THE DEVELOPMENT OF BAPTIST HYMNODY
WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

FUNDAMENTAL TENETS OF THE BAPTIST FAITH

There is no institution in human experience which may be fully understood unless it be known historically. In whatever realm any institution, custom or organization finds itself, whether religious or secular, this will be true. A historical study of the past is valuable to the present and the future, both positively and negatively.

When one undertakes a study of some of the historical origins and developments of the Southern Baptist Convention in relation to its music, he investigates an institution that deserves and receives the loyalty and devotion of millions of adherents, not only in this country but in many of the far-flung areas of the world. This group's history is involved in the patience and hope which it has sustained since its development that mankind everywhere might come to accept the religious precepts and doctrines advanced by its convention. The Latin writer Terence (second century B.C.) states this fact clearly: "I am a man and I count nothing human foreign to me." Philip Schaff, distinguished American theological teacher, adapts these words: "I am a Christian, and I count nothing Christian foreign to me."
Present day organized Baptist life in the South, brought over from Europe, was grounded in the beginnings of Christianity in the American colonies. Just as these antecedents were present in our early colonial religious life, so the influence of its denominational activities has sought to reach to the ends of the earth.

Were one to make an investigation of the fundamental principles of Baptists, he would find the foundation-stone to be the competency of the individual with God, void of sacrament, needing no priest or mediator other than Jesus Christ. As each one "must be reconciled to God for himself the church is composed of regenerated members; by regeneration is meant the new birth which comes to one who repents and accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior."¹ Baptists have always held that

True salvation for any one is a personal matter of faith and is not bestowed by baptism or any other rite or sacrament, nor does growth in the spiritual life depend primarily on sacraments, but comes about by the response the individual makes to the divine appeal as he finds it in the New Testament, by the promptings of the Holy Spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel, and in communion with his fellow Christians both in church services and in daily walk and conversation.²

This denomination also holds to the local church as the central unit in its organization, and from which

²Ibid., p. 7.
the world-wide program stems, and through which it seeks to promote the program for its members. Although this autonomy prevails with reference to the local unit, any church, if it so desires, may join with other Baptist churches in an association or convention which will facilitate the carrying forth of the program these church groups foster.

This type of freedom for each local church is entirely in keeping with that freedom granted to individuals, who, free to approach God as they may see fit, still may enjoin themselves in a unit or church. Admission to the church is made following a public profession of the individual of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; then, following baptism by immersion, into the full fellowship of any particular church. It is here at the point of baptism that the line of demarcation is somewhat strongly drawn between Baptists and other denominations.

Baptists baptize only those who have become Christians; those who publicly have declared that they are followers of Jesus and by this assertion they are buried in baptism and raised again to walk in newness of life. Thus baptism itself is no saving ordinance for it is not for the unregenerate but for all those who believe.
When the Baptists first arose in England immersion was not altogether abandoned, and on that account the practice of immersion did not at first cause much comment, but today it is regarded as their most distinguishing characteristic. 3

Another respect in which Baptists differ is that they do not baptize infants. They believe that all infants of the earth are saved and they do not believe that baptism is a sacrament which bestows either salvation or any other good upon infants. It is only when a child has become a professing Christian that baptism becomes necessary.

In fostering the tenet of the competency of the individual as regards his belief in God, the Baptists have also promulgated the idea of democracy within the government of the individual church. Each member has an equal voice in the program to be effected and likewise in the election of pastor and people who are to be responsible for the projection of the work of that particular church. There is no room for a priest or anyone of any authority to say that a person must accept or reject any precept or practice. Baptists accept the New Testament as the one rule of faith and practice and allow each individual to interpret it as he may see fit. History can recall innumerable periods when Baptists have also stood for the repudiation of any sort of a state church and have issued the call, and that sometimes loudly, for total separation of church and state. "In matters religious every individual is

3Ibid., p. 8.
responsible to God alone, and with this relationship the state has no right to meddle. On the other hand, the church has no right to direct the civic duties of its members.

In attempting to investigate the music of a given area (South) in the Baptist denomination, one can immediately become cognizant of the resultant problems which may arise, and which have arisen due to each church's being an entity unto itself, while, at the same time, attempting to be world-wide in scope. This is not an attempt to discredit the form of self-governing so vital to Baptists. It is merely to show that progress anywhere has always been a matter of what persons in authority have felt to be necessary and important to a people. With regard to music in the Southern Baptist churches [there is really no Southern Baptist Church, as such, since each church is a self-sustaining unit] it may be discerned that the progress and development of a form of church music suitable to worship would necessarily follow the practices set up within the local church and not from any outside authority.

