbals that it would be used for dancing.

It seems without doubt a far step from the excitation of emotion to the accompaniment of actual religious song. Possibly the transition may have been helped by what was taking place

in a sphere outside that of actual religious observance. It is quite probable that some instruments gradually came into being which escaped for the moment the actual trammels of religious uses; that song came to be accompanied in the secular region before it came to be accompanied in religious dance and praise. Certainly instruments of an order differing from drum and trumpet were required. They were discovered ultimately in the lyre and harp. When and how such instruments came into existence we cannot say. Greek tradition attached the discovery to Hermes. In Homeric times such instruments were quite familiar, and there is actually in existence an Egyptian lyre dating some 2000 years before Christ. That such instruments were dedicated from the first to the actual service of religion none can positively assert. The utmost that can be said in favour of such a position is that they took their origin in the East, the home of great religions and the seed-plot of religious development. Moreover in the earliest pictorial representations in Egypt they are in the hands of the priestly class.

Evidently such instruments were designed for vocal accompaniment. But it is not demonstrable that their original use was not secular or that it was ever uniformly religious. The early practice of chanting in saga form the past deeds of a race may possibly have called into existence instru-

ments which can be used by the singer himself. Be that as it may, among all the chief races of antiquity, stringed instruments sooner or later found a place, and song an appropriate accompaniment, under the aegis of religion.

The only other type of instrument at all fitted for vocal accompaniment was an instrument of much earlier occurrence—the pipe. Of the same family as the trumpet but prior in development, it undoubtedly had a very early place in the accompaniment of the dance. But the unsuitable character of its tone could not have made for progress in actual song. In one form or another it undoubtedly found a place within the religious sphere. There is some evidence for its use in early Hebrew history. Among the Hindoos its religious connection is quite clear. The flute was traditionally derived from India, the supreme deity of the conquering race. Aryan peoples therefore in the fourth millenium before Christ must have used it in their worship. While in India it gave place to the stringed instrument given by Saravasti, Brahma's wife, elsewhere it found a permanent home among peoples in some cases widely varying from the Aryan stock.

It seems clear, however, that its general use was in religious exercises of a special type. In the later stages of pre-Christian history it was looked upon as distinctly degrading in influence. Its use in the Dionysian festivals in Greece to

accompany the dithyrambs sung in dancing round the altar is familiar. But the Dionysian festival had its counterpart among many other races. In Italy, Phrygia, Bithynia, Phenicia, Babylon and Egypt the same type of worship held sway. The story of Venus and Adonis forms the general groundwork of a tradition against which the prophets of the Old Testament find it necessary to inveigh. Bacchanalian dances were the least objectionable feature of these observances, and the flute was always found as an accompaniment of the orgiastic rites which obtained. Hence its evil reputation with the ancients and the erotic character attributed to its music.

But to return. Throughout the history of religion we find a tendency to absorb elements of secular practice. In the sphere of music this is always noticeable. From time to time secular instruments and secular tunes have been adopted and so absorbed as almost to lose all connection with earlier usage. So it may possibly be in the case of accompanied song in the religious sphere, a phenomenon curiously enough unknown in some of the most ancient races of the world, and only reluctantly admitted within the Christian Church itself. What was possibly a secular origin is all but lost in the completeness of its religious adoption. Becoming a characteristic feature of worship as a handmaid to the dance,

it finally broke away into a career of independent development, words ultimately becoming more attracted to the new vehicles of sound than to the older ones of motion.

And so we reach the psalms and hymns of antiquity, so important a part of its religious property. Egypt had its ancient chants handed down by Isis. The songs of the Hindoos hymning the virtues of the old Aryan gods date back at least 3,000 years before the Christian era. The sacred caste of singers known as Brahmins grew up as exponents of the meaning of the hymns. So great was their influence and that of song that finally Indra got deposed from his supremacy, and Brahma, originally the sacred song, became the name of the supreme divinity.

Among the Greeks also hymns had at one time a high place of honour. They were the accompaniment of sacrifice, libation and procession. But though Greek and Hindoo sprang from a common stock, there was no development in Greece analogous to that in India. With the Greeks the hymn developed into drama. The Tragedian took the place occupied by the Brahmin. Music itself gradually became a separate art more secular than religious in essential character—a stage accessory. Musical modes were elaborated, no less than fifteen variants being discoverable, each belonging to a separate locality and named therefrom. In time these variants

settled down to seven chief modes, of great importance in later history.

But Greek religious genius tended to express itself through the medium not of sound but of form. It is in the plastic arts that Greece excels. Ideals of beauty, goodness and truth were taught through the eye rather than through the ear. And where sculpture and architecture could not go, philosophy came in to complete the nation's contribution to the sense of Truth.

Nevertheless when music came to be adopted as an essential part of worship by the Christian Church, it was to Greece that it was most indebted, a debt, as we shall notice, not unshared by the Jews themselves.

# CHAPTER IV

## HEBREW RELIGIOUS MUSIC

It is of course the hymn forms of the Israelites which have influenced most widely the religious history of the world. They stand out as an abiding monument of that nation's religious genius.

The religion of Israel in its origin had much in common with that of other primitive races in the nearer East. Many traces of obvious similarities are to be discovered in the old Testament writings. The specialized development which makes Hebrew history so unique has to be attributed chiefly to a long line of teachers endowed with a spiritual insight which grew more intense with the political vicissitudes of the race.

Right back behind the time of that written prophecy which begins with Amos, the Shepherd of Tekoa; before the time of such outstanding figures as Elisha, Elijah or Samuel, there existed what are known as "Schools of the Prophets." The actual function of these bodies is not easy to determine. That they had real points of similarity with the "Mullahs" of other Eastern races it is idle to deny. Divination was reckoned among their offices. Further,

the excitation of religious frenzy—often of a martial order—was equally customary. This was achieved by throwing themselves first into that state. The spirit of Jahweh was then said to have come upon them, the condition being induced by the instrumentality of music.

Such was the source of the earliest prophecies. When Saul went to discover the asses of Kish his father, he went naturally to the prophets. Meeting a company of them coming down from the high place with psaltery, tabret, pipe and harp before them, he fell into a like state of enthusiasm with themselves. Elisha, on the other hand, belongs to a type of prophet standing midway between these "nebiim," as they were called, and those later messengers of Jahweh, whose writings alone reveal how great a difference parted them from their forbears, yet he also depended upon instruments of music when he desired "the hand of the Lord to come upon him."

How the transition took place from common frenzied utterance to unique spiritual insight we are here under no necessity of discussing. But the frenzy itself dates back far in the religious history of Israel; without doubt beyond the period of captivity in Egypt, when instruments were primitive and few.

Egypt naturally left its impress upon Israel and thereby added its quota to the subsequent religious progress of the world. At the time of

the Exodus, music had reached a very high stage of development. Mural paintings and sculptures of the period show the existence of all early types of instrument, of percussion, wind and string. There is the sistrum with its tambourine effect, the flute, the harp—some of the large size with many strings, others smaller and portable; there are also the cithara, the lyre, and the lute. All these instruments appear to have been played together as an accompaniment to vocal music.

The instruments known among the Hebrews seem to have been derived from those in use in Egypt. The trumpet of the Egyptians was a martial instrument. Israel, worshipping Jahweh as the Lord of Hosts, brought this instrument within the sphere of a two-fold usage, reserving it in actual use to the priests. Further, in Egypt, as in India, the cult of music was largely in the hands of the priestly caste, the art being passed on from father to son. This fact is of special interest when we consider the actual position of the Levites among the Hebrews. It affords a clear mark of connection between Hebrew and Egyptian practice.

Hebrew history as such really begins from the time of the Exodus. The nation on its deliverance pledged itself to the worship of a single God, Jahweh. This change was achieved at the instance of one man, Moses. He it was who may be said to have guided the religious instinct

of his people into that channel which offered such wonderful possibilities for the future.

It hardly falls within our province to trace the process by which Jahweh, the Lord of Hosts, became known as the God of Righteousness, and finally as the God of Love and Truth. But it is impossible not to conjecture that Israel's music was at least as largely modified by this internal theological development as it was by external influences which have yet to be described.

Precise information as to the exact situation before the Babylonian Captivity (6th c., B.C.) is not vouchsafed to us. There is indeed no actual music left, apart from traditional tones, belonging to any part of the Old Testament dispensation. Further, it is now generally realised that the Books of Chronicles (c. 300, B.C.) simply cast into ancient settings practices prevailing when they themselves were being written. As to the Psalter, the book as it now stands is undoubtedly a post exilic production. While certain of the Psalms themselves may quite reasonably be allowed a pre-exilic origin, the attribution of the whole book to David rests largely upon misapprehension. Some scholars would fix the book in its present form as late as the middle of the Second Century. As to the actual musical settings there is considerable scope for enquiry. But it seems clear that they were largely governed by Babylonian and sub-

sequently by Greek influences as far as performance in Temple rites was concerned.

Actual worship in the earliest age was of a joyous type and centred round a common sacrificial meal in which communion was effected with the Deity. Procession and dance held a place as in the contemporary worship of other peoples. And the procession, it should be remembered, was a chief characteristic of Egyptian practice. In Israel the singers went before, the minstrels after; in Egypt that order was reversed.

Music itself would not differ greatly in type from that in use generally in the East among the Semites. Syrian and Arab tunes would afford us the nearest clue. We may take for granted the use of a simple pentatonic scale such as is found almost universally in ancient music, and which still largely survives in the folk song of to-day. There seems to have been a clear tendency in Hebrew music to absorb other elements and to admit external influences very easily. The same tendency in religion is the cause of the animadversion of all the prophets. So the impress of Egyptian influence is seen in the instrumental forms as well as in musical practice during the early centuries. So without doubt we must attribute to the influence of Babylon during the captivity the increased majesty of musical display which characterized the worship of the second Temple. Subsequently after the

conquest of the East by Alexander, Greek influence becomes most marked. This was not only in the province of music; the effect was seen also in Jewish life and thought.

Worship in later old Testament times centred more and more round the Sacrifice, which tended to lose its social in a more spiritual significance. In the reign of Josiah, just over a century before the Captivity, sacrifice became centred at the Temple, the householder being henceforward forbidden his ancient privilege of offering as the household priest, in the interest of the preservation of true religion. It was round the Temple Sacrifice that the Psalms clustered, possibly beginning in pre-exilic times; but as we now have them hymns of the second Temple. Unless this connection with the sacrificial service is grasped, the significance of many of the Psalms is lost. "God is gone up with a merry noise and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet." Such a phrase refers to the theology of sacrifice, Jehovah being conceived of as visiting the altar to partake in the offering, and leaving again when the rite was declared complete in the blast of the trumpet.

On the other hand, much of the Psalter can certainly be used with a much less precise sacrificial application—war songs, psalms of instruction, penitence and thanksgiving, all finding a place. Such forms, apart from war songs, were

largely developed during the Captivity. The exiles were separated from sacrificial service, and new forms had to be elaborated to clothe and express the religious idea. The germ of much which is looked upon to-day as most characteristically Christian is to be found in the expedients adopted in Babylon, owing to enforced limitations in the sphere of worship. The synagogue type of service consisting solely of prayer, psalm and reading of the Scriptures began to be evolved; and from the 6th century onwards, down to the beginning of the Christian era, it spread wherever the Jews of the Dispersion found themselves. For, it should be realized, only a small remnant of the Jews ever went back to Jerusalem; enough to re-establish the Jewish Church, but not to re-found the Jewish nation.

It was to the circumstances of the Captivity that we may attribute with reasonable probability the curious custom of chanting the Scriptures, which still persists in Christian worship to-day. Previous to the Exile the Scripture of the Jews would have been the Law. Subsequently the Prophets and the Writings were added. For the reading of each of these sections appropriate melodies were devised, precursors of those forms in vogue in the Christian Church for the reading of the liturgical Epistle and Gospel. It is the same custom which is found among the Moslems in the recitation of the Koran.

In the main we may take it for granted that the religious music of the Jews in post exilic times, whether instrumental or vocal, centred round the adequate performance of the Psalms. The actual picture which we get from the information afforded by the later books of the Old Testament suggests that the choral parts of the Temple service were in the hands of the Levites; the only parts assigned to the congregation being an occasional chorus, the Hallelujahs and the Amens. Singing was antiphonal in character, thus setting the form very generally adopted in the later musical practice of the Christian Church. The vocal parts would be in unison or at the octave, since knowledge of harmony was developed only within comparatively modern times.

Among the Levites who returned after the Captivity there seem to have been special guilds of musicians, those of David, Asaph, and the Sons of Korah being clearly chief in importance. Their names stand at the head of many of the Psalms, indicating that the Psalms in question belonged originally to their private collections. The present Psalter, like our modern Church hymn books, was of course a selection from several sources, earlier books being laid under contribution.

As to the numbers which constituted these guilds we should remember that the Books of

Chronicles are not always trustworthy; numbers are very often highly exaggerated from a pardonable sense of pride and a desire to impress other nations. There is no reason to believe that even in 300 B.C. there were anything like 4,000 actual performers " who praised the Lord with instruments." But we may have a hint of the real truth of the matter in I. Chronicles, xxv. There we are told of the Temple musicians that " the number of them with their brethren that were instructed in singing unto the Lord, even all that were skilful, was two hundred four score and eight." This body was apparently responsible for twenty-four courses into which the year was divided. Their instruments consisted of cymbals, psalteries, and harps. They were arrayed in fine linen and stood at the east end of the altar. This tradition of actual numbers has confirmation also in the Talmud, the book of Jewish oral tradition. There we are informed that the singing of the Psalms was initiated by twelve Levites playing upon nine lyres, two harps, and one cymbal. They were supported by boys and younger men of the same order, the former singing, the latter joining in with the accompaniment.

So much for the externals; actual practice is more difficult to determine. Roughly speaking, our only clue is to be found in the musical rubrics of the Psalms. But these terms have puzzled

generations of commentators, and their precise significance can hardly yet be considered clear. The trouble arises from the two-fold cause of the break in Jewish tradition following the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), and from the fact that the old Testament Scriptures were originally written without vowels. Consonants alone were given and traditional knowledge supplied what was lacking. With the destruction of the nation came the break up of the schools of the Rabbis; with the destruction of the Temple the sacrificial system of worship with its professional choirs and musicians came to an end. Hence the meaning and significance of the somewhat cryptic musical direction was lost. When the Massoretic text of the Old Testament came to be produced (7th century, A.D.), the attempt to supply the exact vowels was often a matter of guess work.

Modern scholarship has produced many surprises in Old Testament fields. Applied to the Psalms it would appear that many of the superinscribed directions will yield their secret. With regard to some terms which have received explanation in the past, considered as they stand unamended, it is possible that we shall have to change our views. Earlier explanations seem likely to fall to the ground. What does it mean when a Psalm is to be sung to *Gitteth* or any of the four other terms, *Aijeleth, Jonath, Shushan*

and *Alamoth?* With but slight and legitimate changes of the vowel points, we discover a suggestive series—*Gathite*, *Aeolian*, *Ionian*, *Susian* and *Elamite*. These are clearly geographical titles which indicate the modes to which the chants were sung, following the Greek fashion.

