Hymnnology

#401 "The God of Abraham praise" (Leoni) is one of the two English paraphrases in our hymnal of the Yigdal, the Jewish articles of faith written down in the twelfth century by Moses Maimonides (1130-1205) and put into verse about 1400 by Daniel Ben Judah Dayyan. (The other one is "Praise to the living God" #372.) The English version of the text was written by Thomas Olivers around 1763. After hearing the Yigdal chanted in the Great Synagogue in London Olivers was moved to arrange it as an English hymn. He went beyond merely versifying the original text by Christianizing it. His complete version comprises twelves stanzas. Our present hymnal uses stanzas 1,4,7,10 and 12. The music has Hebrew roots and has been part of the singing tradition of the Episcopal Church for over one hundred and sixty years.

#686 "Come thou fount of every blessing" (Nettleton) is a text matched with a tune coming from the early 19[th]century folk-hymn tradition of the American northeast. The text, in an altered form, first appeared in the *Hymnal* of 1826. The hymn was written by Robert Robinson in 1758 for the festival of Whitsunday (Pentecost) and published in *A Collection of Hymns used by the Church of Christ in Angel-Alley, Bishopgate* (London, 1759). The first line of stanza 2 originally read "Here I find my Ebeneezer," a reference to I Samuel 7:12. A more authentic version of the text appears in the hymnal *Lift Every Voice & Sing.* The tune known as Nettleton first appeared in print in a two-part version in 4/4 time in *Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music: Part Second* (Harrisburg, PA, 1813). It was named Hallelujah. In another early hymnal it was called Sinner's Call and in another Good Shepherd. A variant of this tune was printed in J.H. Hickock's *Sacred Harp* (Lewistown, PA, 1832) entitled Female Pilgrim. In another hymnal of that era it was called Newell. Finally, the tune appeared in Darius Jones's *Temple Melodies* (New York, 1852) with the name Nettleton. The name is possibly to honor Asahel Nettleton, a well-known evangelist who compiled a collection of texts, *Village Hymns for Social Worship* (New York, 1824). During the 19[th]century the hymn was reproduced and/or altered so as to appear in innumerable hymnals. These included the Presbyterians, Methodists, Evangelical Lutherans, Mennonites, Baptists, Christian Reformed, Roman Catholics, and Episcopalians. Additional tune names include Living Waters, Parish, Fount, Mullins, and Bartimeus.

#48 "O day of radiant gladness" (Es flog ein kleins Waldvögelein) is the first hymn in Christopher Wordsworth's *Holy Year* (London, 1862). The poet confused the first day of the week in biblical scripture with the seventh day of the week – the sabbath – so that his opening line, "O day of rest and gladness" was turned into "O day of radiant gladness." The tune name means "There flew a little woodbird," the opening line of a secular folksong. The tune was called Woodbird in *The Hymnal 1940* and many other hymnals.

#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.

#381 "Thy strong word did cleave the darkness" (Ton-y-Botel): This hymn was written in 1954 at the request of Walter Buszin, then Professor of Liturgics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. At the time there was a need for a suitable processional hymn that could be sung at the seminary's commencement ceremony. The melody that Buszin had in mind was the sturdy Welsh tune Ton-y-Botel. Walter Franzmann wrote the text for this tune. The motto of Concordia Seminary is "Anothen to Phos" – the Greek text of Matthew 4:16: "Light from above." The text was first published in *Worship Supplement* (St. Louis, 1969). 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, vol. 80, October, 1940). It was used by him as the central part of an anthem, "Goleu yn y glyn" (Light in the valley) published in Caernarvon. 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 eighteen 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 (The 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. It was said that the tune had been discovered washed up in a bottle on the North Wales coast. Its original name, Ebenezer, was taken from the chapel in Rhos, Pontardawe, of which T. J. Williams was a member.