To an onlooker, this seeming malpractice could bring forth only music which would depend entirely on the whims and fancies of those involved. Yet, it

appears that this refusal to accept opinions of
"higher-ups" has in many ways proved advantageous. The
churches of the Southern Baptist Convention have not
projected forms and styles of music for services which
have little or no similarity to the character or needs
of the people served.

In allowing an individual to approach God as he or
she sees fit, Baptists do not believe that they have
any right to abrogate that freedom in any manner; such
as the setting up of ritual or liturgy, or types of
ritual which are not in keeping with the established
modes of worship, whether ecclesiastical or evangelical.

It is obviously impractical to expect a group or
area to merely accept what is offered when that
which has been projected has not been defined in the light
of those ideals and truths which have, in turn, been
accepted by the group. Admittedly there are many
problems associated with Southern Baptist Church Music.
However, let it be clearly stated that this denomi-
nation, important to the millions it serves in the
southern part of our country, will continue to be at
variance with any person, or group of persons, who
might seek to encroach on those fundamentals held so
tenaciously. The pages of religious history are replete
with incidents of many that have seen fit to endure persecution, and even death itself, in order that their faith might stand firm and strong. Baptists have been called God's patriots, putting allegiance to him always above loyalty to any person or even to Caesar (the state). Freedom of conscience and complete divorce of church and state! How they have suffered for that. They have faced mockery and mud, fines, whippings and iron bars; they have been burned at the stake and pulled on the rack, but they have held firm. Their torturers might as well have expected a man to walk without a head as to expect to tear such persistent and militant faith out of the Baptists. And note this: never once in their bitter, bloody history have they struck back at their persecutors or persecuted any other for his faith. That is patriotism touched by the divine.5

Although these ideals have had several forms, depending on the particular group, they have persisted through the centuries following the life of Jesus here on earth. It would be entirely without basis for one to state that all of the many isolated groups might be called Baptist. Possibly an investigation of some of these groups—some important to the present day Baptist ideal—will make us cognizant of the unquestioned heritage possessed by Baptists.

CHAPTER II

EARLY APPROXIMATIONS OF BAPTIST FAITH

Accepting available historical evidence, one finds that the Baptists do not appear as an organized church until around the twelfth century. Most reputable historians accept the activities of Peter Waldo and Waldensians as being the forerunners of the sixteenth century Anabaptists. These Waldensians broke step with the Roman Catholic Church and never returned.

They received their name from a very wealthy man of Lyons, Peter Waldo. He, upon reading in the scriptures the story of the rich young ruler's experience with the Master, gave his entire fortune away and sought to evangelize his own people in their own language. Immediately translators were put to work, and Peter Waldo supervised the work of evangelism himself. Notwithstanding the disciplines he imposed upon the new converts, and in spite of the severity of the punishment meted out by the church of Rome, these disciples kept on preaching. Driven to the "caves and valleys of the Alps; they came back when Rome grew tired. Today there are fifteen thousand of them."¹

¹Ibid., p. 6.
Not being a complete unit of belief, the doctrine of the early Waldensian is difficult to define and classify. There were groups which held rather strictly to the doctrine of the church of Rome, retaining priests and bishops and teachers; while on the other hand, others were congregational in their procedures and outstanding in their evangelistic zeal, rejecting sacramental grace and infant baptism. Many of this latter group soon appeared in both Switzerland and Germany and exerted no small influence on the Anabaptists.

In order to prevent confusion, it may be well here to define what is meant by the term "Baptist", when used to characterize the several, though often isolated, historical bodies. A Pedo-baptist is one who baptizes babes. An Anti-pedobaptist is one who rejects the baptism of babes. But this does not of necessity make him a Baptist . . . . An "Anabaptist" is one who baptizes again for any reason, more particularly those who had been converted from the Catholic religion. In this sense, the Catholics might be called Anabaptists since they reimmersed any who came to them from what they called "the heretical bodies." Which made them Pedo-baptists and Ana-baptists at one and the same time. But a Baptist proper, in modern parlance, is one who rejects the baptism of babes under all circumstances and who immerses none but those who personally confess Christ under any circumstances; and those who are thus properly immersed upon their faith in Christ, we have a right to claim in history as Baptists to that extent, but no further. 2

These Anabaptists have been called "the left-wing of the Reformation." They advocated such rights as the abolition of capital punishment, pacifism, and vigorously.

