

CORRESPONDENCE.

"THE RESPONSIVE PSALTER."

(To the Editor of the CHURCHMAN.)

SIR,—I have read, with considerable interest, the article by Mr. Albert Mitchell on "The Music of the Church" which appears in the November number of THE CHURCHMAN. I was particularly interested in the portion of the article which deals with the chanting of the Psalms. Mr. Mitchell states that the Archbishop's Committee regard this question as "a problem." "Chiefly because it is hard to sing them well whether to Anglican or Gregorian Chants."

I have to confess that I have not read the Chapter devoted to "Church Music" contained in the report of the Archbishop's Second Commission of Enquiry, but I gather from Mr. Mitchell's Article, that neither the Commissioners or Mr. Mitchell have heard of "The Responsive Psalter" by the late Rev. James Eckersley. I think a study of this work would convince any impartial person that the problems referred to have been solved by the Author. The work has been before the Public for some years and I am surprised that in any enquiry as to Church Music it should have been lost, sight of or ignored. The late Mr. Eckersley during his life gave lectures in various towns throughout the country upon the Psalter, at which his chants were sung by Choirs, at Eltham (where he resided), at Southport, at Birmingham, at Exeter, at St. Johns College Cambridge and other places.

The work itself and Mr. Eckersley's lectures and demonstrations have been reviewed from time to time in various papers such as *The Guardian*, *The Church Times*, *Musical Opinion* and others. I venture to enclose a few extracts from these which I think should serve to show that the work is one at any rate deserving the serious attention of the authorities in the Church, and all who are interested in Church Music. It is the outcome of the lifelong thought of a scholar and musician. Amongst many musicians of note in the country it has been received with unqualified approval. Its fame has reached as far as India and the Author in his lifetime received several letters from Priests in India asking leave to make use of it for translations of the Psalms into native language. Only the other day I read a letter from an Indian Bishop speaking in the highest terms of the work and of the success with which he was adapting it to Hindustani. Strange that our own Ecclesiastical Authorities, while aware of the defects of the systems most in vogue, should never have come across it in their "enquiry" on Church Music!

The Author, I regret to say, died in November last year. By his will he left a legacy to Trustees, whose names I enclose, for the purpose of propagating the "Responsive Psalter." The Trustees held their first meeting on the 7th inst. They propose to issue as soon as possible a new and revised Edition of the work, fortunately the Author left ample notes for this purpose. Dr. Eaglefield Hull and Mr. John Brook have undertaken the Editorship. I may say the Trustees have absolute confidence that the Psalter has only to become known to be recognized as by far the finest system of chanting we have, and a most valuable addition to Church Music.

Yours faithfully,

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