This opens out a most interesting field of enquiry and of suggestion. After the conquests of Alexander Greek influence on Jewish life was considerable. The Maccabean rising was largely a revolt against the progress of Hellenism, traces of which can be found in many phases of Jewish thought and practice in the latter years of the nation's history. A hint of Greek drama is found in the Old Testament in the Song of Songs, while Greek philosophy finds a most noteworthy medium of expression in the book of Wisdom. It is a well known fact that Greeks had an important share also in the musical arrangement of the Temple services. It may well be therefore that the tunes in use for the Psalms in the day when the present psalter was completed were in the main similar in type to those recognized among the Greeks. Early Christian music undoubtedly adopted the Greek scales, and yet there was at the same time a tradition that Jewish psalmody was not without its influence. Jewish origin certainly has been claimed for the Gregorian type of cantillation. If we can accept the theory of Greek influence on the later

music of the second Temple, the reconciliation of fact with tradition can be effected.

As to the character of the instrumental music there is no little uncertainty, and we are left largely to theory. Direction as to the kind of instruments to be used is often given. But it would seem that our knowledge of the actual type of accompaniment will depend upon the correct appreciation of the term *Selah*.

The first suggestion which arises is that musical accompaniment was partly of the nature of an interlude—as it was subsequently for considerable periods in the Christian Church. *Selah* appears to be a transliteration of the Greek "psalle." It would indicate that at certain points the players should strike up and play their part before the hymn is taken up again by the choir.

The character of this interlude would naturally be determined by the colour of the psalm. It has been suggested with great probability that there would be Selahs of war and sacrifice, made by the priests upon the trumpet; Selahs of mourning performed on the reed pipes; Selahs also descriptive of natural phenomena, such as the storm, produced by harps, clapping and stamping of feet. "Selah is always a musical interlude, but not always what is known to modern critics as pure music. Where it separates stanzas it may be mere sound appealing by the

beauty of its melody or by combination of instruments; more often it represents what we should call ' programme music,' and is consciously and deliberately descriptive of the text which it accompanies.''*

Such in brief is an account of the part played by music in the religion of Israel. An examination in the narrower sphere of the types of instrument in use would be beyond the scope of our present purpose. Doubtless it would offer a more fruitful field, since precise information is as abundant as it is scanty in the more attractive sphere of our enquiry.

At the opening of the Christian era therefore there were prevalent two types of religious service among the race from which Christianity took its birth. There was first the highly developed service of the Temple surrounding the act of sacrifice, with its paid musicians and professional singers. In the second place there was the less elaborate and non-sacrificial type of service with its psalms and cantillation of the Scriptures. This latter type had been rapidly spreading throughout those parts of the civilised world in which the Jews found themselves.

The approximation of Christian worship to Jewish forms was inevitable, since the earliest converts were in the main Jews or proselytes. Christian religious music undoubtedly owes a

* Stainer : *Music of the Bible, p.* 92.

considerable debt to Judaism, if only for the Psalms. But Christian worship at first from force of circumstances, though afterwards over considerable sections of the Church from force of custom, was of great simplicity of character.

The worship of the Temple had less actual influence than that of the synagogue. There were no sacred buildings set apart; and instrumental music was out of the question in time of persecution. No rite had any opportunity of such elaboration as would give scope to the kind of music prevalent in the Temple. It was only as persecution tended to become less regular that the Eucharist began to develope into such a rite, and to give the old Temple tradition an opportunity of re-asserting itself. At first psalms and hymns and spiritual songs were the only musical outlet for emotions deeper and more pregnant with possibilities than the world had ever experienced before.

The final overthrow of Jerusalem at the hands of the Romans (70 A.D.) was of momentous importance in the history of religion, and equally in that of music's place therein. As the Christian Church was not as yet in the position to take over the music of the Jewish Church at the point at which Judaism was forced to abandon it, there was a resultant set-back in progress lasting for centuries. The development of music itself was affected as well as its adaptation to religious uses.

# CHAPTER V

## MUSIC IN THE EARLY CHURCH

To give any clear conspectus of the conditions of worship in the early Church during the first two centuries is impossible. In the first place, for the period between the actual age of the Apostles and the close of the second century, historical information is but scanty. Beyond that fact, owing to the differing conditions under which Christian worship could be pursued, we have to reckon with divergence of custom in different localities.

In the 3rd century, despite persecution, the Church appears before us as a united homogeneous whole with considerable correspondence in all essentials of faith and practice. The catholic idea had grown strong enough to assert itself as it were in public. We find a common episcopate, common scriptures and a common creed. Worship began to be followed in buildings set apart for the purpose. Gradually it became more and more possible to adopt musical embellishments of the Divine Offices in a way impossible under earlier conditions.

Previous to the 3rd century other conditions

obtained. The catholic idea was strong enough. Ignatius of Antioch, for instance, speaks quite clearly of the Catholic Church. The letter of the Church of Smyrna (155 A.D.) is addressed "to all the congregations of the Holy Catholic Church in every place." Sense of unity was real, but its outward manifestation to the world only became possible with growth in the numbers and in the social importance of the Christian body. Until that point was reached the conditions of uniformity were largely absent. But even then forms of worship tended to differ and to preserve local characteristics of their own.

The actual point of contact between the music of the new dispensation and the old is found in the hymn sung by Jesus and His disciples after the inauguration of the Eucharist. "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." Such is the witness of S. Mark; and so the old was taken up into the new, and the book of Psalms received its imprimatur as the song book of the New Israel.

For it would be a psalm that was sung on this memorable occasion; most probably one of those consecrated by Jewish liturgical usage to be sung after the celebration of the Passover Supper. These were the Hallel Psalms (cxiii-cxviii) used regularly at the greater festivals of the Jewish year. Pious conjecture has identified the actual psalm with Ps. cxiv (*In exitu*

*Israel*) and has associated the familiar Tonus Peregrinus with its actual setting.

So the first Christian music was associated with the Eucharist. And from the beginning it should be remembered, distinctively Christian worship centred round the Breaking of the Bread. They continued, we are told, in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that such religious music as there was began to cluster round this service.

At the beginning such a development was not equally rapid among all converts. The earliest Christians at Jerusalem still frequented the Temple services, finding there the highest expression of the spirit of worship. They still hoped for the redemption of Israel and contemplated no rival system of worship. Despite sundry outbreaks of persecution, there is little reason to doubt that such continued the condition of affairs until the signs of Jerusalem's coming overthrow were distinct.

Outside Judea matters were on a somewhat different footing. The first converts were drawn from the synagogues, and the methods of the synagogue without doubt had considerable influence. After the synagogue refused to admit them to any further association, they worshipped entirely apart, meeting in the houses of the richer brethren. With this change came the establish-

ment of a distinctively Christian day of worship. The first day of the week was chosen in commemoration of the Resurrection, and it soon began to be considered an act of disloyalty to observe the actual Sabbath.

Worship consisted of prayer, praise, exhortation, reading of the Scriptures, and celebration of the Eucharist. Not unfrequently in the earliest days a common meal, or *Agape*, in commemoration of the last Supper, had its place. But this feature from various causes failed to persist.

Force of circumstances generally consecrated the late hours of the night and the early hours of the morning to such Christian observances. In the daytime ordinary avocations had necessarily to be pursued, for the attachment of a large slave class to the new religion allowed very little independence of arrangement. The earliest hymns would be naturally in the main the ancient Psalms, together with those more Christian canticles which soon came into use—the *Magnificat*, *Nunc Dimittis* and *Gloria in Excelsis*, preserved in S. Luke. There is, moreover, some indication that hymns of private composition and of spontaneous nature were admissible, though the time came when they had to be disallowed.

As to whether any instrumental music ever found place in the worship of the earliest days we

have no method of ascertaining. It is more than probable, however, that from the beginning in Gentile sections of the Christian Church the pagan associations of ordinary instrumental music would militate against its acceptance. After persecution had become more or less regular, the necessity for secret observance of Christian rites would strengthen such a position on the grounds of common safety. Moreover, there was another consideration of even greater weight—the expectation of an early Second Coming of the Lord. To spend time and thought on the elaboration of services was the last thing with which the faithful could be expected to concern themselves.

What is probably the earliest Christian document outside the New Testament, the so-called Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (c. 95 A.D.) gives us our first clear information of the worship of the post-apostolic Church. Definite directions are given as to Divine worship; but no mention of music is found. Thanksgiving centres round the Eucharist; but it finds its medium in prayer. Some twenty years later we find an actual reference to the practice of singing as characteristic of the Christians. It is found in a letter of Pliny to the Emperor Trajan. As a newly appointed governor of Bithynia, a province on the south shore of the Black Sea, Pliny found himself at a loss as to the proper method

of dealing with the new sect. Apart from refusal to worship the Roman deities, their only eccentricity lay in the fact that it was their habit to assemble on a fixed day before daylight and sing a hymn antiphonally to Christ as God, binding themselves sacramentally not to commit theft or adultery or to break their word.

This reference to antiphonal singing shews the persistence of Jewish influence, though early Church writers held the opinion that Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who was martyred about the year 110 A.D., was the originator of the custom. The tradition points to the early development of Church music at Antioch—the city where the disciples were first called Christians. The importance of this centre of Christian influence during the first four Christian centuries can hardly be overestimated. From Antioch the missions of S. Paul radiated. In Antioch by the 3rd century ceremonial reached a pitch of magnificence undreamed of elsewhere in the Church. In Antioch at a later date there arose a school of theologians unrivalled in the early Church. And Antioch was undoubtedly a home of music. The Roman satirist, Juvenal, writing early in the 2nd century and deploring the influence of Syria upon Rome, speaks of the river Orontes pouring into the Tiber not only the language and morals, but also the cymbals and pipes and three-cornered harps of Antioch. The epistles also of

Ignatius, written as he journeyed to Rome for martyrdom, bear contemporary witness to the same prevalence of music in the instrumental illustrations which are used. Speaking of one of the bishops in Asia Minor he writes, "He is tuned in harmony with the commandments as a lyre with its strings." Again in the *Epistle to the Ephesians* the following noteworthy passage is found: "Your noble presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted to the bishop as the strings to a harp. And thus by means of your accord and harmonious love Jesus Christ is sung. Form yourselves one and all into a choir, that blending in concord and taking the key note of God, you may sing in unison with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father."

If it cannot be proved that the Jews of later pre-Christian times adopted those Greek modes which became prevalent in the Church at an early date for the purposes of chanting, no better suggestion could be made than that Antioch was the scene of the wedding between Jewish psalm and Greek melody. It should be remembered that S. Paul himself, as a student at Tarsus, must have been acquainted in the ordinary course with Hellenistic musical forms, as well as with Greek poetry and philosophy. Be that as it may, it is at Antioch that we first hear of the fashion initiated by Bishop Leontius (c. 350 A.D.) of two choirs singing antiphonally, as the custom is to

the present day in the Church. From Antioch S. Ambrose of Milan adopted the custom in 387 A.D., so introducing it into the West. At Antioch also other less regular developments had their place—applause during service and the admission of women singers into the choir. But in the main, such customs were deprecated elsewhere, particularly in the West. Nevertheless, after the legalization of Christianity by Constantine at the beginning of the 4th century, there was a very definite tendency in the East to an almost pagan elaboration. It may be that the character of the public buildings put at the disposal of Christian congregations before they had churches of their own, influenced music and ritual in a secular direction. Basilicas and public halls with their raised dais offered temptations to display. The Church on the other hand was flooded with converts only too ready to be on the winning side. The result was a deterioration in the total life of Christianity.

Such is the explanation of the debased character of much that pertained to life and worship in the 4th century, particularly in the Eastern section of the Church. Churches in the greater cities became palaces; the choirs were no longer leaders of devotion, but mere collections of *virtuosi* whose efforts won the applause and exclamation of the congregation. They used unguents for the throat and accompanied song with

gesture. Further, the temptation to the rhythmic movement of the dance, which belonged to pagan modes of worship, was not unknown among the congregations.

The contrast between this condition of things and the agelong puritanism in such matters, which is even now so marked a feature of Greek Christianity, is very striking. In the Eastern Church generally instrumental music is not allowed. The modern Greek choir sings unaccompanied music in two divisions, each division having its *Psaltes* or chief singer, while the congregation take no real part in the singing proper. Reformation was enforced, partly by political disaster, partly by the influence of the monasteries. The monastic life had been largely embraced owing to the very deterioration in ordinary church life which it now set itself to conquer. The Council of Laodicea (367 A.D.) took a very firm stand against the practices which all the best Church leaders, such as S. Chrysostom, so loudly deplored. Church music was confined for execution to a body of canonical singers who could only gain their office through a special form of ordination.

Finally, early in the 8th century, the monk, John of Damascus,* set the house in order as far as the music of the sanctuary was concerned. He stands to the Eastern Church in this respect in

* One of his best known hymns is in common use in the English Church. *The Day of Resurrection, earth tell it out abroad.*

much the same relation as we shall see Gregory, Bishop of Rome, standing to the Church of the West. The only difference is that while the music of the East still stands much as he left it, in the West Gregory's work was but the foundation of continual musical advance.

In the West there was a generally severe tone in religious observance from the outset. Feeling was more puritan and religious expression more restrained than in the East. There were two chief centres of influence, since Christianity reached the West by two routes. It reached Rome as an opinion still within Judaism comparatively early. It had there to await the arrival of S. Paul (c. 59 A.D.). for definite organization. From Rome it spread at a very early date into North Africa, the home of such great leaders as Tertullian, S. Cyprian and S. Augustine. But it reached northern Italy through the efforts of missionaries who went overland through Macedonia and Dalmatia. There, in the valley of the Po, Milan became an independent centre from which the influence of Christianity radiated westwards into Gaul. Eventually both Rome and Milan became the homes of definite schools of Church music as well as rivals in other spheres.

At Rome the earliest converts being among Jews and proselytes, the earliest type of music would be that in use in the synagogues of the Dispersion. The Romans themselves were but

poor musicians, and depended upon external aid in this respect. The later history of Church music gives only too clear witness to this fact. With the earliest Christians, therefore, intoning of scripture and chanting of psalm would follow the Jewish mode. Hence the force of the contention that the later Gregorian Tones really preserved in their simpler forms the customary melodies of Jewish cantillation. Nevertheless, there seems to have been but narrow scope for music during the first two and a half centries. As we can see from the Apology of Justin Martyr (died 165 A.D.), worship centred here as elsewhere, after the primitive fashion, in the Eucharist. But no mention is made of music. Orpheus it is true was held symbolical of Christ as the Good Shepherd during the period, several examples being found depicted with the lyre in the catacombs themselves. But if S. Thomas Aquinas is to be accredited as at all a typical representative of the thought of Latin Christianity, there prevailed for centuries a prejudice against all instrumental music lest an appearance should be given of Judaizing!

The formal legalization of Christianity in the West by the *Edict of Milan* (314 A.D.) removed the chief disability of Christian worship. At Rome it synchronized with the foundation of a school of singing by Pope Sylvester. Here then the prototype is found of that institution with

which we are familiar to-day—the choir school attached to the cathedral foundations. Pope Sylvester's action was an advance of immense significance both for the Church and for Christendom generally. Not only was the practice of music advanced: it was in the cathedral schools of a later century that the germ of the medieval university was found. Nevertheless, during the period of nearly three centuries intervening between the pontificate of Sylvester and that of Gregory the Great, comparatively little advance was made in Rome. Leo the Great (440-461 A.D.) established or re-established a singing school; but Rome continued ultra conservative, and developments which began to take place with rapidity elsewhere seemed to have left Roman Christianity almost untouched. Such progress as was made came mainly through the influence of the monastic order of S. Benedict, founded early in the 6th century. The result was that Gregory found wide scope for initiative and reform when his opportunity came.