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asserted the freedom of the soul and the conscience. They also voiced the ideal of

Separation of church and state, refused to take oath in court, or even to hold civic office, and stood against the payment of taxes and interest on money loaned. That was about as far to the left as anyone could go and be a reformer; it made them not only heretics to the church but rebels to the state. Popes and princes went after them with fire and sword; every great Protestant reformer spoke against them. Even Martin Luther condemned them in Germany when they took the part of the people in the Peasant's War of 1525, advising the princes to "knock down, strangle and stab them" without mercy. Luther, for all his greatness, left the church still chained to the chariot wheels of the state.3

Unable to stand for that, the Anabaptists sided with the peasants against the Lutherans. Seeking to guard their peculiar heritage, they launched out alone with the supreme determination to succeed or perish in the attempting of it.

Groups appeared in Switzerland and in Italy and Holland. Some followed the pattern of moderate but constructive activity -- translating the Bible into German -- until they were forced through persecution to flee to Moravia to proclaim their truths. Those in Italy were of little and short-lived consequence, partly because Rome is in that country. Undoubtedly, the Dutch groups were the most radical. Standing out in clear detail is the "affair at Münster," where they committed such outrages and excesses which have given a mark of shame to the group, resulting

3Mead, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
in war of catastrophic proportions and bloodshed. The small remnant remaining attempted to move forward under the name of Mennonites.

The coming of the seventeenth century brought forth the appearance of this Mennonite group who, in turn, are considered the immediate ancestors of the Baptists since it was they who scattered over much of England preaching Anabaptist doctrines.

As time went on, these groups, isolated though they were from each other in consistency of doctrine and practices, managed to continue to be organized. The year 1638 finds what was called at that time the "Particular Baptist" group being organized. They were named as such due to the belief that atonement was a particular or limited thing for the elect only. This group made its appearance in England. Groups broke away from what was called the General Branch and formed churches of their own. One in particular, in 1641, convinced that immersion was the only form of baptism, started its own church. Although, as is suggested by the foregoing statement, there were differences such as forms of baptism, etc., still there was prevalent those fundamentals which have always been characteristic of the Baptists. In 1644, these "immersion" Baptists wrote their Confession of Faith, which, even today is a guide to Baptists. This date also marks the
first time in history such groups were called by the name "Baptists" which they keep even today.

Although definite procedures were gradually being accepted, there were still eras of storm and of quiet. These were not without impress upon the societies of which Baptists were a part and on the life and character of the communities in which they found themselves.

As is the case with any great undertaking, loyalty to the truth will always make for greater and more rapid progress than will a lack of staunch zeal for a principle. In so far as the Baptists, of not only England but the other countries of the world, were able to withstand the tendencies to compromise were they able to witness the growth of their beliefs. England offers possibly the greatest example of how determined these Baptists were. The incidents relative to both the Particular and the General branches confirm the appearance of not only great men, but great deeds performed by these men. In 1891 these two groups united as one.

Of tremendous influence, not only in the realm of Baptist history, but of widespread acceptance everywhere, are the writings of Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*. This allegory was written in Bedford jail when Bunyan was sentenced for preaching and promised release were he
to reject his ministry. Not to be overlooked is John Milton who, in his blindness, wrote *Paradise Lost*. Others such as Daniel Defoe, creator of *Robinson Crusoe*, also appeared on the scene.

Many theologians, too numerous to mention in this treatise, received their training and inspiration from such preachers as Alexander MacLaren, A. J. Gordon, Robert Hall, and Charles Haddon Spurgeon; also, Andrew Fuller, in whose English home the English Baptist Missionary Society was formed in 1792; and William Carey, often called the "father of the modern missionary movement," himself serving in India.
CHAPTER III

BAPTIST HYMNODY IN ENGLAND AND ITS COMPILERS

History bears out the fact that most of the Baptists in England were opposed to any form of congregational singing until about the year 1673. This was true of the General Baptists even beyond this date.

