

# THE BAPTIST QUARTERLY

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N. Temperley, with C.G. Manns and J. Herl, *The Hymn Tune Index: A Census of English Language Hymn Tunes in Printed Sources from 1535 to 1820*, Oxford University Press, 4 Vols, 1998, £300

This magnificently produced set is a tribute to what the human brain can analyse and correlate with the help of the computer. The cost of production is such that in the future such a statistically dense body of information is likely only to exist as a data base electronically accessed. Indeed the data base for hymn tunes at the University of Illinois supplements this published material and may, in a limited way, be accessed through the web. The last two printed volumes contain 17,424 entries of the Census on nearly 1,600 pages, indicating in which collections appear named tunes by given authors or a melody defined by its melodic shape or musical incipit. The first two volumes contain an evaluation of research in this area, a valuable

historical introduction (60pp), advice on methodology, a bibliography of sources and a series of helpful lists and indices.

Reflecting the interests of this journal I looked for things Baptist and discovered that the earliest Baptist collection is Edward Trivett's *Hymns and Spiritual Songs .... With Tunes proper for various meters*, published in Norwich in 1772, some seventeen years after its words-only version in London. Not previously noted by Baptist authors, its identification as Baptist comes from the immersionist intent of a special section 'Prepar'd for baptism and the Lord's supper', and the appended poem on the death of John Gill. Of Trivett [1712-92], Ivimey has much to say. Minister of Worstead, Norfolk 1740-1792, he baptized 391 people and sent eleven young men into the ministry, including his son Zenas, who became minister at Langham in Essex and was a signatory at the meeting setting up the first Baptist Union. The 1730 chapel had to be enlarged during Trivett's ministry, he was involved in successfully plants at Denham and Diss, and seems to have been a leader more generally of the churches in East Anglia.

Isaac Smith's *A Collection of Psalm Tunes* (various editions 1779-1795) is also identified as having Baptist connections as Smith was the 'clerk' of the Alie Street Chapel, Stepney. He composed several tunes still in common use [Abridge and Irish]. A chapel in Alie Street was founded by Elias Keach [d1699], only son of Benjamin Keach of hymn-writing fame. In the eighteenth century, however, this church passed into the hands of, or was replaced by, a Presbyterian church until under Socinian influence it lost its congregation. Writing in 1823, Ivimey says that only 'a few years since', the building was taken over by 'Mr [John] Bailey, [1778-1830] a Baptist', who renamed the chapel 'Zoar' to house a Gospel Standard Church. That probably explains why Smith's book has 'no distinctively Baptist characteristics', since his connection was probably in Alie Street's presbyterian phase, where the language of 'clerk' would fit more comfortably.

John Rippon, first President of the first Baptist Union, comes into his own in this collection, with seven separate entries between 1792 [which refers to an earlier words edition of 1787] and 1808. His collection went on being reprinted long after his death and the expiry of his copyright. The 1792 collection boasted 249 hymn tunes, 1 canon, 1 'oratorio excerpt' and was 'Sold by Mr Rippon, and may be had at the vestry of his meeting house, in Carter Lane Tooley Street.' Of this collection, Orlando Mansfield helpfully wrote in *BQ* VIII, No 1, 1936 [pp.36ff]. A further article from Whitley in *BQ* X No 8, [pp434-43] identifies further Baptist compositions and shows how a study of hymn tunes can reflect on other aspects of Baptist History, especially the growth of dissent, the modern missionary movement and the fight against slavery. Both references have eluded Professor Temperley's team, as have the Companions to the various Baptist Hymn Books that have been produced in the twentieth century with their important historical apparatus.

Mansfield, after careful evaluation, confirms Skeat's judgement that Rippon was the first 'to compile, on an extensive scale, a book of tunes with a comprehensive

hymn book suitable for the devotional exercises of religious worship'. Correspondence, addressed to Rippon from New York, reproduced in *The Transactions* I, No.2, pp.69ff, indicates the North American use of his collections and the benefit to his estate of his publishing of hymn tunes. *The Hymn Tune Index* is strong on the North American dimensions of this story. Always open to opportunities of market exploitation, Rippon announced in the 1815 edition (the cheapest at 8s 6d a copy) that those 'who purchase six copies of Mr R. may have a seventh Gratis.' Rippon's own musical abilities were of no mean order, in that he composed an oratorio on *The Crucifixion* around 1837. The scale of his musical enterprises, however, needed a collaborator, Thomas Walker, [1764-1827]. An alto vocalist from the metropolis, Walker tells us both he and his father were personal friends of Rippon, making for easy collaboration in the nine editions of Rippon he produced under his own name before 1820. Whitley also identifies the significant role of Robert Keen, one of George Whitfield's executors and precentor at Carter Lane.

Other early Baptist composers and tune collectors can be identified. Gabriel Davis [c1770-1824] of Portsea composed the much-used *Monmouth*. Thomas Jarman, a member of the choir at Clipstone and buried in the Baptist graveyard there, produced 'flamboyant, Methodist' music such as the ever popular *Lyngham*. Isaac Tucker [1761-1825] precentor of a Baptist church near Westbury, wrote *Horsley* and *Devizes*.

It would be good to indicate that at last Julian [John Julian, *A Dictionary of Hymnology*, revised Edn, 1907] has found a 'Tunes' companion to its encyclopedic coverage of 'Hymns' themselves. Although this volume extends from the post-Reformation years to the main years of Evangelical Revival impact upon English protestant worship, the cut-off point of 1820 unfortunately predates much of the development of hymnody within the liturgy of the Christian churches. This leaves Julian still needing a companion for much of the nineteenth century, to say nothing of the post-Julian years.

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## BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY ASSEMBLY MEETING

**'The European Baptist Federation: past story and contemporary challenge'**

This will take place on Wednesday, 28 April 1999, at 2 p.m. at Punshon Methodist Church, Bournemouth (opposite the Conference Centre). The speakers will be the Revd Bernard Green, author of *Crossing the Boundaries: a history of the European Baptist Federation*, to be published that week, and the Revd David Coffey, President of the Federation. All members and friends are welcome.