While conservatism was reigning at Rome, an important change was coming over the scope of Christian worship in the 4th century. It is found in the widespread development of daily services. And here we are able to come into touch with the work of Milan. During the first three centuries, apart from the *Eucharist*, the only other type of service was the *Vigil*, held before each Sunday

and prior to fast and feast days. From the 4th century onwards this latter type of service began to develop into daily evening and morning prayer, the custom developing finally into the eight offices of the medieval church. Cessation of persecution made this advance possible, while the growth of the monastic class made it desirable. These services at first consisted in prayer, psalms, and in some places lections from the scriptures. They had their choral parts which they inherited from the vigils—though with vigils music was of somewhat late adoption. Two treatises of the 4th century attributed to Niceta of Remesiana, the probable author of the *Te Deum*, defend the practice of keeping vigils with psalmody and hymns against the objections of the more conservative Christians. This clearly shows that the custom was then of but recent origin.

It is probable that daily public *evening* and *morning prayer* was established first in the Eastern Church during the period 350-375 A.D. The custom seems to have originated in the monastic life of Egypt and to have passed northward through Jerusalem to Antioch. From Antioch it passed quickly to Milan and thence to the Church in Gaul, Spain and Britain. The choral accompaniment was added outside the place of its origin; for according to S. Augustine, Egyptian psalmody resembled distinct reading rather than song.

The Western development began under Auxentius, a native of Cappadocia and Bishop of Milan 355-374 A.D. It was continued under his successor, S. Ambrose, who also introduced to Milan and the West the singing by antiphonal choirs which had begun at Antioch. This fashion spread into Egypt and Mesopotamia before the end of the century, though Rome forbore to adopt it till the middle of the following century, and omitted to make morning and evening offices compulsory on the clergy till well into the 6th century. By adopting this attitude the Latin Church closed to itself the avenue of musical progress, for it was in the new services that the real opportunity now lay.

Western Europe, apart from Roman Italy, was soon flooded with new liturgical forms, and as we shall see, with new Church song. The exact character of the music has unfortunately long been lost sight of. It became so merged in the general Plainsong of later days that few traces of it are to be found. All that remains is what sedulous énquiry has discovered in derivative tones persisting in Gallican and Spanish forms. But of the liturgical forms many traces still exist, both of the Liturgy proper and also of hymns and canticles suitable for the daily offices. Of these perhaps the most important are those which were preserved in Ireland. The Antiphoner of the monastery of Bangor, Co. Down,

which dates from about 680 A.D., contains not only Irish hymns but also with the *Te Deum*, the *Gloria in Excelsis* and the Biblical canticles, hymns of S. Cyprian and S. Ambrose. It numbers in its collection a series of antiphons and collects such as were repeated before and between the singing of the psalms, together with the familiar Eucharist hymn, "Draw nigh and take the Body of the Lord." There is still preserved also a "Book of Hymns" with a very ancient text of the *Te Deum;* while in the famous Cursus Scottorum we have rules laid down by S. Columban for the chanting of the Psalter.

The day and hour services by attracting to themselves psalmody and hymns had the effect of modifying the earlier liturgical forms of the Eucharist. Prior to the growth of these services suitable psalms were sung before and between the lections, which were taken from the Old Testament prophecy as well as from the Epistles and Gospel of the New Testament. These lections, owing to the growth of the new services, became generally cut down to two. The psalms gradually deserted the Liturgy and short hymns took their place. That is why the Psalter of the Church of England to-day is attached to Mattins and Evensong. The Liturgy also itself tended to become more fixed in form than it had been previously. It was during the 4th century, according to Duchesne, that the famous Gallican

Liturgy came into being. This form of service, issuing from Milan probably under the direction of Auxentius or Ambrose, penetrated Gaul, Spain and Britain, holding its own till gradually displaced centuries later by the Roman rite.

The general aspect of this liturgical form is interesting to notice, particularly in regard to its musical setting and possibilities. It may be compared with the later Roman form which Gregory the Great is reputed to have fixed, and round which so much wonderful music came to be written. Its features are Eastern in character. It began with an anthem; after an exhortation and a collect the Trisagion was sung. After this came the Benedictus with lections; then the Benedicite followed by the Gospel, which was itself preceded and followed by the Trisagion. After a sermon and further prayers came the oblation of the Bread and Wine, during which an offertory anthem was sung. Further prayers and Consecration followed, with another anthem, while a final anthem was sung during Communion.

Such is the general outline. Clearly there was considerable scope for musical expression. Hymns were needed. S. Ambrose himself composed numbers of them in metrical form. Some are supposed to have survived in ancient office hymns which still exist. Of those attributed to him the best known are "O Strength and Stay upholding all creation" and "The eternal gifts

of Christ the King." But S. Ambrose did much more than this. He it is who was responsible for fixing the Authentic modes for the music of the Church. All music apart from folk-song was still based on the old Greek modes. By limiting Church music to four tones S. Ambrose both gave it a chance of developing a character of its own and also eliminated the future possibility of the adoption of undesirable and profane melodies, which curiously enough, as subsequent history shows, continually manifest a tendency to creep into ecclesiastical music.

The general effect of the new music combining as it did the joyous and exulting with the grave and the tender, was such as to move to ecstasy the great disciple of S. Ambrose, S. Augustine of Hippo. His only fear was lest the charm of sound should rob the hearer of the value of the words. He sees a snare which has underlain the development of the music of worship through all its subsequent history in the Christian Church; though he admits, perhaps somewhat grudgingly, a counterbalancing consideration—" that by delight of the ears the weaker minds may rise to feelings of devotion."

This promising condition of things was broken in upon by the political disasters which soon began to affect all Europe west of the Rhine and south of the Danube. Ireland alone escaped the scourge. The barbarian Teutonic tribes began

to break into the Roman empire and none could say them nay. At the beginning of the 5th century the Visi-Goths under Alaric, after overrunning Italy and Southern Gaul, settled down in Spain. At the close of the century the Ostro-Goths under Theodoric took possession of middle Italy. Angles and Saxons in the same century began to overrun Britain. Vandals and Burgundians carved out kingdoms in Gaul, Spain and Africa. The Franks broke into northern Gaul, while in the following century the Lombards swarmed into the valley of the Po.

The Church having but just subdued the Roman world, was left to struggle with large alien populations whose traditions were pagan or at the best heretical. Of the ancient civilization little was left save that which the Church managed to conserve. But even within the Church the disorders of the times left their mark. The voice of authority became imperatively needed, and before progress could be made the West had to await more kindly circumstances and the strong hand of a capable reformer.

# CHAPTER VI

## THE GREGORIAN REVIVAL

THE closing years of the 6th century found Western Europe settling down to the new conditions. It was a period of transition, and like all such periods it offered a unique opportunity to a man of outstanding capacity. Such a man was found in Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome.

Gregory may be almost styled the Founder of the Papacy. He did not actually pretend to the authority subsequently claimed by his successors; but by statesmanship and power of organization he laid the foundation of a wider influence in the West than that which had formerly accrued to Milan. He treated as an independent sovereign with the new barbarian kings, and by his bitter quarrel with the Patriarchs of Constantinople made more actual that schism with Eastern Christianity which in the 10th century became complete. Milan had been a channel of Eastern influence into the West, and as late as the second half of the 7th century England had an Eastern as archbishop in the person of Theodore of Tarsus. But from the time of Gregory's pontificate the West became

more and more a separate entity with developments peculiarly its own. Except indirectly through the Crusades, the East hardly came in contact with the West again until the revival of learning in the 15th century.

With the effect of the Renaissance we shall be concerned subsequently. Our present task is to trace the progress and development of religious music in the West, and for this we have first to consider the creation and establishment of the Gregorian system.

Apart from his other achievements Gregory's contribution to the department of Church worship was very considerable. He founded—or refounded—a school of singers at Rome. He fixed the order of the Mass. He compiled an Antiphonary of liturgical music. He widened the scope of ecclesiastical music by authorizing additions to the modes of Ambrose. From this time onward until the days of the Troubadours music became the sole possession of the Church.

The extravagant claims made by some as to the importance of Gregory's personal share in this great work cannot well be maintained. It hardly seems probable that he should neglect to lay under contribution the musical treasury which had been accumulated during the preceding half century by the new Benedictine order to which he belonged. That treasury could not fail to be largely indebted to the church song

prevailing at the time of its inception. Gregory's own letter to Augustine of Canterbury in the matter of liturgical uses to be adopted in England is illuminating. "I should like you carefully to select," he writes, "whatever you have found either in the Church of Rome, or in that of Gaul, or in any other, which may better please Almighty God; and to introduce into the Church of the English what you have been able to gather together from many churches."*

In face of such advice in liturgical matters it is hardly to be denied that Gregory would pursue a like course in the elaboration of a musical scheme to answer the requirements of liturgical expression. In Gregory we see not so much an originator as a compiler. That his music has characteristics marking it off from earlier Gallican tones cannot be denied. But it should be remembered that the term Gregorian as now used is wider in significance than originally was the case. All Plainsong is not necessarily derived from Gregory. The authentic Gregorian music is contained within fairly strictly defined limits. The *Antiphonary* contains all, and perhaps more than all, for which he was personally responsible. Of the melodies which he gave the Church the simplest are considered of greatest age; the more elaborate are conjectured to be contributions drawn from Greek and Syriac sources. It is

* *Epistles*, Bk. xi., 64.

therefore by no means necessary to postulate a great outburst of Church song in Rome during the preceding three centuries. The backwardness of Rome in liturgical and musical progress has already been noticed, together with its chief causes—the slow adoption of the daily offices and its innate conservatism. The hymn itself was only reluctantly admitted, and at a date much later than that of Gregory. Rome absorbs and systematizes, but rarely originates.

The *Antiphonary* of Gregory* contained provision for psalmody in the daily offices (*antiphonarium officii*), and also directions for the musical parts of the recently settled Canon of the Mass (*antiphonarium missae*). By this time in the hands of the Benedictines the daily offices were practically fixed in the since prevalent canonical order—the night hour of Mattins, with Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. The earlier Vigil had provided three chief hours of prayer, vespers at sunset, mattins at midnight, and lauds at sunrise. In the subsequent monastic development these hours became of daily occurrence, while the third, sixth, and ninth hours were also adopted for devotions during the rest of the day. Later on, the additional devotions of prime and compline were ad-

* It might here be noted that some scholars disallow Gregory I's part in this musical advance. They urge that the Mass waited till about 700 A.D. for completion, and that the offices were not fixed till 680 A.D. by Pope Agatho.

mitted, the latter being in origin the usual private prayer of Christians on retiring for the night.

At all these offices music was introduced. In the night offices the older method of responsory chanting tended to prevail. The later monastic additions showed the mark of their origin in the more general antiphonal character of the chanting. It was usual as we can see both from the Irish and the Roman books to preface and conclude with an antiphon explaining the general or particular bearing of the psalms which were sung.

The Roman Eucharist, or the Mass, was made up of two elements. There was first of all the permanent core of the service. This was called the *Ordinarium*. Its music was fixed. It consisted of the Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei.* The other element, comprising Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Tract, and Communion Antiphon, changed with special days and seasons. It was called the *Proprium*, and gave scope for musical variety. The Introit accompanied the approach of the priest to the altar. The Gradual was a chant sung between the first two lections. Originally it was a whole psalm sung responsorially, the precentor singing his verses from the steps (*gradus*) before the altar. The Alleluia—or in penitential seasons the Tract—came between the lections of epistle and

* The Creed was not added in Rome till the 11th century.

gospel. Originally a simple Alleluia, it gained in Gregory's time psalmodic additions, again sung responsorially. The Tract was simply a solo chant. The Communion Antiphon, originally a rendering of a portion of Psalm xxxiv, became in course of time variable in text. It was a complement to the Introit and rounded off the whole service.

The general subject of Plainsong, the category to which the music of Gregory belongs, will be dealt with at length in another volume. Its general characteristics however are familiar. It differs from music of later development in two respects, in absence of rhythm and the arrangement of tone and semitone. In modern music there are only two modes, major and minor, despite the number of keys which are allowed for. To the four tones authorized by Ambrose, Gregory added four others, styled plagal, and all these tones necessitated different intervals of tone and semitone. Hence the distress frequently admitted by those accustomed to the comparative monotony of present day music. Plainsong is thought barbaric when really it has quite as much to say for itself as that which is thought more civilized. The present arrangement has only grown up to answer the demands of modern musical development. The range of expression in Plainsong is more varied, and as a vehicle of spiritual emotion it is peerless.

The other point of difference also lies on the side of greater freedom. Early music as we have already noticed was rhythmic, owing to the influence of the dance. Modern secular music, being in origin largely dependent on dance forms, is also governed by fixed rhythm. Plainsong however is without such limitations. Beginning among the Jews in scripture cantillation, it was applied by the Church to the Psalms in their translated and necessarily unrhythmic form. It is therefore a sort of prose music fashioned to verbal demands.

The advantage of this characteristic was enormous in the earlier days as a defence against paganism. Plainsong could defy any attempt to debase it to such types of emotional expression as tended to develop in the 4th century in the East. There was no appeal to bodily motion. Rhythm could only be found in actual metrical hymnody, and the hymn did not become popular early in Latin Christianity. The result was a spiritualization of religious emotion to a pitch unreached even by the Jews.

Gregory's reform did not affect the religious music of the West all at once. Its first conquests were made in Southern Italy, though it probably reached the Church of the English at the very beginning of the 7th century. Singing schools were subsequently set up at Canterbury and afterwards at York. Within the century even

Ireland was affected. We find some Roman innovations spreading from England and impinging upon Gallican custom. Nevertheless it was not till the reign of the Emperor Charlemagne, towards the close of the 8th century, that Gregorian music was given its full chance.

Prior to that date, and subsequent to the invasion of the Barbarians, Western Europe was chiefly influenced by missionaries from Ireland. These brought with them their own adaptation of Gallican customs. For it should be remembered that at the beginning of the 7th century culture was more advanced and more secure in the great monastic schools of Ireland than elsewhere in the West. Rome itself was largely in ruins in Gregory's day. The re-evangelization of the West—even of northern Italy—fell largely to the lot of the Irish. Celtic missionaries were responsible likewise for the greater share of the evangelization of England.

The type of music actually in vogue among the Irish is not known precisely. Their basal scale is thought to have resembled the ancient Dorian mode. But Celtic music was not bound to the old Greek scales. It was of independent development. There remains possibly a clue to its character in the traditional vocal music of Wales—a spontaneous harmony created by natural musical instinct. No such reasons as were urgent in the case of the Christians in the

old Roman Empire would militate against the use of instruments. The mention of the ancient harp and the *crotta* or *crwth* early in the 7th century by Fortunatus, Bishop of Poictiers, would seem to point to the possibility of their use for religious purposes.

The only serious rivals to the Irish were the English missionaries who began to attack the heathen fastnesses east of the Rhine at the close of the 7th and at the beginning of the 8th century. With them the Roman music came back into Europe and was established among the converts in Western Germany. What might have been the outcome of the Irish influence from the point of view of ecclesiastical development generally and of music in particular is an interesting academic speculation. Unfortunately Danish inroads began to affect the security of Ireland as a home of learning, while in Europe itself there rose to power in the latter part of the 8th century a ruler in whom were united a genius for conquest and a passion for the customs of Rome. The Emperor Charlemagne ruled over practically all the West but Britain and the greater part of Spain before his death in 814 A.D. He established the Gregorian music throughout his dominions and swept all other types away. Ambrosian collections were destroyed and little remains to witness to their

character but reminiscences prevailing in the Spanish rite.