Rev. W.R. Stevenson, in an article in the General Baptist Magazine for January, 1887, says: "For one thing they were afraid of forms, forms of praise as well as forms of prayer. They also urged that the praises of God, in order to be accepted, must be sincere, but in a mixed congregation of believers and unbelievers, many would be sure to utter words of praise with their voices, whilst their hearts were not engaged, which would be hypocrisy. If under the prompting of a spirit of gratitude to God, a brother in their assemblies felt moved to sing by himself a psalm of thanksgiving, they could not gainsay, provided he confined himself to the words of Scripture, but more than this they could not admit." ¹

Thomas Grantham, following the formation of the General Baptists in England, himself a disciple of John Smyth [who in 1606 fled to Amsterdam with a group of Separatists], published his "Christianismus Primitivus" in London in 1678. In this work he held that

The New Testament recognized no promiscuous singing, and no singing by the rules of art, but only the utterance of Psalms and hymns sung by such as

¹Henry S. Burrage, Baptist Hymn Writers and Their Hymns (Portland, 1888), p. 627.
God hath fitted thereto by the help of His Spirit for the edification of the listening church. If all sing, there were none to be edified; if pleasant tunes are used, that would bring music and instruments back; if other men's words are sung, that would open the way to the similar use of forms of prayer also.

It is noteworthy to see the replies given by a small minority of congregations which were asked by the General Baptist Assembly in 1689 to justify their use of singing of psalms. Being called upon to "show what psalms they made use of for the matter, and what rules they did settle upon for the manner," they replied

Not the metres composed by Messrs. Sternhold and Hopkins, but a book of metres composed by one Mr. Barton, and the rules produced to sing these Psalms as set down secundum artem; viz, as the musicians do sing according to their gamut. Sol, fa, la, my, ray, &c., &c.; which appeared so strangely foreign to the evangelical worship that it was not conceived anywise safe for the churches to admit such carnal formalities; but to rest satisfied in this, till we can see something more perfect in this case, that as prayer of one in the church is the prayer of the whole, as a church, so the singing of one in the church is the singing of the whole church; and as he that prayeth in the church is to perform the service as of the ability which God giveth, even so, he that singeth praises in the church ought to perform that service as of the ability received of God; that as a mournful voice becomes the duty of prayer, so a joyful voice, with gravity, becomes the duty of praising God with a song in the Church of God.

3Ibid., p. 93.
These isolated beginnings, sporadic as they appeared at this time, received what was termed the general approbation of the Assembly although it also showed that the effort to penetrate the isolation of a peculiar sect was somewhat elephantine and awkward. It was not until the middle of the eighteenth century that it was conceded that congregational participation was somewhat an innovation. The similarities of attitude far outweighed the differences and there was no attempt to exclude such or to impose an opinion which would call for general acceptance and practice.

However, singing in worship came to be a definite subject of dispute. Allusion is made by Burrage in *Baptist Hymn Writers and their Hymns* to Benjamin Keach, who, in 1673, as pastor of a small Particular Baptist Church in London, introduced the practice of singing a hymn at the observance of the Lord's Supper. As time progressed, hymns were added to the service on such days of thanksgiving; and in 1690 it was voted by the church to sing a hymn every Lord's Day. Strangely, and yet entirely in keeping with the belief in the rights of the individual, it was decided that the hymn to be used would appear in the service following the prayer after the sermon, so as to allow those unwilling to join in an opportunity to "go freely forth."
This idea proved impractical to both sides of the issue. One of the members of the church, Isaac Marlowe, printed a tract in opposition to a book which Keach had produced in 1691 entitled, The Breach Repaired in God's Worship; or Singing of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs Proved to be a Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ. This same year saw the advent of the first Baptist Hymnbook to be published in England. Keach published a book entitled, Spiritual Melody, which was a compilation of his own compositions used in various congregations of earlier years, and which, at the suggestion of friends, was brought forth. Notwithstanding his attempts to bring about a keener understanding of his ideas regarding the participation of the people in singing, there were those within his own church who saw fit to withdraw their membership on the grounds that they did not agree with the minister that the singing of spiritual songs and psalms was an ordinance of Jesus Christ.

Burrage states that the very same church which was organized as a result of these differences called a minister who made it a condition of his acceptance that a psalm or hymn would be sung at the beginning of public worship, and at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper.

