

L. A. Gotwald

The Common Service Book
and Hymnal.

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THE COMMON SERVICE BOOK AND HYMNAL.

BY ELSIE SINGMASTER LEWARS.

The Church has waited long for its new Common Service Book and Hymnal. It has waited both with patience and with impatience, at once anxious to possess its treasure and unwilling to hasten the constant and untiring labor of those who for years have given unstintedly their time and effort. Of the amount of labor, of the vexatious delays, of the unforeseen difficulties entailed by so large an undertaking the Church has for the most part only a layman's knowledge, but it is conscious that they must be many.

The three bodies, the General Synod, the General Council and the United Synod in the South, have not been alone in their desire to possess a book representing a higher standard in text and music than their earlier books. During the last ten or fifteen years all Church Bodies in the United States, Canada and England have put forth revised and improved Hymnals. Among the most important are the revised "Hymns, Ancient and Modern," 1904; the English Hymnal, 1909, (the High Church Party in the Anglican Church); Church Praise, 1912, (Hymnal of the Presbyterian Church in England); the Church Hymnary, 1910, (a Common Hymnal for the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, etc.), Worship Song, 1905, edited by W. Garrett Horder, chiefly for Congregational Churches. The Episcopal Church in Canada published in 1910 "The Book of Common Praise." The Presbyterian Church in the United States revised its Hymnal in 1911. The Episcopal Church has completed the revision of its Hymnal, the text of which was reported at the last General Convention, and the music of which is now in preparation.

The new volume which may well rank with the Hymnal of any Church body is in the first place a beautiful one. The gold lettering, the simple binding, the clear monotype printing of the service, the placing of the hymn as a whole below the music and neither altogether nor partly between the staves, all contribute to this effect. The book is substantial, but not unwieldy. Though it contains two hundred pages more than the Book of Worship, it is very little heavier.

The arrangement improves upon that which we have hitherto had. Following directly upon the Table of Contents and the Calendar of the Church Year is placed the Common Service so that it may be quickly and easily found even by the stranger who is unfamiliar with the book. In the Book of Worship it was to be found after diligent search as far back as page 43. In the new book not even the prefaces have been allowed to stand before it.

The rubrics have been greatly simplified. Italics have been omitted in the interest of a clear page, and also because italics are a subordinate form of type, each response being indicated by a modified letter R, used in liturgical printing to indicate Responses. The colons dividing the psalms are plainer than in the old book.

Two settings of the service are given. In each there are only a few alternate forms, the alternate settings of the Gloria Patri, one for use in Lent, the Sentence to be used instead of the Hallelujah in Lent and alternate Offertory sentences. A few alternate forms have been inserted later in the book, but every care has been taken so that the service itself may stand clearly before the eye of the worshipper and be used by him with the greatest comfort and profit.

The first setting has been compiled and edited by the Rev. J. F. Ohl, Mus. Doc. It is based on melodies long associated with the English text of the Liturgy and includes also more modern settings.

The second setting contains the historic Plain Song settings used in the Christian Church for more than a thousand years. The arrangement used is that of Doc-

tor Luther D. Reed and Mr. H. G. Archer. The two settings are entirely separate. By including them both it is intended that a variety of musical taste may be satisfied.

Following the two settings of the Service are the Introits, Collects, Epistles, Graduals and Gospels for the Church Year, and the Invitatories, Antiphons, Responsories and Versicles for Festivals and Seasons, the Collects and Prayers, the General Prayers, the Psalms, the Canticles. Then follows the History of the Passion and two special Orders of Service, one the Preparatory Service, the other the Service for the Burial of the Dead. The General Rubrics and three Prefaces complete the liturgical portion of the volume.

The text of the Liturgy has been altered very slightly, and this by way of improvement.¹ A meaningless sentence concerning enemies has been omitted from the General Prayer and several welcome petitions have been added, for missions, for the ministry of the Word and for our schools and homes. There is also a permissive use of the Gradual, a choir response sung after the Epistle. The liturgical appointments (pages 153-162) provide Lessons Collects, Introits, etc., for all the special Days (Minor Festivals) in the Calendar, including those commemorating Apostles, Evangelists, etc., as well as Reformation, Harvest, Thanksgiving, etc. The number of Psalms has been increased and the full text of the Epistle and Gospel for the Day and the full Passion History are given.

The Augsburg Confession, the Formula of Government and the Constitution of the General Synod have been omitted from this music edition, but Luther's Small Catechism will be printed in the word edition of the book.

There are three prefaces, one originally printed in connection with the Common Service in 1888, explaining the history of the Service and its claim to be "the Common Service of the Christian Church of all ages," and making clear by quotations from the Augsburg Confession the conviction of the Lutheran Church that though "the true

¹ The Exhortation has been omitted from the Communion, to which it does not belong

unity of the Church is not injured by dissimilar rites" yet that usefulness and tranquility are maintained and edification served by the use of a common historic service. The two shorter prefaces give a brief statement of the principles governing the work of the editors of the new volume.