The magic spell of Rome upon his semi-barbarous imagination was reinforced by influences of a more personal kind. Charlemagne was eager for a revival of learning throughout the West, and his chief lieutenant was the English Alcuin from the now famous school of York. Under these auspices the Benedictine monasteries began to assume the character of schools of learning, elementary indeed, but full of promise of greater things. This promise was fulfilled at the close of the period of political chaos which succeeded the death of the Emperor. In connection with these monasteries, schools of music were set up similar to those already established at Rome, Canterbury, and York. Such schools were founded in France at Soissons, Cambrai, Sens, Toul, Dijon, Orleans, and Lyons, while in Germany those of Mainz and Trèves were perhaps chief in importance.

The newly established music found a powerful stimulus and support from a quarter entirely unexpected by Gregory himself. It was in union with Gregorian song that the organ began to take that place in support of religious music with which to-day it is so generally associated.

Ecclesiastical historians have hardly given sufficient weight to the importance of music in the expansion of the primacy of Rome in the Wes-

tern Church. Uniformity of musical expression was a factor of immense importance in the earlier centuries. It effected at least as much as legal fiction and political opportunity in raising the Pope to that position which he held by the close of the 12th century. From the time of this establishment of uniformity under Charlemagne, the organ began to take an intimate place in the maintenance of the Church's solemnities—finally coming to modify the rendering of the Mass itself.

It was in Spain and England that the organ seems to have found its earliest footing within the ecclesiastical sphere. The organ at Sherborne is mentioned in the 7th century by Bishop Aldhelm. In the next century Charlemagne's predecessor had been presented with one by the Byzantine Emperor. But in Constantinople it was probably a secular instrument, the descendant of those in use in pagan Rome in the 1st century. Charlemagne caused instruments to be introduced into some of the greater churches on the continent. In the century following his death, organs increased in numbers and capacity. Rome itself would have nothing to do with them, and even now the Sistine Chapel does not admit such music. Yet from time to time the organ has suffered violence from the fury of iconoclasts who see in it a clear symbol of popery. In a

sense their prejudice is better founded than they know.

In the 10th century some remarkable organs were set up in England. Dunstan erected one for the monks at Malmesbury, while an instrument of enormous proportions was built at Winchester. This organ had 400 pipes and 26 pairs of bellows, necessitating the services of no less than 70 blowers. Later in the century considerable improvements in construction were made by Gerbert of Aurillac, while a teacher at the cathedral school of Rheims. A great mathematician, he had acquired special knowledge from the Moors through residence within the Spanish marches. His inventive skill brought him a somewhat dangerous reputation, which he hardly threw off by becoming Bishop of Rome as Sylvester II.

By the eleventh century, the time when the great intellectual revival began to set in, nearly all cathedrals and many of the larger churches of Western Europe had organs. It should be realized however that until much later in the Middle Ages the instrument was of very limited capacity. It did not actually accompany the choir. It gave the intonations, and must have sounded much like the pedal organ of to-day. The keys had to be thumped down, two players being necessary to play in octave. But despite what seem to us such serious disabilities the

organ played a conspicuous part in confirming the establishment of the Latin music.

But even yet the story is not completely told. Personal influence of rulers, even when seconded by special instrumental support, could not have assured to the Gregorian system the final success which it achieved. It needed something more to preserve it from the hazards of such uncertain periods in human affairs as that which succeeded the age of Charlemagne. It could not have maintained itself till its champion arose, had it not possessed something that had been denied even to Jewish music. That essential safeguard was a system of notation. For this it was indebted to the East. The invention of *neumes* is generally attributed to S. Ephraim of Edessa, a Syrian Father. This great hymnologist died in 378 A.D. His system of notation may have reached Milan in the time of Ambrose. But this is uncertain. Gregory however was able to take full advantage of it. Very odd it looks to modern eyes with its fourteen characters indicating notes and modulations. But it was a great advance, and it made possible the preservation of a written tradition during times in which oral tradition could easily have perished.

In this work of preservation the Benedictine monasteries played the chief part. During the 9th and 10th centuries Europe reached its darkest hours. Political chaos was enhanced by the

desperate and far-reaching inroads of the Northmen. The work of Charlemagne in every department seemed in danger of complete overthrow.

Nevertheless even in the darkest hour light never actually disappeared. It was not a matter of accident that we find developing in the 11th century a great school of Church Music in Northern France, where Paris gradually was becoming the great intellectual centre of the West. Though monasteries and abbeys might be destroyed, as they were through the length and breadth of the West, the Benedictines saw to it that the fruits of Gregory's labours were not lost. Musical schools persisted, and some attempt is seen to elaborate the opportunities of the singer. Hucbald, of S. Armand in Flanders (born 840, A.D.), experimented with part singing on the Plainsong basis, adding discant to the ordinary melody. To modern ears the actual acoustic effect of his productions is barbarous in the extreme. But his work marks an important advance in music both for itself and as an adjunct to public worship. Another prominent contemporary worker in the same field was Notker, the monk of St. Gall. St. Gall was one of the great Irish foundations of an earlier date. There the Gregorian music had been introduced for the first time in 790, A.D., and the original manuscript of this Antiphonary, the

oldest extant, is still preserved. Notker was both a composer and a conspicuous musical theorist, and played no inconsiderable part in the preparation for that advance in the sphere of religious music which took place in later medieval times.

So by the labour of one and another, by strokes of good fortune, and by their own intrinsic merit, the Gregorian settings to the Church's worship had won a settled place in France and Germany as well as Italy at the opening of the Middle Ages. Such parts of Spain as remained Christian after the conquests of the Moors maintained their older forms. In England alone, by irony of circumstance, the Roman music seems to have fallen short of utter conquest.

# CHAPTER VII

## MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE AGES

It will have become clear that it is more easy to trace the progress of religious music in the period subsequent to the 6th century than in that preceding it. The earlier period of persecution, followed as it was from the beginning of the 4th century by dogmatic discords and a growing separation of West from East, offered but narrow scope for development in what may be called the arts of the Church—architecture, sculpture, painting and music. Certain phases of development are to be seen; but they tend to be elusive, as they are generally local in significance.

After the 6th century the East began to settle down to a somewhat uncompromising conservatism, which was hardened owing to the necessity of self-defence against Mahomet. Egypt and North Africa in turn were overrun by the Moslems, who also intruded themselves into Spain. The flourishing Christianity of the Churches which had bred S. Athanasius and S. Augustine quickly became a thing of the past.

In the West, however, despite circumstances in many ways unfavourable, there was no such conservatism and no such destruction. We ob-

serve a growing unity of development in ecclesiastical affairs which, beginning with Gregory I, reached a climax in the papacy of his namesake, Gregory VII.

From that point onwards—the second half of the 11th century—we have to deal with a Medieval Europe: a period characterized by a unity even more marked than that of its predecessor, till its death-knell was rung in the Renaissance and the Reformation. The contribution of this age to Christian worship and devotion is one which cannot be overlooked. It is perpetually re-enforcing itself upon the imagination. Nevertheless it was not on the side of music that the greatest advances were made. Other forms of church art came to perfection and had exhausted their potentialities before music came into its true kingdom. For that consummation we have to wait until the more modern period.

The most enduring achievement of the Middle Ages lies in the expression of religious idealism through material forms. It was in architecture and its concomitant arts that the medieval spirit discovered its opportunity of realizing itself. The progress can be traced from the utilitarian to the ideal; from its beginnings in plain buildings of the Roman type to the splendid climax in which enchantment is held captive in grey stone. The great Abbey and Cathedral edifices which were

beginning to take form during the early days of the period were not raised to meet the need of congregations. They enshrined the religious idea: they were to stimulate the soul to wonder, awe and aspiration.

Music can hardly be said to have fulfilled so high and full a function till a much later date. There was no parallel development. Music halted a long way behind. Its capacities were hidden and the conditions of advance were longer in disclosing themselves. It was only after the progress of architecture had reached its apogee, after the point had been reached at which only elaboration became possible and decadence was at hand, that music began to come into its own.

Curiously enough, the very influences which went to debase architecture were those which gave music a wider scope and higher possibilities. The result is that it has been finding ways to transcend, if that were possible, the actual achievement of architecture. It was the Renaissance with its return to classical and pagan usage which put a term to the development of Christian architecture. The revival of pagan models meant the abandonment of the pure inspiration of Christian art. There is a gulf separating St. Peter's at Rome from Notre Dame in Paris, well nigh as wide as that separating the worship of Jupiter from the religion of Jesus Christ.

Music on the other hand needed to be freed from ecclesiastical bondage, from consecration merely to the demands of Christian song before it could really discover its own hidden potentialities. It had to be paganized, to come back to that rhythmic form from which it had been divorced in ecclesiastical usage all through the Middle Ages. It had to be freed from the tyranny of the voice, through dance and other forms, before it could reach the stage of fully independent appeal.

In point of fact, music was more tardy even than painting in discovering itself. Colour like sculpture was at first subservient to the expression of the religious idea in architecture. Simple didactic frescoes, with their ancient classical filiations, following the demands of the Gothic building, melted into coloured glass. Nevertheless, comparatively early there arose a line of painters, more particularly in Italy and Flanders, who gradually produced the independent imaginative picture symbolizing and expressing the religious idea. There was nothing in music by the end of the 14th century which could really compare in parallel development with the wonderful paintings of Van Eyck.

The only way of escape for music lay in the free development of instrumental art. Words after all, however poetic their imagery, are helpless in the face of the deeper emotions and the

highest truth. In subservience to words, however transcendently the service is performed, music has limitations which were hardly guessed at in the Middle Ages. Its finest products did not contemplate the use of instruments but were *a capella* compositions. The scope of music had been much wider in pre-Christians times, though its actual technical development was far in arrear of that point of excellence to which the service of religion had brought it. In the service of the drama and the dance however its emotional appeal had covered a wider range. The Renaissance freed music from its narrower trammels, and re-opened to academic consideration the earlier channels of expression in which it still flowed in popular usage. The result was beyond expectation. Music was enabled in course of time to offer Religion an inspiration and support hitherto unequalled. The music of Palestrina, though subsequent in production to the Middle Ages proper, was the supreme achievement of the medieval system. We have only to compare the nature of his contribution with that of Bach to understand the character of the change.

Bearing these points in mind, we proceed first to examine the actual development during the Middle Ages. It was almost entirely a development within the sphere of Religion. Though in the 12th and 13th centuries Troubadour and

Minnesinger may claim a share, it was no important one. The subsequent efforts of the Meistersingers had even less effect. Neither music nor poetry was very much advanced by the contests in which they engaged. The Troubadour is looked upon generally as a very secular type. But the tone of his music could not escape that which was prevalent within the Church. The very love songs which were in vogue at a much later date in the Court of France provided the melody to which the earliest Reformation psalms were set. The tone of all such compositions would be termed ecclesiastical to-day. And such is certainly the case with the most famous of the Troubadours even of Provence. The haunting melodies of Adam de la Hale (13th century) are not at all suggestive of secular tone. The only really secular music during the period was confined to simple folk-song. Secular music in its higher flights was dependent upon contemporary developments within the ecclesiastical sphere, while its very contests were often held within the church walls.

The real potency of music depends mainly upon harmonic structure. The task of the medieval musician therefore was to learn how to fill in the outline provided in the simple melody. Just as painting needs background and perspective to please the eye, so music needs the richer effect of being written in parts to satisfy

the ear. But while there is reason to believe, as we shall see later, that in Celtic music there was a natural harmony, neither Greek nor Hebrew nor other ancient music seems to have got beyond the octave. It is possible of course that arpeggios were played on stringed instruments. But such instruments found no permanent home in Latin Christendom. All that the medieval musician had to work upon were the meticulous rules of later Greek theorists preserved mainly in the work of Boethius.* So it came about that when progress became possible, advance was delayed by over-emphasis on theoretical speculation as to the true canons of harmony. This was in fact the chief reason for the slower progress of music as compared with the other arts. In painting and sculpture the canons were visible, while in architecture the difficulty seems to have been overcome experimentally.

Three conditions had to be fulfilled before any real advance could be made. The first was a cultivation of musical feeling. Outside Celtic circles there seems to have been at the outset but small realization of discordance in sound. Combinations which affright the modern ear were accepted without astonishment in the early Middle Ages. The other needs were less æsthetic than practical. They were a simple scale which would systematize the modes in

* *De Institutione Musica.*

vogue, and a system for symbolizing sound more advanced than that which had been provided by S. Ephraem.

The first great achievement in these directions was that of Guido of Arezzo. He had had his predecessors in Hucbald and Notker. But he was more independent and more originative. Guido was the first of a line of great figures in the medieval period who strove with music with a view to elicit its latent possibilities. Berengar, of Tours, Anselm and Lanfranc were in part his contemporaries. His work therefore was performed at a time when the beginnings are found of those striking intellectual developments which were soon to find further manifestation in the growth of the Universities. The Cluniac Reformation which had begun to cleanse monastic life in the 10th century was now bearing rich fruit, and already the monastic and cathedral schools of Italy were dispersing a new culture beyond the Alps.

Guido's contribution to music was the actual foundation of the method upon which the present notation is based. He also invented the system of solmization and produced theories of his own on the actual construction of counterpoint. His services won for him from his contemporaries the title of Inventor Musicae.

Guido's work was continued in northern France, where Paris was fast becoming a great

home of learning. Till the final climax of mediæval religious music is found in Orlando Lassus and Palestrina, Italy, Northern France and Flanders vied with one another in the production of continental Church music. But the greatest contribution during the Middle Ages proper came from the Flemish school, which devoted itself strenuously to the elaboration of counterpoint and canonic writing.

The development of polyphony in place of simple melody limited the actual expression of worship more and more to trained singers. The body of the congregation had no such part as it performed in the days of S. Ambrose. Difficulties of language had intervened. Latin was no longer the tongue of the people, though it still remained the language of the Church. Choirs became a matter of necessity, except in monastic foundations where all could sing and understand. These choirs consisted of bodies of clerks in minor orders. Reminiscences of this state of things are to be found embedded in the present English prayer book, as well as in continued practice in our cathedrals.

A change now begins to come over the central Christian service. As we have seen, in early days musical expression found variety and scope more in the Proper than in the Ordinary of the Mass. There it was provided with changing melodies for changing psalms and antiphons.

But after choirs had learned through the gradual formulation of rules of consonance and dissonance to combine four or more melodies in one, the tendency arose to seize upon the Ordinary of the Mass as the one fixed element of the service and reserve it for special musical treatment—building up congruent settings for all the parts of the one whole. The fashion began in France, and only won admission in Rome at a later date. There it was one of the consequences of the so-called Babylonian captivity—the popes having taken up residence at Avignon under the protection of the kings of France during the greater part of the 14th century. Gregory XI is thought to have introduced it on his return to Rome.

The *cantus firmus*, as the melody was styled, around which the earlier elaboration of parts was made, was first of all a Plainsong theme. Gradually, however, rein was given to other tendencies, only too frequently found in ecclesiastical music. There arose over-emphasis on the music at the expense of the actual words of the service. It got to matter little to some composers whether the whole text of the Mass was provided for, and not unfrequently other verbal texts were introduced or superimposed upon the original. Side by side with this tendency was another even more unfortunate, of using secular and even ribald tunes as themes. In many cases the effect must have been grotesque in the extreme. The same

tendency crops out in sculptured art. It is not always objects of piety that we find carved in the stonework of the medieval church.

This latter tendency, however deplorable, witnessed to the exhaustion of Gregorian themes. It was an important step towards a new advance —the production of original melodies. Josquin des Près (1440-1521), a singer belonging to the Papal Chapel, appears to be the first conspicuous composer of new religious tunes. He is not free from the reproach of using popular tunes as well. So he stands at the point of transition to better things. Several original masses stand to his credit. Through his pupil Goudimel, he is the musical ancestor of Palestrina (1514-1594).

