

Hymnology

#51 “We the Lord’s people, heart and voice uniting” (Decatur Place): During the 1960s and ‘70s, “The Lord’s People in the Lord’s House on the Lord’s Day for the Lord’s Service” was a saying often quoted in the Church of England and used as a teaching device to try to express succinctly the essence of Christian liturgy. This hymn, which is Canon Bowers’s first, was written in 1972. It is entitled “The Lord’s Own” and began “Let the Lord’s people.” It first appeared in *More Hymns for Today* (London, 1980). When the editors of our present hymnal decided to include this hymn they proposed some changes to Canon Bowers, which he agreed to reluctantly. The tune Decatur Place was written in 1983 for use with this text by Richard Wayne Dirksen, former Organist and Choirmaster and Precentor of Washington Cathedral. In late 1982 the Hymn Music Committee began a search for new tunes for texts for which they did not have settings. In response the composer submitted several tunes, among which was Innisfree Farm (#34), the same tune, but in a more complicated rhythm (9/8). The committee liked the tune but was divided about its suitability for congregational singing. Not wishing to lose the tune, the committee asked Dr. Dirksen to recast it in regular meter. Decatur Place is the result. The tune name honors the Washington home of Paul Callaway, the composer’s longtime friend and predecessor as Organist and Choirmaster of the Cathedral. Hymn #34 “Christ, mighty Savior, Light of all creation,” proved *not* to be too hard for congregations to learn and enjoy. We have sung it several times for Choral Evensong.

#301 “Bread of the world, in mercy broken” (Rendez à Dieu): When first published in Bishop Reginald Heber’s posthumous *Hymns, Written and Adapted to the Weekly Church Service of the Year* (London, 1827) the form of this text has been in two brief stanzas. This short hymn is based on John 6: 51, 54-58. The first stanza of the text is addressed to Christ as revealed through the elements of the Holy Eucharist and then as the one who has given us the words of life and died for our sins. The second half is a prayer to Christ for mercy to be granted to sinners and for God’s sustenance in the Eucharistic feast. The tune first appeared in *La forme des prieres et chantz ecclesiastiques* (Strausbourg, 1545), assigned to Psalm 118. In the Genevan psalter of 1551 it was changed, presumably by the musical editor Louis Bourgeois, to the form we sing in the present hymnal. The harmonization is based on that of Claude Goudimel in *Les cent cinquante Pseaumes de David, nouvellement mis en musique à quatre parties* (Paris, 1564).

#547 “Awake, O sleeper, rise from death” (Marsh Chapel): St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is the inspiration for this hymn text by Rev. Dr. F. Bland Tucker. In February 1980 the author wrote of this text, “The first two lines (Ephesians 5:14) are a quotation from a very ancient Christian hymn, probably. There is no known copy of it in existence; so I filled it out with quotations from other verses in the same epistle.” Taking chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the epistle as his source, Dr. Tucker encapsulates important themes from each to create a credal statement of God’s redemptive acts in Christ combined with a charge to all people to follow the way of Christ. The poem first appeared in 1980 as the text of an anthem by David N. Johnson for chorus and organ. The tune Marsh Chapel was written in late 1983 by Max Miller for use with this text in our hymnal. The composer writes: “Since I have been at the Chapel of Boston University so long and in all likelihood will finish my time there, I would like to call the tune Marsh Chapel. The chapel lies at the heart of the University and has weekday and regular Sunday services, serving both the University community and the larger community as well, both live and through broadcasts of the Sunday morning service.”

#321 “My God, thy table now is spread” (Rockingham): This hymn by Philip Doddridge was first published in the posthumous collection edited by John Orton entitled *Hymns founded on Various Texts in the Holy Scriptures by the late Reverend Philip Doddridge, DD* (Salop, 1755). It was headed, “God’s Name profaned, when his Table is Treated with Contempt,” (Malachi 1: 12). The final stanza read, “Revive thy dying Churches, Lord, / And bid our drooping Graces live; / And more that Energy afford, / A Saviour’s Blood alone can give.” The first American Episcopal collection of 1786 included some stanzas but not all. The tune Rockingham by Edward Miller was first published in his *Psalms of David* (London, 1790). Miller stated that “part of the melody” was “taken from a hymn tune,” and it resembles an earlier tune named Tunbridge (Bath, ca. 1778). The name Rockingham was assigned by Miller and has endured. It is not known why he chose to call it after a small Northhamptonshire village. Leonard Ellinwood suggested it was named for the Marquis of Rockingham (1730-1782), sometime prime minister of Great Britain. The tune appeared first in the US in *The Salem Collection of Sacred Music* (Salem, 1805). It has been in Episcopal hymnals since the mid-nineteenth century.

#414 “God, my King, thy might confessing” (Stuttgart): This text is the work of an Irish prelate who was also a prolific translator and writer of hymns. It has been matched with this tune since the 1892 *Hymnal*. The text is a paraphrase of Psalm 145 by Richard Mant. It first appeared in the author’s *Metrical Version of the Psalms* (London, 1824). It originally had 14 stanzas. Our hymnal includes six of them. Mant was clearly inspired by the vocabulary and style of Charles Wesley’s verse. “Thy might, all might excelling” recalls Wesley’s “Love divine, all loves excelling.” The tune Stuttgart dates back to *Psalmodia sacra, Oder: Andächtiger und schöne Gesänge* [Holy Psalms, or: Reverent and beautiful Hymns] (Gotha, 1715), edited by Christian Friedrich Witt. Witt was probably the composer of the melody, associated with the text “Sollt’ es gleich bisweilen scheinen” [Should it appear from time to time] by Christoph Tietze. It was adapted and harmonized by Henry John Gauntlett (not William Henry Havergal as stated in the hymnal) for the hymn “Earth has many a noble city.”