Except for those of the authors and composers of hymns and music no names appear on the volume. Now that the Common Service has for thirty years served to edify an increasingly large number of our congregations until its use is the rule and not the exception it seems that any account of the new edition would be incomplete without mention of those who prepared it. The committee whose report was gratefully accepted in 1888 consisted of G. U. Wenner, D.D., A. C. Wedekind, D.D., F. W. Conrad, D.D., E. J. Wolf, D.D., and M. Valentine, D.D., of the General Synod, C. W. Schaeffer, D.D., John Kohler, M.A., H. E. Jacobs, D.D., S. Laird, M.A., B. M. Schmucker, D.D., J. A. Seiss, D.D., A. Spaeth, D.D., and C. F. Welden, M.A., of the General Council, and E. T. Horn, M.A., T. W. Dosh, D.D., and S. A. Repass, D.D., of the United Synod in the South. Those who builded upon the foundation thus laid and have given us not only a Common Service beautifully represented but a Common Hymnal are J. A. Singmaster, D.D., D. H. Bauslin, D.D., J. B. Remensnyder, D.D., LL.D., William E. Fischer, D.D., J. A. Clutz, D.D., F. H. Knubel, D.D., E. K. Bell, D.D., G. A. Getty, D.D., of the General Synod; H. E. Jacobs, D.D., LL.D., T. E. Schmauk, D.D., LL.D., J. E. Whitteker, D.D., E. F. Keever, D.D., J. F. Ohl, Mus. Doc., L. D. Reed, D.D., A. L. Steimle, D.D., E. F. Bachman, D.D., C. M. Jacobs, D.D., Rev. J. C. Mattes, Rev. Paul Z. Strodach, Rev. Gomer C. Rees, Rev. F. Jacobson, Ph.D., Rev. M. E. Haberland, Rev. A. J. Reichert, T. E. Benze, D.D., W. L. Hunton, Ph.D., of the General Council, and M. G. G. Scherer, D.D., E. C. Cronk, D.D., and A. G. Voigt, D.D., LL.D., of the United Synod in the South.

Beside these, the members of the committee at the conclusion of its work, a number of others assisted in the

earlier stages but died before it was completed, among them Doctors A. Spaeth, E. T. Horn, Ludwig Holmes, and C. M. Esbjorn. Doctor G. U. Wenner has also been a member of the committee during its whole history, except for two years.

Returning to the plan of Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg in the first American Hymnal of 1786, the committee has followed the Church Year in the arrangement of the hymns. Thus the Advent hymns come first. Each hymn is printed as a whole, under the music, but separate from it, so that its poetical form and content may be grasped. This arrangement lifts the church hymnal to a position above that of the elementary singing book or Sunday School book where it is proper that the amateur singer should have all the help possible. It should also remind the pastor or leader that a great hymn is a unified composition and that it cannot have stanzas lopped off at the end or cut out in the middle without injury to the thought.

The omission of the doxologies will probably seem surprising and is to be explained by the fact that they are little used in most Churches, that they are often redundant, that they are very often used simply from custom or as a matter of form when they do not fit the sentiment of the hymn. Bishop Ken's "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" may be found in its original place at the conclusion of both his hymns, Numbers 449 and 471. Many other historic doxologies are also given in connection with the hymns themselves, as in the case of nearly all translations from Latin, and in many original English hymns.

In the appendix have been placed a few tunes which, though favorites, do not belong in a hymnal proper. It is hoped that these may be omitted from later editions.

Added to each section of hymns is a list of hymns of similar character to be found in other sections of the book. These cross references greatly increase the list of suitable hymns for each season or occasion.

A valuable feature of the book is its indexes, which offer to the student of hymnology a quantity of interesting

and valuable material. The Index of First Lines is properly placed last so that it can be most conveniently found, and preceding it are invaluable lists of authors, translators, composers and tunes. It is of the deepest interest to the Church to trace to their source the words and music which have inspired and consoled uncounted generations but it is often impossible owing to the carelessness of some transcriber or editor to find the name of author or composer or the date of the work. The carefully prepared indexes of the Common Service and Hymnal will be used with gratitude by all future Lutheran and many other hymnologists.

In the index of authors and composers may be seen how wide and deep are the sources of the book. It will be of interest to the General Synod to observe that among the modern composers William E. Fischer has contributed the tune *Laus Regis*, Norman W. H. Schafer the tune *Ecclesia*, and Harold Lewars the tunes *Adjutor*, *Salve Jesu*, *Septem Voces*, a seven-fold setting of the words on the Cross, *Vexilla Regis*, *Rorate Coeli* and *Froebel*.

Of the hymns themselves it is difficult to speak in the limits of a book review. Only the finest judgment and the widest acquaintance with the hymns of the ages could have assembled so noble a collection. No hymnal, we believe, surpasses it in quality and serviceableness. We may point to it with pride and we may at the same time make it our daily companion. It is not perfect, but its imperfections are not the fault of its makers. There are great tunes for which no great words exist, there are great hymns which have no adequate tunes. Translations fall often far short of the original and those familiar with the sonorous German of the great chorals feel disappointment when they read them in another tongue. But of these and other difficulties we may say that they have been solved as well as human beings could solve them.