With Des Près we find the beginning of a new order of musical possibilities. He it was who first began to grasp the function of music as an actual language. Plainsong tones had certainly afforded opportunities for joy or sorrow to find fitting expression. But Des Près went further. He made a beginning in the actual manifestation of thought in sound. Music was thus started on the way of becoming a medium of expression for the deeper emotional verities. Before this time it had merely stimulated and assisted such expression in action or word. Though the beginnings were but small, this was a most important advance, coming to fuller manifestation as instrumental music came into its kingdom.

The Renaissance movement was in full flood before the medieval music had manifested its full power. With the Renaissance and its consequences in the sphere of music we have to deal. But for the moment we must keep to the older thread.

The outward unity of Western Christendom was broken up during the epoch of the Reformation, a movement which really began in the second decade of the 16th century. Certain abuses in the older ecclesiastical system led to a widespread revolt, with results far-reaching on every side of religious life. The most outstanding feature of the whole movement was the denial of the hegemony of the Bishop of Rome by large sections of Western Christendom. This necessitated an attempt on the part of those who still owned the Roman allegiance to cleanse and reform the system which had led to the revolt. The attempt was made in the famous Council of Trent which closed in 1563.

Among other things which called for reform the music of worship held no insignificant place. So great had become the general deterioration of music owing to the tendencies already noticed, that the Council had well nigh determined that a return to simple melodic Plainsong should be made. The licence of the Renaissance conditions had not improved the secular tendencies of Church song.

Happily the iconoclastic tendencies of the Council were not given full play. At the instance of Pope Pius IV a commission was appointed to examine the real possibilities of those methods of harmonic construction in the development of which the musical history of the Middle Ages is summed up. So it came about that Palestrina was selected as an exponent of their fitness to be considered proper adjuncts to religious worship. Three Masses were composed, the success of which, particularly of that called after Pope Marcellus, assured the retention of polyphonic music.

The fruits of six centuries of varied toil were thus preserved. A new school of music was set up in Rome from which Palestrina and his friend Nanini strove to permeate the reformed Latin communion with a true ideal of religious music. "As long as religion lasts, Palestrina's music will be the purest and loftiest form in which it has been expressed."*

Nevertheless, despite the union of genius and opportunity, Palestrina was unable to make a permanent impression on the Church's worship. The influences flowing from the Renaissance, to which religious music owes much, were not all of them in favour of religion. In the process of gaining greater freedom of expression through union with instrumental forms, the music of wor-

* Parry, *Studies of great composers*

ship in the Latin Church soon lost its true religious tone.

Much had been achieved by the Middle Ages. Unjustifiable developments apart, music had become a great stimulus to devotion, as well as a clear medium of devotional expression. But its highest function, the suggestion of spiritual verities, had yet to be realized. Curiously enough, for that consummation, it had to wait till a time when religion itself was beginning to sink to a low ebb all over Europe. It is not until the 18th century that the fullest religious possibilities of music disclose themselves. It then soars out of the sphere of mere utility and begins to match itself against the medieval poetry in stone. Historically it is a far cry from the fugue and prelude of Bach to the long drawn aisle and fretted vault; but it is no far cry in fact.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THE RENAISSANCE AND ITS MAIN EFFECTS

THE Renaissance, or Revival of Letters, is a term applied to a movement which began in the latter half of the 15th century. Schism with the East had cut off Latin Christianity from participating in the possession of those treasures of poetry and philosophy in which the temper of pre-Christian Greece had been preserved. When learning began to revive in the early Middle Ages, philosophers had to trust for their material to translations of Greek works which reached them largely through Moorish sources. In the 15th century, however, the pressure of the Moslems upon Eastern Europe, held back for so long by series of crusades, became overwhelming. In 1453 Constantinople fell into their hands. Greek scholars bringing with them treasures of ancient learning, began to flood over into Italy, where the materials of civilization and culture had accumulated already with greater rapidity than elsewhere, Italy having become the centre of exchange between the West and the farther East.

There ensued a classical and pagan revival,

the general outlines of which will be sufficiently clear to the English reader of George Eliot's "Romola" or Charles Reade's "The Cloister and the Hearth." This revival affected every side of life, spreading gradually into other countries in the West, and providing in more ways than one both fuel and fire for the later movement of religious reform. Renewed study of the earliest Christian documents gave to scholars beyond the Alps material of the first importance to the task of reviewing the later and less attractive developments of Latin Christianity. The reversion to pagan ideals on the part of many of the most prominent Italian churchmen afforded no small justification for the series of revolts against the Roman obedience which took place subsequently in the North. "God hath given us the Papacy, let us enjoy it" was the exclamation of a famous Medici Cardinal just elected to the spiritual leadership of the West. It was the shameless hawking out of pardons to pay for the new paganized fane of S. Peter at Rome, which provoked the first outburst of the reformer Luther.

The general effect of the Renaissance upon the progress of music has already been noticed. For a thousand years all musical advance had been made under the aegis of the Church. Those limitations of its character which had prevailed since the days of S. Ambrose were

now disregarded in the new liberty of thought and action which it was the privilege of the new age to bestow. Art of all kinds, formerly pursued for the sake of Religion, began to arrogate more independent functions. Architecture, sculpture and painting broke back to classical models—though the older inspiration still remained and was followed till well on into the 17th century. Music followed the same course though the signs of its actual departure become clear at a date somewhat later than that of its co-partners in the arts of the Church.

The change was rapidly approaching on the side of music before the time of Palestrina's death. It is associated largely with the rise and progress of Opera, though madrigal and dance bore their subordinate part.

Opera was born in Florence. In the year 1580 a society was founded for the study of ancient Greek drama with a view to the revival of musical and dramatic declamation. The first opera, "Dafne," was produced in 1594.

In one sense the new departure was a kind of secular counterpart to the more purely religious experiment known as Oratorio, which began in 1540, also at Florence. Oratorio, which took its name from its birth-place, the oratory of S. Philip Neri, was the older Miracle or Mystery play in a Renaissance dress. Such plays were familiar features in the life of the Middle Ages.

Mystery plays were representations of Old and New Testament stories bearing on the Fall and Redemption of Man. The Miracle play proper was a dramatized version of the life of a saint. Originally, like oratorio, these plays took place near or within the buildings of the Church, the earliest players being clergy. Their general vogue was from the 12th to the 16th century, when drama of a more secular type began to take their place. The last known play in England took place in 1580 at Coventry. A continental survival of this type of play is found still in the Passion Play of Oberammergau. By the 13th century they were commonly held in all towns of any standing at Christmas and Easter, the Christmas depictions dealing with the Fall and leading to the birth of Christ; those at Easter dealing with the events from the Passion to the Ascension. Early in the 14th century the two sets were brought together—at any rate such was the case in England. They were performed then by the town guilds on Corpus Christi Day.

These plays, originally didactic in purpose, tended in time to offer scope for buffoonery, and their original religious purpose lost much of its force. But they had given considerable scope to popular religious music. They were, in fact, the progenitors of the carol. S. Philip Neri endeavoured to re-introduce the religious atmos-

phere which had become so attenuated. He caused religious allegories and gospel scenes to be produced within the chapel of S. Maria in Vallicella. Incidental music was allowed, and recitative alternated with chorus. Palestrina himself was partly responsible for the music.

From such simple beginnings Oratorio as we know it to-day first sprang, whether in the narrower sense as Passion Music or in the wider of Religious Cantata. From such simple beginnings Opera also gleaned its inspiration and its method. Oratorio proper was inaugurated in 1600 in the performance of *L'Anima e Corpo* by Cavaliere. This, as the title would suggest, was really a kind of symbolic Mystery Play. It corresponded with Opera in surroundings and stage effects as Opera corresponded with it in form. Both types of performance in fact followed at first much the same lines—*musica parlante*, chorus and ritornello. The declamatory parts were sung with the support of the theorbo or harpsichord.

The ritornello or musical interlude gave an opportunity to orchestral music. Instrumental music was now struggling for an utterance of its own. The organ had already discovered its power of producing elementary symphony by combining four or more melodies in one, after the fashion of vocal music. This aptitude seems to have been hit upon at Florence late in the 14th

century. Gradually the example was imitated on clavichord and virginal. Combinations of other instruments were experimented with, and by the close of the 16th century orchestras were in being.

Chamber music had been coming slowly into fashion during the century and a beginning had been made already in the work of utterance by conveying impressions of natural phenomena instrumentally. This was a useful preliminary to the later development in which ideas themselves were to find expression in sound.

The more secular of the Florentine revivals in course of time tended to give the tone to its congener. And not only so; the Mass itself fell under the influence of Opera. Orchestras were admitted in the performance of the service of the Mass at the same time as their place became secure in Opera. At first no great difference is discoverable between the new secular and religious music—whether of Oratorio or Mass—than can be discovered between that of Troubadour and clerk in the Middle Ages, or of Protestant psalmody and Parisian love-song.

Real secularity of tone took some little time to develop. But all through the 17th century the actual transition was being effected.. There is little noticeable difference in style between the opera music of Caccini and that of Carissimi's oratorio. But soon after the first half of the

century the distinction between the old and new becomes very marked in France, where opera was first introduced in 1659. When Charles II introduced this lighter music into the worship of his private chapel, the English ear at any rate was quick to grasp how wide the gulf between secular and religious had then become.

With the adoption of orchestra, the music of the Mass took over the opera style with recitative chorus and interlude. It adopted also the opera singer, till gradually it lost its true religious bearing, becoming little but a monument of virtuosity. Great names are to be found among offenders in this matter. Haydn, Cherubini, Verdi and Gounod are all among those who followed fashion and neglected spiritual propriety. "This is Church music," wrote Hauptmann of Palestrina's Masses, "all other music is something different."* He wrote in a day when all other music as far as the Roman Church was concerned was indeed something different.

Only of late years has a real attempt been made to throw off the baneful influence of concert music and re-introduce that which really strives to match the spirit of the Liturgy. It was forgotten that when music shares the duty of expression with words enshrining a message of their own its function is not to dominate but to serve. And the actual religious possibilities

* Hauptmann (1794-1868), a well known musical theorist.

of music seem to have been overlooked also. The result has been the creation of a situation almost analogous to that existing when the Council of Trent was in session. Reaction has set in; and papal rescripts in favour of plain song as the music of worship are a sign of the natural revolt which was bound to occur against a fashion in which the first principles of Christian worship tended to get lost.

To return to Oratorio. Here, as we have said, the same secularizing influences asserted themselves as in the music of the Mass. Oratorio held its place as a distinctively ecclesiastical performance till Handel (1685-1759) brought about its connection with the stage. By his time it had lost its actual dramatic character and had become a religious cantata not inappropriate to the concert room. As such it provides at the present time well-nigh the chief spiritual pabulum of large classes of our own people in the industrial North. Originally conceived as a handmaid to religion it has become in some parts a popular fetish commanding the worship of greater congregations than any altar in the kingdom. Moreover Oratorio has been in great favour with the extremer forms of Anglo-Saxon protestantism, the Biblical character of its libretto being uncompromised by any real ecclesiastical bias in its music. For such religionists it has formed a kind of Cathedral standard through which the

narrower prejudices of earlier forms of worship have been broken down. That is doubtless an achievement, but outside the mind of its originators and certainly beneath the standard which they proposed for it.

Were it not for the imperishable contribution to music of this type of Bach, Handel's contemporary, (1685-1750), the original function which it was meant to serve might have become obliterated. Oratorio gave Bach the opportunity of writing his magnificent Passion Music to the Gospel stories of S. Matthew and S. John. The attraction to the Passion which is characteristic of earlier German work in the same sphere seems to have arisen from a feeling for the evangelical doctrine of the Cross which was relatively stronger in Lutheran circles than elsewhere. Bach fully justified the original purpose of Oratorio. His contribution is more nearly akin to the religious drama of S. Philip Neri, both in form and spirit, than that of any other writer within the same sphere. The re-introduction of Oratorio into the actual service of the Sanctuary is the result of his work. It is a happy sign of the growing religious understanding of modern times.

The name of Johann Sebastian Bach is associated with things infinitely greater than the true rendering of the spirit of Oratorio. His real greatness lies in his contribution to the language

of Music as a vehicle of Truth. The meaning of this achievement will be noticed subsequently. It is however recognized universally that in his work Music begins to fight on equal terms with the architecture of an earlier age for the wonder and admiration of the world.

The school of music which reached its highest point of power in Palestrina achieved great things: but it could not achieve the impossible. Styled *nuova musica*, its filiations were not with the new but with the old. Working under the limitations even then obtaining, there were heights beyond its range of vision. If Palestrina found an alphabet and made a rich vocabulary, Bach took a vocabulary and transformed it into a tongue.

" Music," wrote Cardinal Newman in a noble passage quoted by his admirer, Mr. Bellasis, " Music is the expression of ideas greater and more profound than any in the visible world, ideas whch centre in Him Who is the seat of all beauty, order and perfection whatever." It was not the operatic Masses after the French and Italian manner, it was not even the unequalled " a capella " compositions of Palestrina, which made possible such an expression of belief. Through the instrumentality of Mendelssohn and Samuel Wesley, Bach's contribution, though so long unnoticed, had wrought its influence on the Western world.

It was in Bach that the Renaissance and Reformation movements first found an adequate expression in terms of music. Hitherto instrumental music had been aiming chiefly at sensuous beauty of sound. In Bach's hands it became a vehicle of ideal revelation. It speaks the very language of the soul.

Bach's great medium of expression was the organ, which now comes into a kingdom never again to be disputed. On the organ Bach asserts and maintains his supremacy among all musicians of whatever age. In his day this instrument was still of highest development among its lesser rivals. Its adaptation to true ecclesiastical style in music had been carried to considerable lengths in Germany, where, since the Reformation, it had been vouchsafed greater opportunities than elsewhere. In the Roman communion the only real opportunity lay in extemporization of interludes during processions. In the English Church organs were used simply to support the choir. They had no pedals until a comparatively late date. Pedals however had been invented in Germany as far back as 1325. Reed stops were added in the following century. At the Reformation under the encouragement of Luther the congregational chorale became an established part of Protestant worship, and the chorale soon began to lend itself to artistic development on the organ in the form of Preludes.

Here Bach found a great opportunity. In the chorales many of the older ecclesiastical tones had been preserved. Working with such material as well as giving rein to his own genius, he produced some of the most beautiful and characteristic examples of his art. The true spirit of devotion expresses itself in the outpouring of a great heart.

But this spirit finds an even deeper manifestation in the Fugues, which go beyond expression to suggestion of the most tremendous order. Theme after theme suggests or embodies ideas essentially religious in a manner so inspiring that the force of Newman's apothegm comes home unavoidably. "Perhaps," he once said, "Thought is Music." When we consider under how limited conditions Bach had to work in order to achieve the presentation of his ideas—that apart from the antique contrapuntal manner of the fugue all that offered was the sonata form hardly yet emancipated from the suite—his success stands out as nothing short of gigantic.

Bach was the supreme gift of Lutheranism to the service of religion. Considerable figures in the musical world have appeared in Germany since his day, but lacking the same inspiration and power. And history has shown that Lutheranism is lacking in those qualities which can appreciate and foster the message of its greatest son. A message so deep in meaning and so

catholic in spirit demanded a religious setting more receptive and aspiring. Bach's message is enshrined more completely in conditions more catholic than those within which he worked. It was the revival of English Church music in the 19th century, with its great development of organ music, encouraged by Mendelssohn and carried out by Walmesley, S. S. Wesley, and Goss, which gave Bach's music a setting and an influence more fitting to its worth. It is one of the ironies of history that Bach, whom Handel had overlooked, should have played so great a part in that revival which the influence of Handel had made at last so necessary.

