

Hymnology Sunday August 5, 2018 compiled by Dr. Anthony Antolini

#522 “Glorious things of thee are spoken” (Austria). 1889 marked the year of the first published matching of this text and tune in the *Primitive Methodist Hymnal* (London, 1889). Until the post-World War II years, that relationship seemed inviolate. The association of the tune, however, as the German national anthem, “Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,” during World War II made the singing of the tune Austria for many people difficult. For a substantial period of his life John Newton was accustomed to writing hymns, often at a rate of one a week, exploring the same biblical themes of his preaching. Presumably “Glorious things of thee are spoken” shares its origins with a sermon Newton preached on Isaiah 33: 20-21 sometime around February 1779. The hymn is a fairly close paraphrase of the scriptural passage. The hymn is one of the best loved in the English tradition. Haydn composed the tune as the Austrian national anthem, “Gott erhalte Franz der Kaiser” [God save Franz the King]. During his visits to London in 1791 to 1792 and 1794 to 1795 Haydn had been much struck by the powerful hold that “Gave save the King” exercised over the emotions of the British people. Accordingly, the Imperial High Chancellor Count von Saarau commissioned for Austria a similar song. Haydn composed his immortal melody in January 1797, and the song was first performed in the public theaters on the Emperor’s birthday, 12 February. After the establishment of the Austria Republic in 1918 new words were written which began “Sei gesegnet ohne Ende” [God bless without end]. The first phrase of the tune actually comes from a Croatian folk song, “Vjutro rano ja vstanem” [Just after dawn I rose and left]. However, the rest is original. There was also an orchestral version, officially circulated for use in theaters and concerts. Haydn became inordinately fond of the song, and he used it for a set of variations, forming the slow movement of his string quartet in C, Op. 76, No. 3, The “Emperor” Quartet. It was the last thing he played on the piano on 26 May 1809, five days before his death.

#309 “O Food to pilgrims given” (O Welt, ich muss dich lassen). This anonymous hymn has been traced to the Mäyntzich Gesangbuch (Mainz, 1661), where it was printed under the heading “Gesang von dem waren Himmelbrot” [Hymn on the true bread of heaven]. The translation by John Athelstan Riley began “O Food of men wayfaring, the Bread of Angels sharing.” The composer of the original secular melody was perhaps Heinrich Isaac. It occurs in two of his works: the first, a four-part setting of the melody with the secular text, “Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen,” [Innsbruck I must leave thee] and the second in *Missa carminum*, where the melody appears in the “Christe eleison” text. Both can be dated sometime before 1500, although there is the strong possibility that the tune is much older. Bach used the melody in his *St. Matthew Passion*.

#307 “Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendor” (Bryn Calfaria). The text is matched with Bryn Calfaria, a Welsh hymn tune. The text, by George Hugh Bourne, was privately printed for St. Edmund’s College, Salisbury, England, where Bourne was warden. Bryn Calfaria by William Owen, of Pryscol, first appeared in the second volume of his *Y Perl Cerddorol* (The Musical Pearl), (Caernarvon, 1852). The story runs that the tune came to the composer on the way to the Dorothea Quarry, Dyffryn Nantlle, where he worked, and that he wrote it on a slate from the rubbish heap there and then. It was rejected as being typical of a poor tune. Despite this, it has had a wide appeal in both Welsh and English books. It appeared in *Alexander’s Hymns 3* (New York, 1915) to “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah.” Bryn Calfaria

means “Hill of Calvary” in Welsh and reflects the fact that when it first appeared it was set to the famous “Gwaed y Groes” [The blood of the cross].

#617 “Eternal Ruler of the ceaseless round” (Song 1). Although the work of an American poet, this text initially gained currency in England where it was introduced in hymnals toward the end of the nineteenth century. The words were written by John W. Chadwick for his graduation from Harvard Divinity School on 19 June 1864. Composed at a time where there was much anxiety concerning the outcome of the American Civil War, the hymn is a call for unity. Its first use as a hymn text was in England where Garrett W. Horder included it in his *Congregational Hymns* (London, 1884). The tune Song 1 was composed by Orlando Gibbons for the opening “song” in George Wither’s *Hymnes and Songs of the Church* (London, 1623).

#527 “Singing songs of expectation” (Ton-y-Botel). The text for this hymn was written for the second Sunday in Advent. It was originally Danish and was translated by Sabine Baring-Gould. Written in 1825 by Bernhard Severin Ingemann, it first appeared in his *Hoimesse Psalmer* [High-Mass Hymns] (Copenhagen, 1843). The English version first appeared in the 1892 *Hymnal* in this denomination. Thomas John Williams composed the tune in 1896 according to the story printed in the last years of his life, and therefore open to correction by him, in *Trysorfa'r Plant* [The Children’s Treasury]. It was used by him as the central part of an anthem, “Goleu yn y glyn” [Light in the Valley]. It became widely known in Wales as a result of being one of the tunes taken up in the Revival associated with Evan Roberts. This began in November, 1904, and during the following 18 months swept across all denominations in Wales, bringing the membership of the nonconformist denominations to their all-time peak. The tune became known in England at about the same time. The name Ton-y-Botel [Bottle Tune] is the result of a sensation-seeking story circulated in 1902 after the appearance of the tune in the *Baptist Book of Praise* where it was called Assurance. (The previous name had been Ebenezer but it could not be used because another tune had that name in this book). It was said that the tune had been discovered washed up in a bottle on the North Wales coast. The original name, Ebenezer, was taken from the chapel in Rhos, Pontardawe. A warning to organists appears in *The Hymnal Companion 1982* as follows: “As with many other Welsh tunes, it must not be sung too fast, in the case for fear of it becoming a jig.” In the *Hymnal 1940* the tune was associated with the text “Once to every man and nation,” a poem by James Russell Lowell (1819-1891), written as a protest against the US war with Mexico. The text was not included in our present hymnal because it is not sacred. Many older members of the Episcopal Church have been angry about this omission and, occasionally, we have sung it from the old hymnal by request. Lowell’s original poem was 90 lines long and was first published in the *Boston Courier* on 11 December 1845.