The opening hymn is "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," a composition of musical and poetical dignity and beauty which since its origin in the eleventh century has expressed in many tongues and in many lands the universal

desire of mankind for ransom for sin and the promise of a Savior. Here, also, in the Advent section, are "Wake, awake for night is flying" and "Oh, how shall I receive Thee," now restored to their proper tunes, "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates," and "Comfort Ye, Comfort Ye My People," hymns once cherished by all Lutherans but long absent from some of our hymnals.

Beside the best of the Book of Worship's Christmas hymns are many others, both old and new, some of them our neglected possessions, some from non-Lutheran sources. Here are "Good News from Heaven the Angels Bring," by Martin Luther, here "All My Heart This Night Rejoices," and here "Christians, Awake, Salute the Happy Morn." "Joy to the World" is set to a simple beautiful tune within the compass of the average voice and the ability of the average singer. In the Epiphany section "As with Gladness Men of Old" is set properly to Dix.

The Lenten section opens with a lovely setting of "O God, I Love Thee, Not that My Poor Love," and includes the dramatic "Christian, Dost Thou See Them?" set to two fine tunes. "Savior, When in Dust to Thee" has been separated from the light and unsuitable Spanish Chant and set to both Aberystwyth and Wahres Seelenlicht, both expressing its deep and solemn contrition. Similarly "Go to Dark Gethsemane" has been separated from Pilot and adequately set.

In the Easter section there are many hymns long sung elsewhere but little known to our congregations. Among them are "Come Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain," the old and majestic "The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done," and "Welcome, Happy Morning." No hymn is more welcome than that for the communion "Deck Thyself with Joy and Gladness" about the words and air of which is written one of the great cantatas of John Sebastian Bach. "Thine Arm, O Lord, in Days of Old" is set to a stately new tune by Norman W. H. Schafer.

Among the hymns of the Church Triumphant has been placed the treasured "For All the Saints Who from Their Labors Rest," and "Stars of the Morning, so Gloriously

Bright," and among the hymns of prayer, praise and thanksgiving the ancient "The God of Abraham Praise," "Praise to the Lord the Almighty, the King of Creation," and "Praise the Lord of Heaven." "My Hope is Built on Nothing Less," a fine hymn, long joined to poor and difficult music is now set to Melita to which are also set the words of "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" which, with its plea for the safety of those at sea, is now sung over the whole English-speaking world, and which every Sunday in the year is a part of the service at our Naval Academy. "O Morning Star, so Pure, so Bright" is another composition deemed worthy by the world's most famous musician of forming the basis of a great composition. "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" is set to Martin in the appendix, but in the book proper it has much worthier settings in Hollingside and Aberystwth. "My Jesus as Thou Wilt" and "Sweet the Moments, Rich in Blessing," are no longer joined to operatic tunes. "Come My Soul, Thou Must be Waking," has been suitably set to Hayden. The English composers have given us new evening hymns and reset some of those whose words we have long loved.

To the National hymns in the Book of Worship are added "God of Our Fathers" and "God the All Merciful." For safety at sea we have beside "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," "The Ocean Hath no Danger," set to touching St. Christopher. The Resurrection section offers us from the lips and hearts of our ancestors "Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense," and the Judgment section "Great God, What do I See and Hear," and the magnificent and seldom sung "Day of Wrath, that Day of Morning."

The book proper closes with forty-eight hymns for children over which both adult and child may well linger with delight. Here for Christmas are "Silent Night," "Come and Hear the Grand Old Story," "See, Amid the Winter's Snow," "Behold, a Branch is Growing," "Joy Fills Our Inmost Hearts To-day." "Once in Royal David's City," "Oh, Ye Heavens, Bend and See," "There Came a Little Child to Earth." Here for other times and seasons are "Easter Flowers Are Blooming Bright," "God

Spake My Child, God Spake to Thee," "I am Jesus' Little Lamb," "There's a Friend for Little Children."

It is not easy to foresee any extended adverse criticism of the Common Service and Hymnal. There are those in all three bodies who will miss a few hymns, or a few conjunctions of hymns and tunes. There are those who will need to be reminded that for the sake of a growing generation certain favorites of a past poetical and musical taste should be forgotten as soon as possible. But not many faults will be found. The size of the committee, its practical experience with the needs of the congregation, its wide liturgical and musical knowledge, and above all, its long and enthusiastic devotion to noble aims would seem to make it certain that all debatable questions had been considered and had been wisely met.

The Common Service and Hymnal is finished, but it has not yet achieved its purpose and will not achieve it until it has lifted thousands of voices in prayer and praise and thanksgiving. The wide divergence of our liturgical and musical theory and our liturgical and musical practice has often been a source of mortification. Here is the remedy. These hymns are not the easily learned, easily forgotten, worthless compositions of a revival song book; they are the tried and proved support of generations of believers, beautiful in form, rich in content, everlasting. The hymns lose nothing if we do not sing them, they will continue to be sung and to console and uplift long after we have passed on; it is we and our children who will forfeit a heritage if we neglect them. Many of them we have long left indifferently to strangers. Let us now make them our own.

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