> "To thee the lords of song ascribe their fame,
> For thee the chiming spheres attune their fires;
> To all the ends of earth thy glorious name
> Resounds, while high in heaven immortal lyres
> Salute thee, and the streets of gold acclaim
> Thy worth with plaudits of celestial choirs."*

Since the time of the Reformation music has had a scope within the English Church wider than that offered elsewhere in Christendom. It has had the opportunity of fulfilling all the functions possible to it within the religious sphere. Not always has the scope or the opportunity been appreciated. Nevertheless the sum total of achievement within the English Church is greater than can be shown elsewhere. The Roman Church, though it is tending in imitation of the

* Hayes: *J. S. Bach* in *The cup of Quietness.*

practices of others to give greater scope to actual congregational worship, is debarred by the language of its liturgy from offering the possibilities open since the Reformation to English church folk. Moreover, wonderful as its achievements in the music of the sanctuary have been, their deficiencies from the more purely religious view have been obvious.

The contribution of Calvinism is negligible, and continues so to-day in all communions which preserve the Calvinistic spirit. Among the more modern Protestants, where elaboration of worship is allowed, the music is purely imitative and drawn from extraneous sources.

In the Eastern Church music, like theological expression, tends to remain where it was after its reform in the earlier Christian centuries. In the Greek Church proper, singing is left to clergy and choir, and the music is of a primitive order reminiscent of the ancient tones. No part-singing even gained a place till late in the 19th century, while instrumental music is still considered unsuitable to sacred uses. In Russia things are practically in the same condition.

How the English Church has used its opportunity the following chapters will attempt to show. Progress has not been uniform, nor has it always been maintained at one and the same time in all the departments in which musical expression is permissible and of value. During the

past century the bulk of achievement has been great and fully worthy of a glorious past. The best of the older traditions in conjunction with the fuller resources of the present have established a union of the practical and the æsthetic in ways before unthought of and elsewhere impossible.

How so desirable a consummation has been brought about and what factors contributed to its successful issue it will be now our business to enquire.

# CHAPTER IX

## REFORMATION PSALMODY AND MODERN HYMNODY

THE general change in the religious and social life of Western Europe which is associated with the Reformation was a product of causes too numerous for our present consideration. Beginning among Teutonic peoples in the revolt of Luther, and continued in the Romance world by Calvin, its breach with the past issued in the creation of new types of religious services among its several adherents.

Important consequences accrued which affected the bearing and claims of music. While there was a tendency on some sides to cling to older forms of worship, there were equally tendencies on others to part entirely with ancient tradition and to reconstitute Christian worship in accordance with individual desires. With all however there was the general principle of making the form of worship more congregational. In Germany, and also in England, as much of the older form was maintained as was consistent with modifications adopted in doctrinal standards. But the Puritan spirit, manifested first in Calvin and carried to its logical conclusion in English protestant

nonconformity, was essentially iconoclastic. Neither beauty in surroundings nor elaboration in performance was permitted in Divine worship. Music as an art fell under a ban which is by no means wholly removed even at the present time. It was a popish, or at the best, a worldly invasion of the sanctuary.

Nevertheless even under these least favourable conditions a new element of progress is observable. An advantage lost in one direction was gained in another. Popular vocal melody—so long as it was not sung in parts—was unsuspected of taint even by the most extreme innovators. The Reformation movement therefore on all sides witnessed an outburst of popular religious song the more striking as it had been so long denied.

The growth and development of this form of religious music, with its consequences upon modern practice is the subject of our present enquiry. It will lead us chiefly into consideration of the congregational aspect of post-Reformation English Church worship.

As regards Europe generally, the part of the laity in the offering of praise within the building of the churches became more restricted as the Middle Ages advanced. The chief congregational service was the Mass, and its musical expression demanded an ever growing expert knowledge, which was confined to the clergy and

trained singing men. Almost the only opportunity for the laity arose when some secular melody disclosed itself as the *cantus firmus*. Then they would join in with astonishing vigour, using the words of the secular ditty. Whatever may have been the case in England, and that point has yet to be discussed, practically the only other way in which provision was made for the laity was found in such curious liturgical manifestations as those connected with the Feast of Asses, where liberties were permitted more astonishing than pleasing to the modern mind. Oddly enough the popular sequence in that service is preserved in the tune generally sung to the well-known hymn, "Soldiers who are Christ's below."

Nearly all great religious movements have been marked by outbursts of song on the part of the laity. Reformers, orthodox or unorthodox, have realized its value. So it was in the 16th century. The introduction of the vernacular, whether wholly or in part as the language of devotion in the place of Latin, gave to popular song an opportunity which it was not slow to accept. The chief difficulty lay in the choice of what to sing. True, the Psalms were soon available in translated form. But for the most part people could not read; they could only sing something which they could get by heart, like the ballads in use on secular occasions. With this they were

soon provided. Luther in Germany hit upon the device of the chorale. The office was performed for Romance protestantism by a much less likely person.

It is again one of the ironies of history that the more extreme forms of Puritanism were indebted to a notorious writer of love songs for their material in congregational praise. In 1542 Clement Marot published fifty-two Psalms in metre, set to the music used for other purposes at the French Court. Despite the fact that their source as well as that of their music was equally disreputable, these Psalms became immensely popular on the continent. Calvin adopted them, and Beza, his successor, added a version of those remaining.

From this time onwards the metrical psalm began to take a conspicuous place in the worship of large bodies of Protestants. It was often the merest doggerel, but it answered a need and provided an opportunity. It came to England at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign (1559), when the exiles of the reign of Mary returned from abroad. It was Calvinism, absorbed in Frankfort and Geneva, to which these refugees were attached. English Puritanism therefore received its song from French and not from Lutheran sources. True, Coverdale's *Goostly Psalmes and Spirituall Songes* had introduced a Lutheran element in 1539. But its influence was

as slight as its existence. Sternhold and Hopkins produced an imitation of Marot which, set to ballad and dance tunes, soon caught the popular fancy.

Though deprecated by the ecclesiastical authorities, the popular fancy forced its will upon the actual services of the English Church. It became necessary to issue formal license to permit the singing of these psalms before and after the ordinary offices. Thousands would assemble at S. Paul's Cross early in the reign of Elizabeth to participate in the new devotions.

The adoption of such Psalmody within the Church was assisted doubtless by the fact that official Church Music in England clung to pre-Reformation ideals of liturgical music. Though the English services were now in the vernacular, officially there was no attempt to follow the customs of continental Protestants. In that sense the Reformation settlement in England was peculiar. There was no such breach with Catholic tradition as occurred upon the continent.

Nevertheless, whatever the official position, continental manners asserted themselves, with the result that though the same Prayer Book was used, two distinct types of service came into existence. Where there were " quires and places where they sing "—in cathedral and collegiate churches—the non-congregational ideal of religious music prevailed. " Why is the whole

congregation to sing," wrote Dr. Charles Burney (1726-1814), "any more than preach or read prayers? It does not appear by any passages of the Bible concerning the performance of the Psalms that they were originally intended to be sung by the whole congregation indiscriminately. Singing implies not only a tuneable voice, but skill in Music: for Music either is or is not an Art, or something which nature and instinct do not supply. Every member of a conventicle, however it may abound with cordwainers and taylors, would not pretend to make a shoe or a suit of cloths; and yet in our Churches all are to sing."*

Such was the position in the 18th century. Any approach to congregational music till within living memory was considered unworthy of cathedral services. Elsewhere in the parish church the liturgical parts of the service were reduced to the speaking voice, and the metrical psalm alone gave opportunity for music—a condition of things which often must have justified Burney's wise remark. Tunes were sung in unison, and following generally the continental practice, all sitting. There were no organs in general parochial use, though many of the more important churches had been provided with them since early days.† Stringed and wind instruments

* *History of Music* iii 64 (digested).

† Sometimes these organs were only small "portatives."

were those usually in vogue. When the religious fervour which supported earlier psalmody died out, the services in the ordinary parish churches became unspeakably dull. The custom of "lining out" each psalm two lines at a time, first allowed during the Commonwealth period for the sake of the unlearned, must have been far from elevating even when Sternhold and Hopkins had given way to Tate and Brady.*

The ideal of the extreme reformers, upholding the necessity of purely congregational worship, could not be fitted into the English liturgical system without penalty. It was an ideal impossible under ordinary conditions, because it demanded an educated laity. It was met by failure all along the line. Outside England the music of the reformed communions is crude and unsatisfying. But for the parallel development in England of a more ancient ideal, our own Church music might have been no better. It was from the Cathedral that the rescue came when the deceptiveness of the purely congregational ideal had been laid fully bare.

The highest ideal of worship under ordinary circumstances is to be found in such a union of cathedral and congregational methods as may be possible under any given circumstances. Dr. Burney wrote at a time when educational standards were not high, and when the spiritual bank-

* Authorized by William III in Council, 1696.

ruptcy of Genevan psalmody was only too obvious. To-day conditions are somewhat altered. Another popular form of religious song has been discovered and the general level of congregational ability is such that far higher musical achievements are possible to it than was the case under earlier conditions. The last century has witnessed the steady permeation of the older parochial type of service by cathedral standards; and it is becoming much more generally realized that beauty in worship and inspiration to the worshipper cannot both be expected if music is limited wholly to the compass of the general congregation—whether considered from the vocal, mental or æsthetic point of view.

The way of escape from the *cul de sac* into which metrical psalmody had led the ordinary music of worship was discovered chiefly by the Wesleys. The salvation of the situation lay in the re-discovery of the value and power of the metrical hymn.

Why re-discovery ever became necessary it seems not inappropriate to ask. There were two chief reasons. First of all there was the protestant worship of things scriptural. This gave the psalms even in versified translation a clear advantage over other forms of song. Here lay the chief factor which militated against the growth of natural hymnody within the sphere of Calvinistic influence. So late as the closing decades

of the 18th century we find Romaine, a prominent leader in the Evangelical movement, objecting strongly to hymns on the ground that they were merely human compositions!

The second reason, more valid for the English Church itself, lay in the failure of Cranmer's attempt to translate the old Latin hymns with that felicity which at once approved his work on the ancient collects. The result was that with the exception of the "Veni Creator" in the Ordinal, no hymn was preserved for the Prayer Book services.

This was a serious omission, the more so as it left completely open to Calvinistic psalmody the place which it was fully ready to arrogate to itself. Its actual consequences from that cause alone we have already seen.

But, beyond that, this omission was a dangerous breach in tradition. Hymnody had arisen in the Early Church from the necessity of combating the influence of popular heretical songs in which it had become the fashion of schismatic teachers to enshrine their teaching. S. Ephraem, S. Athanasius and S. Chrysostom each employed the hymn as a weapon of Church defence. Their example was followed and the basis of the hymn was broadened by S. Hilary and S. Ambrose in the West. Forcing its way into the forms of worship, as the metrical psalm did later on, it proved its great value as the metrical psalm did

not. It was adopted by the Benedictine order and inserted in the daily office. Hence the title, "office hymn," by which many of the ancient examples are still known.

No lack of hymn writers of varying merit is found in the period between the 6th century and the Reformation. The medieval writers like S. Bernard, Thomas of Celano, and S. Thomas Aquinas made contributions to the Liturgy itself. Here the sequence, developed at S. Gall from the psalmodic additions to the Alleluia, offered an appropriate field. Two well-known hymns, "Come thou Holy Spirit, come" and "Now my tongue the mystery telling," were written for the sequence by King Robert of France and S. Thomas Aquinas respectively.

All this wonderful development was lost to the English Church at the Reformation, the hymn disappearing as an integral part of public worship everywhere except in the Universities, where Latin liturgical forms were still allowed. The Prayer Book gave its benediction to the non-congregational anthem, and there it was forced to stay. An attempt was made in 1623 by George Wither to re-introduce the ancient practice. His *Hymns and Songs of the Church*, set to music by Orlando Gibbons, excited the discerning admiration of King James. Jealousy however on the part of the Stationers' Company, which was interested in the printing of the Metrical Psalms,

ruined this laudable adventure. Even to-day hymnody as such has no regularized position. The attempt of Cotterell to introduce hymns at Sheffield in the year 1819 led to a suit in the Archbishop's Court. Much later still the practice of Bishop King at Lincoln was one upon which Archbishop Benson had to sit in judgment.

It was not till the opening years of the 18th century that the hymn began to find a vogue. Later in the 17th century Bishop Ken had written his *Morning, Evening, and Midnight Hymns*, but these were simply for academic use at Winchester. The first really great English writer was Dr. Watts, a prominent nonconformist divine. In his hands the hymn began to show possibilities undiscovered in the Latin metrical hymn. The difference is not easy to define, but it is obvious by actual comparison. The new hymn is more emotional and less majestic. It is at once an outlet and a support for spiritual fervour.

The Methodist movement took up the new discovery. John Wesley, following Wither's example, had issued a Church hymn book in 1737, before the work for which he is specially famous was begun. It had but little circulation, but it shews that he had realized the potentialities of the new auxiliary to worship. The success of Methodism must be largely attributed to the adoption of a medium through which it was able

to keep alive in the popular mind the evangelical message of the preacher.

The slowness of the Church in realizing the importance of the hymn is easily accounted for. There was at the time a strong dislike in clerical circles to "enthusiasm," as the religious product of Methodism was styled. This was not all mere prejudice. Anyone who has read Lecky's account of the revival will have to admit that elements of justification for such an attitude were not wanting. There was further a natural reluctance to embrace a usage originating and fostered largely within the circle of nonconformity. Many of the hymns which came into being during the century would not have corresponded with the doctrinal standards of the Church, though of course there was a residuum of outstanding merit having no such disadvantage. Many such are in use within the Church to-day.

Though Dr. Porteus, Bishop of London, declared in 1790 that "Psalmody is now almost totally useless in the Church of England," the custom still held good till well on into the last century. High Churchmen seem to have been particularly averse to any change; the only approaches made to nonconformist practice being made by individual Evangelical clergy.

With the Oxford movement however a school of hymnologists began to grow up within the

Church. It was the inevitable consequence of fresh study of ancient models of worship and new appreciation of their value. Felicitous translations of ancient Greek and Latin hymns were supported by original compositions which can hold their place with any hymns of the past, of whatever origin. At the same time a new school of Church musicians arose foremost among whom perhaps we should set Sir John Goss. A union of words and music became possible which was worthy of the service of the Church. With the hymn music of the 18th century no such consummation would have been possible. That had a florid character of its own which has degenerated into the musical jargon of latter day revivalists.

Thus Anglican congregations have been given opportunities of a fuller kind than heretofore for adding their quota to public worship, while through the training in musical appreciation given in hymn tunes the way has been opened to more complete appreciation of the meaning and power of musical expression. It is hardly too much to say that the Church at large in England has been led through the mediation of ecclesiastical hymnody to rediscover the possibilities of the older musical tradition.

This is not to say that there have been no mistakes. Popular taste has been and often still remains vitiated. The music of many individual

composers famous in their day is far from satisfying the more exacting modern canons. Pursuit of sentimentality has occasionally gone too far. Sweetness at the expense of sense has often been aimed at and achieved. But that makes but little difference to the main line of argument. However glaring the faults of this or that hymnologist, through hymnody the English Church has been able to make perfect the opportunity of music in religious practice; through hymnody English churchfolk have been led to realize the priceless value of their possession.

# CHAPTER X

## MAIN LINES OF ENGLISH PROGRESS

At this point it might be considered that our survey was complete, and that (in view of the data now collected) the time had come to attempt the analysis of the actual function of Music in Religion. Nevertheless there still remains something to be done. "Long before the works and reputation of Palestrina had circulated throughout Europe," writes Dr. Burney, "we had Choral Music of our own, which for gravity of style, purity of harmony, ingenuity of design, and clear and masterly contexture, was equal to the best productions of that truly venerable master."*

Both scientific and patriotic motives combine in compelling a consideration of the development of that ecclesiastic music in England which, with the post Reformation uses just discussed, has given us the actual treasure of to-day. English religious history naturally has many points in common with that of the rest of western Christendom, more particularly during the last thousand years. But here has been no absolute uniformity

* *History of Music* iii 76.

of tradition, and as far as music is concerned, even since the Norman Conquest, development has by no means been limited to imitation—as some have imagined and some still aver.

We must start first with origins, and then follow that development subsequent to the close of the Middle Ages which persisted in the official standards of the Church despite popular acceptance of different ideals.

The nature of the music of Celtic Christianity has been observed already. The British Church, as an organized ecclesiastical society, grew up in the latter part of the 2nd century. It was founded probably by missionaries from Gaul, and Gallican influences prevailed until Britain was cut off from its neighbours by the Saxon invasions of the 5th century. These invasions, by driving the British westward re-inforced the Christianity already existing in Wales, as well as that which was in its infancy in Ireland.

There would have been time before the actual severance from Gaul came about to have absorbed elements of Ambrosian practice, though not impossibly native music had chief influence and place. At a date subsequent to the mission of S. Augustine to the English (597), Christian music in Ireland was based on pre-Christian melodies. Even after the fashion of plain song had spread across to Ireland, the influence of native music continued very clearly marked.

It is extremely probable therefore that the contention as to the position of native music is true with regard to Britain proper. The probability is strengthened by the information which comes to us from Giraldus Cambrensis. Giraldus wrote in the 12th century, but in view of the passionate loyalty with which the British in Wales clung to their institutions in face of Saxon pressure, his information is as likely to be correct for the 5th century also. The music of that day was sung in parts in a natural harmony and in a minor key, and was accompanied by harp, crwth, and pipe. The significance of this information will appear as we continue.

With regard to the English Church proper, it should be remembered that it was the product of evangelization taken up by representatives of the ancient Christianity of these islands as well as by those sent by Gregory from Rome. The actual influence of the continental missionaries was strongest in Kent, though it had some vitality north of the Humber. Elsewhere the work was carried out almost entirely by Celtic missionaries. It is true that Wessex was converted by a missionary with commission from Rome. But his name, Birinus (Byrne), is only too significant of his origin.

With the Roman mission the Gregorian system of music naturally came in. Outside Rome, England was probably the first country to give

it a home. Nevertheless despite the influence of the famous schools* of Canterbury and York, other tendencies found a place in England as they did abroad during the period preceding the reign of Charlemagne. The newly-introduced foreign prelates at the Norman Conquest found much to take exception to in English Church music. It must have differed considerably from the Gregorian type which they employed. Otherwise it is difficult to understand the action of the Norman Abbot of Glastonbury who summoned archers to shoot down the English monks at their altar because of their refusal to change their style of music!

Apart from the undoubted influences flowing from early Celtic sources, the Gregorian system was broken in upon at the close of the 9th century. The Danish invasions had played havoc with the Church. Abbeys and monasteries had been destroyed and with them a vast quantity of materials of learning. In consequence the clergy were soon reduced to a pitiable state of ignorance which was only mended in the work of reconstruction undertaken by Alfred after the Peace of Wedmore (878, A.D.). Alfred re-established schools of learning, in which musical instruction naturally found a place. As there were hardly

* In 668 Pope Vitalian had sent Roman singers to Kent, where Theodore of Tarsus had just established the School of Canterbury. In 680 Pope Agatho sent John, Precentor of S. Peter's to Northumbria.

any priests left in England who could read a page of Latin, instructors had to be found elsewhere. So it fell out that Alfred's chief assistant was a Welsh churchman, Asser, who became his biographer. Music was entrusted to another Celt, John of S. Davids. Here alone lay a sufficient cause for any subsequent falling away from pure Gregorian standards.

The North was of course largely heathen. The Danes were conquered as well as converted from Wessex. How far they accepted southern musical standards must be a matter of conjecture. It has been held that they had musical standards of their own, through which they made their own contribution to the general musical development in England. After having dealt with Welsh music, Giraldus found himself impelled to add: "In the northern parts of Britain beyond the Humber and on the borders of Yorkshire, the inhabitants make use of similar symphonious harmony in singing, but with only two differences of tone and voice, the one murmuring the underpart, the other singing the upper in a manner equally soft and pleasing. This they do not so much by art as by a habit peculiar to themselves which long practice has made almost natural. This method of singing has taken such deep root among this people that hardly any melody is accustomed to be uttered simply. But as not all the English but only those of the north sing in

this manner, I believe they had this art at first like their language from the Danes and Northmen who formerly occupied those parts of the island."*

Whether this conjecture of Giraldus is correct it is difficult to determine. We have also to reckon with earlier British influences in the north. It can hardly be without significance that the British kingdom of Loidis (Leeds) maintained itself for a considerable time after the earlier English invasions, and that it covered practically the same territory as that in which a natural sense of harmony is found best developed even to-day.

After the Norman Conquest official ecclesiastical music was forced more into line with the fashion on the Continent where, in Northern France, great advances were being made. The English Liturgy also came more into line with the Roman uses But with the loss of possessions in Northern France, English interests gradually became more insular and independent. English music therefore found freer scope for development, though absolute independence of external influence could not be expected with the correspondence which was maintained between scholars through the medium of the growing Universities. England produced its own authorities however in the sphere of musical theory. From William Odington (died 1250) onwards,

* *Cambriae Descriptio*, cxiii.

several of them played a considerable part in that technical development in which the Middle Ages gave their contribution to general progress. Not impossibly when the matter comes to be understood fully, it will be found that Englishmen should have the credit for musical advances, in the past generally attributed to the schools of the Continent. John Dunstable (died 1453), undoubtedly a great contributor to musical art, was in all probability the originator of the Flemish School of Dufay.

We have to reckon with a remarkable piece of evidence, overlooked by such writers as Naumann, which seems to point to a clear superiority of English national talent as well as to imply a possible divergence in ecclesiastical use. This is found in the remarkable canon, *Sumer is icumen in*, written in six parts, which has been found in a manuscript dating from 1220. It points to an emergence of harmony at a date far earlier than is known elsewhere, while from the fact that it is set to a simple Latin hymn as well as to the secular verses, we may conjecture an early use of popular harmony in the service of the Church.

That such compositions did not stand alone is clear from other examples preserved in the same manuscript. But for the wilful destruction that accompanied the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII, much greater wealth

of documentary evidence might have been found. But further examples somewhat later in date and set to English, Latin and French are still preserved.*

Indications of coming possibilities are found in the 14th century among Wicklif's followers, who, like reformers before and since, popularized their message through the medium of song. Hence their popular nickname of Lollards. Otherwise the 14th century has little to show in musical advance. In the beginning of the next century things are very different. Side by side with the work of John Dunstable, some fifty of whose compositions have been recovered, we have examples of the work of more than a score of English composers, chief among whom was Lionel Power.

The Wars of the Roses forbad further progress. But immediately they reached a conclusion, music again is found asserting its claims. The Tudor age is famous for its song. Beginning with the work of Robert Fairfax, organist of S. Alban's Abbey, music both secular and sacred, reaches a high pitch of development and wins its way to a position of importance hardly realized in the subsequent life of the nation.

In view of this evidence, slight as it may seem, we can scarcely doubt that music took a living place in medieval English church life. The ten-

* Given in *Early English Harmony*, 1897.

dency until within recent times was to consider English music but a pale reflection of that which obtained abroad; confined to liturgical chanting, where it was not purely academic in character. Modern research has shattered that conception. Technical music found its place in the degree courses of the Universities where the majority of the clergy were trained. But these typically English institutions did more for music than that. They gave to the English clergy a wideness of outlook not so fully realized abroad. That in itself was a great gain.

On the other hand, it cannot be taken for granted that popular or congregational music ever found any considerable place in the actual services during the medieval period. Nevertheless it should be borne in mind that many relatively modern departures have roots stretching far back into the past. It may be therefore that English folk had larger opportunities within the walls of their churches than has been admitted hitherto. The written evidence of liturgical forms is never a full criterion of actual custom; even Law is not. Legally the English secular clergy could not be married between the reigns of Henry I and Henry VIII; actually large numbers always were. The future liturgiologist who can decipher the actual condition of Church worship to-day from the Prayer Book will need to be endowed with insight more than human.

There we must leave the question, with a bias towards the more attractive theory. But there is another kindred problem which is possibly interconnected. What about instruments? Organs were in use in England at an earlier date than on the continent, except perhaps in Spain. Did other instruments play a part in worship, or did they come in during the reign of Elizabeth from the secular region to accompany music taken from secular associations? That depictions of many types of medieval instruments may be found in minstrel galleries and choirs in ancient churches is no proof of their use within the church itself. But there seems to be evidence as far back as the 12th century of cymbals, pipes and cornets—or their medieval representatives being used in Yorkshire in addition to organs.* Cymbals may have been bells, which are again mentioned in 1450 with organs and clarions. John Evelyn, writing in 1662,† complains of the introduction of a concert of violins in place of the ancient grave and solemn wind music accompanying the órgan. "We no more hear the cornet which gave life to the organ; that instrument is quite left off, in which the English were so skilful."

Evelyn is hardly the man to write of a custom being ancient which was not yet above a century

* *Speculum Caritatis* by Ethelred of Rievaulx.
† Diary of John Evelyn.

old. It may therefore be that the instrumental music common within living memory in many of our parish churches goes back for its origin to very primitive custom.

In England the breach with Rome preceded by a considerable interval any general change in the Church's services. The introduction of the Litany in English by Archbishop Cranmer (1544) was the first indication of how things might possibly go. With but slight changes in words and setting, it is the Litany used throughout the English Church to-day. Apart from this advance the music of the reign was written for the Latin services, Fairfax, Taverner, Merbeck, Sheppard, and Tye being the outstanding contributors. Henry VIII himself can claim some skill in composition, though we may not attribute to him all that was once allowed.

Vernacular services came with the reign of Edward VI. Almost without exception, those who had composed for the Latin forms gave equal diligence to fulfil the new needs. This fact will occasion little surprise to those familiar with the general character of the English reform movement. Just as the great body of the clergy accepted the changes as they came—from Latin to English under Edward, back to Latin again under Mary, and finally to English with Elizabeth—so the musicians accommodated themselves to each transition. Taverner, Merbeck,

Sheppard, Tye and Tallis, all left examples of Prayer Book compositions.

In 1550 Merbeck produced "The Booke of Common Praier noted," and thereby largely determined the subsequent development of English Church music. The inflections in the priest's part and the responses of the congregation in the daily offices were practically the same as those normally in use to-day. Merbeck's most striking contribution however was in the music of the Eucharist. It has well been said that had he left nothing but his setting of the Creed he would have been a benefactor to his Church and country.

The medium used by all these composers was simple Plainsong. They found considerable difficulty in accommodating the older tones to the new language. This was surmounted, and plain song settings were the custom, and alone had real sanction until the latter part of the 17th century.

In the work of Tye and Tallis a beginning is found of that characteristic feature of the full Prayer Book service—the Anthem. A development of the older motet popularized by Des Pres, it was akin to the Madrigal, so popular in the secular sphere.

Queen Elizabeth's Prayer Book differed slightly from that which Merbeck had noted in her brother's reign. Harmonized settings making

large use of his melodies were provided in the year after its issue by the most distinguished musicians of the day. The work of Tallis is best known from his harmonies—still well nigh universally used—for the Responses and the Litany. They lent that richness and dignity to the services concerned which a careful posterity has preserved.

Considerations of space and proportion forbid any extensive treatment of the wonderful period that followed—the formative period of purely English music. It was an age of great things—of great soldiers and sailors, writers and dramatists. Never in English history do we find such a galaxy of great names—Drake and Raleigh, Bacon and Shakespere. Music did not dally behind. We find Byrde and Farrant and Bull, and as outstanding in his own sphere as Shakespere among dramatists, the English Palestrina, Orlando Gibbons.

This great advance was not made without opposition. The Puritan party throughout Elizabeth's reign strove to degrade Church worship to their own standard. With vestments and ritual, music had to share the obloquy which the violence of partisanship was not slow to devise. The organ, with its special ecclesiastical connection, was a chief object of attack. Antiphonal singing also called forth wrath. Matters reached a climax in the Civil War when the iconoclastic

spirit had full scope. The organs were removed from all the churches, and the liturgy was silenced for twelve years. It was a melancholy interlude.

Gibbons died early in the reign of Charles I. Through all this reign the Elizabethan tradition was being extended and consolidated in the favourable environment of a High Church revival. The hiatus created by the Commonwealth only accentuated the triumphs which were to come.

The Restoration period, which began in 1660, is characterized by few glories and by many infamies. A reaction followed the Commonwealth, as was indeed inevitable. Puritanism pure and simple is so out of accord with the teaching of nature, and is based on a conception of the universe so utterly alien to its true spirit, that it always achieves its own overthrow—and oftentimes much more than that. Its consequences are often more distressing than its self-destruction.

Of the morals and manners of the Restoration the less said the better. Such chronicles as the diary of Samuel Pepys show how quickly compulsory narrowness of outlook became voluntary laxity of conduct. But this same diary bears witness to the strength of another reaction, a reaction wherein lies the only glory of the age. We find Pepys full of a fresh delight in music. He describes the sensations which it produces in

him. He gads about from place to place to hear it, and he fills his house with a great litter of instruments.

And this attitude was characteristic of a generation which had grown to manhood without music. Music provoked unbounded enthusiasm. Within the religious sphere the concord of sweet sounds was as welcome as in drama and in dance. Opera also saw the light in obedience to the mandate of those foreign fashions which had grown popular with the returning exiles.

But it is in Church music that the most enduring achievements are found. It was the age of Henry Purcell, and the magic of the name of Purcell still exercises its old charm. The verdict of to-day is no less emphatic than that of his own generation. Yet he was only one among a number of outstanding figures. We read in Pepys (Nov. 22, 1663) how the diarist heard a good anthem made for five voices by one of Captain Cooke's boys, " and they say there are four or five of them who can do as much." Those boys left each of them his mark.

Cooke was an old royalist musician whom Charles II put in charge of the music of the Chapel Royal. Wise, Humfrey and Blow were all among his pupils, Purcell himself being a decade younger and pupil in turn of Humfrey and of Blow. Despite the difficulties caused by a situation described by Dr. Burney as " ten

years of gloomy silence before a string was suffered to vibrate, or a pipe breathe aloud, in the kingdom "—partly perhaps because of these difficulties a great school of music was in process of being set up, uniting with the contribution of the past fresh elements of distinction and beauty. A natural comity is found between Tallis and Gibbons and Purcell. Yet each has points of difference from the other, and Purcell's is the difference most marked.

For the Restoration in restoring tradition had broken it. New influences prevailed. Charles II's predilection was for the lighter forms of music, and particularly for those orchestral forms, which then prevailed in France. Humfrey was sent to Paris to study Lully's method. His success is seen in the measure of change which was introduced into the older and more severe forms. The nature of the change is best described in the words of Dr. Hullah:* "In place of the overlapping phrases of the old masters, we have masses of harmony subordinated to one rhythmical idea; in place of sustained and lofty flights we have shorter and more timorous ones, these even relieved by frequent halts and frequent divergencies; and in lieu of repetition of a few passages under different circumstances, a continually varying adaptation of music to changing sentiment of words, and the most fastidious observance of their emphasis and quantity."

* Quoted in Barrett's *English Church Composers*, p. 96.

In the new school Purcell was an apt pupil, though he shows signs of Italian influence. His actual contribution seems to be summed up best in the words of his epitaph: "Who left this Life and is gone to that Blessed Place where only his Harmony can be exceeded." His death in his thirty-eighth year was a great disaster for English music, since it made the more easy that unfortunate perversion of Church music which is associated with the name of Handel. Croft and Boyce continued the older English traditions till the middle of the following century. But in the end the artificial foreign production prevailed to the confusion of religion as well as of music.

But the Restoration period had left an indelible mark upon English development. The older plain song chant melted into that form which to-day is considered so typically Anglican that adoption of the older ways to some minds savours of disloyalty. The transition was not unnatural. It was thought to be a useful accommodation to the needs of congregational singing, particularly as the melody, which in earlier plain song days was the tenor, was now removed to the soprano —a practice probably originating with Palestrina. In its actual consequences the new fashion, though still most popular, has hardly maintained that pitch of religious feeling which characterized the older music.

The other special contribution of the Restora-

tion was the developed Verse Anthem, begun by Gibbons and perfected by Purcell. Here was found opportunity for the introduction of symphonic orchestral music such as was invading the Mass abroad. But the tone was far more sober and the expression more restrained.

Regrettable as was the secularization of English Church music during the great part of the 18th century, its effect for the future was largely neutralized by the compilation by Boyce of the best examples of English sacred music during the two preceding centuries. Material was thereby ready to hand when the times of refreshing drew near once more.

Between Boyce and the revival of the 19th century, links are found in John Wesley's nephew, Samuel Wesley, and Thomas Attwood. The contribution of the former in forcing into public notice the work of J. S. Bach has been noticed already. The latter, a contemporary also of Mozart and of Mendelssohn, made no little mark through his pupils. It was in Attwood's pupil, John Goss, and Wesley's even greater son that the revival of true religious standards in music found its earliest and most adequate expression. Other figures of distinction of course there were—Clarke-Whitfield and Crotch. But they, like Attwood and the elder Wesley, belong rather to the twilight than the dawn.

Such in outline is the history of sixteen cen-

turies of English religious music, from the earliest days till union was effected with the musical by-products of the Reformation. That the union has produced all that can be desired and nothing that has to be deplored is the last thing that any thinking person would care to claim for it. Prolific offspring gives many hostages to fortune. But that the total effect has been to raise the general standard of religious aspiration and expression in ways not possible elsewhere in Christendom it would be idle to deny. Progress is still being made and the promise of the future is no uncertain one.

# CHAPTER XI

## RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS OF MUSIC

To understand in any fulness the actual function of Music within the sphere of Religion, it is necessary to be quite clear as to all that the term Religion connotes. Sometimes it is used to suggest less than the whole that it implies. Sometimes it is held to imply even more. By one Religion is thought to imply little that is specific; by another it is narrowed down to very precise terms indeed.

We have considered already the origins of the phenomenon. We saw that it was in essence a response to environment universally present in humanity, since it was an inevitable concomitant of the self-conscious state. It arose from the sense of dependence wedded to that of wonder. It is a consciousness developed through emotional channels, and as the human race progresses, sustained and conserved by moral and intellectual sanctions.

Religious consciousness and its expression in worship must always have gone hand in hand. For practical purposes they are well nigh inseparable. To the popular mind, to be religious demands regularity in acts of devotion. The

only trouble is that the popular idea does not always get beyond this point. Developed Religion stands for more than Worship. Religion has to act as a moral dynamic and control, and it has to offer guidance and satisfaction to the intellect. Our enquiry therefore must embrace not only Worship, but also Morality and Truth.

Human personality clusters round an emotional core. Yet man is something more than a mere creature of the emotions. His being manifests itself through the more specialized channels of will and intellect. Action and thought are characteristic features of his nature, as well as capacity for sensation. These must not be considered separate compartments of living, though they mature in historical succession. But feeling, will and intellect each express a real emergence of that subtle and inexplicable thing which constitutes the real Self. Man's actions respond to feeling before they are governed by intelligence; for rational development is no more a feature of primitive human conditions than it is of child life. Gradually however life becomes something more than a series of emotional explosions; it comes to be regulated through intellect and will in view of both physical and social necessities.

The history of the discovery of social obligation lies somewhat outside our province. To-day we recognize that Religion has the task of con-

trolling and directing the Emotions through regulation of the Will. Quite primitive Religion was non-moral in its outlook. Human conduct was then governed simply by expediency, laws of which were arrived at gradually. But ages had to elapse before expediency was translated into duty; that is, before conduct was related to the idea of Divine law for man.

Among the Hebrews the realization grew most strong of righteousness in God demanding righteousness in man. With them therefore Religion became a dynamic and control within the moral sphere in a way unapproached by other nations. For this purpose it had to offer intellectual satisfactions to the mind. This office could not be confined simply to the practical sphere of rational injunction to the will; in view of growing realization of the problems of existence it had to be extended into the more purely mental sphere.

These several points have now to be considered in their order. Religion is only possible according as the religious consciousness is realized. That is the fact of primary importance. Ill-balanced reasoning, moral depravity or persistent neglect to give expression to that consciousness in worship—any such factors may obscure a witness which is present in all self-conscious beings. Some may ignore, others may destroy it. But there cannot be Religion without it.

And what part is possible to Music here? It cannot create; that we have seen already. But it can, and does, stimulate and revive. In this direction its power has been recognized from earliest days.

In the more primitive religions, barbarous sounds, equally with grotesque images, kept alive a sense of awe. Still to-day in its proper setting Music can raise the soul to heavenly spheres. In the hands of spiritual composers it becomes sacramental, re-invigorating and re-inforcing the messages of personal need and cosmic wonder.

This power has never found better expression than in Milton's well-known lines in *Il Penseroso*

> "There let the pealing Organ blow
> To the full voic'd Quire below,
> In Service high, and Anthems cleer,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into extasies,
> And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes."

Such power as this, in some degree, is of first necessity for music which claims to be religious in the true sense. Earlier types of sound may not move us as they moved our forbears; the conditions of impression and of reception are so altered. But the modern ear can detect and appreciate the spiritual motive of any music however ancient which has been inspired by Christian thought. It is not equally probable that Christians of quite early times could detect the message of all that appeals to us now. A child, equally with an adult may recognize religious value in a

hymn tune, though the bearing of a fugue, much more deeply suggestive to the one, would be lost upon the other. This point must be kept in mind. The change from simple to complex in religious music involves the simple in the understanding of the complex. But the understanding of the simple would not necessarily involve the other. So that it might be that music which was full of religious suggestion for one age might never so appeal to an earlier generation.

Pre-Christian music would depend for its ability in this direction upon the success with which it brought home supra-mundane suggestion. Where it was confined strictly to hieratic use, any kind of sound would carry religious significance. But as the use of music became more diffused, religious standards would become defined with greater care. Their character would depend upon conceptions of divinity, martial or other, obtaining among those concerned.

This primary function of religious music—widest in scope and most essential in its bearing—is linked therefore in use and in development with the growth of the conception of religious Truth. Religion as it advances gradually finds itself confronted by fundamental questions. To these it is forced to fashion answers. Tentatively at first, later with growing confidence, it deals with problems of metaphysical significance in the light of the Divine consciousness which is

realized. In divers portions and in divers manners, through prophets and teachers known and unknown, knowledge of God grew more and more intimate. In the light of that knowledge the great problems of existence, themselves of gradual emergence, were asked and answered. Israel and the Greeks offer the clearest examples of advance to the same goal, though by different pathways. The fruits of their achievement have been passed on to Christianity.

Thus it comes about that religious music grows in meaning and narrows in suggestion as it gradually eliminates that which belongs to less enlightened days. How finally it comes to aid Religion to express what it divines but cannot utter will be a matter for subsequent consideration.

We now come to Religion as Worship; and Worship in its character is conditioned similarly by knowledge of Truth and the attitude towards it. Primitive worship is governed by primitive ideas. Modern worship should reflect the state of modern spiritual apprehension. But, whether primitive or modern, in worship Music has found its greatest opportunity. Feelings of devotion and aspiration find natural expression in song. In worship music exercises its most catholic appeal. Here inevitably its success or failure is most marked. Here it may foster or destroy most easily the very spirit which it sets itself to serve.

Failure in this high matter is at least as easy as success. S. Augustine's fear that worship might be robbed of its true meaning has proved itself well founded. Much of that degradation of popular religion which is so deplored to-day must be laid to the charge of popular worship. Corruption has crept in with popular music, which has generally been wedded to the hymn. And not only has music failed in its true function, the maintenance of the religious sense at a pitch coincident with modern faculties of apprehension; the hymn itself, relying on the aid of simple tunefulness, has invaded spheres outside its proper province. It has now become largely a doublet form of prayer and creed, of inferior value, and robbing liturgical forms of proper balance. Moreover hortatory and didactic elements, best confined to the pulpit or reserved for the anthem, have been absorbed.

The attitudes of aspiration or devotion are possible without musical subvention, and without utterance. Yet both are most easily achieved through the help of music whether or not expressed in words. But music itself may only be of neutral value: it may become a decadent emotional force. It is useless if it adds no fuel to the fire of worship; it is worse than useless if it degrades worship to the level of mere emotionalism. Despite all that has been won that makes for truth and purity in worship, there never was a time

when so clear a call was heard for merciless destruction of everything in word or music which robs the act of worship of real value and true force. Well might we echo the solemn words, once more of Milton, in view of the failings of the times.

> " Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heav'ns joy
> Sphear-born harmonious Sisters, Voice and Vers,
> Wed your divine sounds, and mixt power employ.
> Dead things with inbreath'd sense able to pierce,
> And to our high-raised phantasie present
> That undisturbèd Song of pure content
> Ay sung before the saphire-colour'd throne
> To him that sits thereon . . . .
> That we on Earth with undiscording voice
> May rightly answer that melodious noise;
> As once we did, till disproportion'd sin
> Jarr'd against natures chime."

Such an ideal as this was possible in the 17th century. It should not be forgotten to-day. The outcry from time to time for the discontinuance of Cathedral music is as mischievous as it is misguided. It disregards the power of true music in the maintenance of religious consciousness. Equally it overlooks its enormous value in the preservation of the true spirit of worship. Nothing else can take its place. The support and encouragement of ideal standards, always capable of leavening the religious life of the nation, should be continued at whatever cost.

We come then to Religion as a Moral Force. What aid, if any, can Music offer here? It is a large question. Morality depends upon govern-

ment of the emotional life. In Music we have great emotional forces which may develop their resources on the side either of good or of evil. Past and present experience is full of warnings. True, the Greeks held that real music was always moral: but equally they realized that there was immoral music. For that reason, among the thoughtful, certain types of instruments were taboo. Plato is clear that music may be used in education to inspire love of the noble and hatred of the mean. But he recognized that moral purpose must lie behind it, if that end was to be achieved.

There can be no question that some kinds of music stimulate irregular desires, and therefore must be considered immoral in their tendency. On the other hand music may be used as certainly to suggest the very opposite desires. It can appeal to the higher as well as to the lower in man. The question really is how far such appeal or such suggestion can show permanent influence upon the soul. Music may move to high resolve; it may agitate, it may enlighten. But these effects seem generally to be temporary in their nature. Except in those few cases where intellectual apprehension is secured, the effect of sound is not maintained for long, when its action upon the emotions has ceased. Troops will be played right up to the fighting line, the piper will skirl up to the very moment of the charge; for

memory does not seem able to perpetuate the message of the sound.

It would appear therefore as far as moral control is concerned that all music can achieve is to create an atmosphere. Regular hearing of inspiring music must have a good effect. Continual hearing of morbid music must have an evil effect. But really permanent moral consequences can only be produced by acting upon the Will along lines more purely intellectual than emotional. There is necessarily an intellectual element in all music; but the general appeal is pre-eminently emotional. Like other forms of art, music can create conditions favourable to the encouragement of moral truth and of ideal righteousness. But a more purely mental method of appeal is essential if the individual approbation of the good is to be secured on a permanent basis.

We now reach the final topic of discussion. Can Music assist Religion in its supreme vocation of witnessing to transcendental Truth?

It is said that the friendship between Wagner and Nietzsche, a friendship of great significance in the earlier development of the latter's genius, came suddenly to an end when Wagner found himself forced to confess his inability to withstand the influence of the Church's system. He had tried to leave Religion out of account: Parsifal was the confession of his failure.

The reason for this rupture must be sought

along lines not only personal but philosophical. Nietzsche had abandoned the idea of God and therefore hated Wagner for going over to the enemy. Philosophically his point of view was that Religion was retrograde, deceptive, and therefore evil. Consequently it could have nothing to say in the discovery of Truth.

The incident is not without significance in regard to the topic now under discussion. Religion is either all that it claims to be, or else it can demand no further hearing. Wagner, apparently through the message of music itself, was forced back into line with tradition. Nietzsche would have nothing to do with it, and in his rebellion finally went mad. Wagner discovered that the highest which music could offer had to be sought along the lines that Religion suggested. Nietzsche hated all historical precedent. He was a pragmatist of the deepest dye, determined to think and live experimentally and apart from all former canons.

Wagner was in the right. Nietzsche was wrong, though he knew that history and the combined experience of mankind was against him. Religion stands as a witness of perennial experience, and points to a supreme Reality in which all thought and life subsist. The very fact of personality depends upon what Religion has to say. What does Creation mean? What does Existence mean? The only line of dis-

covery is that which is disclosed to religious intuition.

Nietzsche of course is not alone in his revolt. But on the side of philosophy he is an outstanding example of modernist tendencies. On the emotional side, music, colour and form have shown no uncertain signs of endeavour to break their traditional bonds. Cubism for instance is a form of madness not unparalleled in other directions. But time will take its inevitable revenge. The witness of generations of progress in the understanding of Personality cannot be denied with impunity. And it is round this understanding that every other question has to stand.

The Absolute in Truth cannot be envisaged even by Religion. Intuitions of its nature come through the emotions to will and intellect. So our ideals of Beauty, Goodness and Truth grow and converge in witness. In their lower ranges these ideals admit of actual expression. But there are higher reaches only revealed through forms of art. True Art consists in the suggestion of hidden realities. In its various forms it is apocalyptic of Reality. Through such media as colour, form and sound, it suggests verities beyond the capacity of poetry or philosophy to set in actual words. Based as it is in its various forms on principles and standards of judgment of no arbitrary adoption, in its cumulative witness it becomes ever more secure.

In that witness Music fulfils to-day the highest part. In width of range and power of appeal it has long since overtaken its competitors. Nor is it time to say that the best has now been done. The very fact that Music's models are not sought, like those of plastic forms of art, among the phenomena of nature, gives it a scope impossible to define.

Our only question really is—can Religion bear witness to the Truth? Through the religious witness, the principles and standards of to-day are what they are. If like Nietzsche we deny, then neither music nor any other art, as we now know them, has any claim on our attention. But if in Religion we find, as Christians hold, the highest witness, then Music may become a veritable theology of the emotions. It can suggest the deepest verities in terms of human comprehension.

> "Heights, that we long had struggled to achieve
> Seem close at hand and simple to attain;
> The baffling mists of doubt dissolve and leave
> The heavenly landmarks plain."*

* Hayes: *Broken Music* in *The Cup of Quietness*

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