With this psalm or hymn the service was enriched for the next nineteen years. In 1753, it was found that there were only two men and two ladies who were opposed to singing and they changed their opinions and
declared their willingness that the church should have liberty in this matter. Accordingly it was agreed that there should be singing after, as well as before, the sermon, and on all other proper occasions. 4

Iviney observes:

In the present day, when this practice is universal, it will appear unaccountable that our fore-fathers should require arguments to prove the following particulars, viz.: What it is to sing?; that there can be no proper singing without the voice; "tis not simple heart-joy," or inward rejoicing without the voice; no metaphorical singing mentioned in Scripture; no mental singing, as there is no mental praying; the essence of singing no more in the heart or spirit than the essence of preaching, etc.; singing is a musical modulation or tuning of the voice, etc., etc. -- with a number of other particulars equally curious, and, to us, self-evident. 5

In 1888, Henry S. Burrage published a compilation of the contributions made to the field of hymnology. In an area in which there is very little material, this volume includes the prominent facts and salient features of Baptist hymnody in the light of its growth and development all over the world. It is from this informative work that the following data concerning English hymnwriters among the Baptists are taken.

In 1697, Joseph Stennett, pastor of a Baptist church in London, published a collection of hymns entitled, "Hymns in Commemoration of the Sufferings of our Blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ, Composed for

4Burrage, op. cit., p. 628.

5Ibid., p. 637.
the Celebration of His Holy Supper. • • •
A second edition of Stennett's Hymns appeared in 1705, and the number of hymns, which in the first edition was thirty-seven, was now increased to fifty. In 1709 appeared the second edition of Mr. Stennett's Version of "Solomon's Song of Songs." In 1712 Mr. Stennett produced twelve hymns on Baptism.

In the year 1750 the pastor of a Baptist church in Maze Pond published a volume containing one hundred hymns which was entitled Evangelical Hymns and Songs in Two Parts.

A larger volume containing two hundred and sixty-three hymns, some of which are still in use, was published in 1768 by John Needham, pastor of the Bristol Baptist Church. It was entitled Hymns Devotional and Moral, on Various Subjects, Collected Chiefly from the Holy Scriptures, and Suited to the Christian State and Worship.

Also, in Bristol in 1769, compiled by two ministers, John Ash and Caleb Evans, the first Selection of hymns prepared for use in the Baptist churches in England was published. It was entitled A Collection of Hymns Adapted to Public Worship, and included four hundred and twelve hymns by such great English hymn writers as Stennett, Beddome, Wesley, Watts, Steele and Addison.

The first General Baptist hymn book was published in 1772 and compiled by Dan Taylor, their leading pastor. The title of Hymns and Spiritual Songs suggested that there were many who assisted in placing this book before the people. It included two hundred and ninety-three hymns.

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6Ibid., pp. 628-9.
John Fawcett published in 1782, his Hymns Adapted to the Circumstances of Public Worship and Private Devotion. The collection comprises one hundred and sixty-six hymns, which had been written at different stages of Fawcett's ministry.

In 1783, Richard Burnham, who during his ministry composed many hymns for his congregation, published New Hymns on Divine Subjects. A third edition of this same hymnal appeared in 1794, and a fourth, containing three hundred and eighteen hymns, was published in 1796.

A collection of hymns by Samuel Deacon appeared in 1785, entitled, A New Composition of Hymns and Poems; Chiefly on Divine Subjects, Designed for the Amusement and Edification of Christians of all Denominations; More Particularly Those of the General Baptist Persuasion. Later, subsequent editions were enlarged over the sixty-three hymns and twenty meditations, and coming to be known as the Barton Hymns. A watch-maker by trade, Barton preached for thirty-seven years, and also authored several religious books.

The hymns of Samuel Medley were first printed as leaflets, commencing in 1786. There followed in 1789 a small volume containing seventy-seven hymns, and

Ibid., pp. 629-30.
still, in 1794, a larger volume appeared. In 1800, the year following his death, his son published a volume containing two hundred and twenty hymns with the title *Hymns—the Public Worship and Private Devotions of True Christians, Assisted in Some Thoughts in Verse: Principally Drawn From Select Passages of the Word of God.*

His daughter also published other volumes but these were not considered authentic (Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* alludes to a seeming difference of allegiance between sister and brother in the publishing of the posthumous collection.)

A contribution which had much effect on Baptist Hymnody in England was made by John Rippon, who was born in 1751. He was educated for the ministry at the Baptist College, in Carter Lane, Tooley Street, London and remained there until his death in 1836.

Dr. Rippon was one of the most popular and influential "Dissenting" ministers of his time. From 1790 to 1802 he issued the *Baptist Annual Register*, a periodical containing an account of the most important events in the history of the Baptist denomination in Great Britain and America during that period, and very valuable now as a book of reference. 8

He was probably better known, however, for a selection of hymns for public worship which appeared in 1787. The first edition was entitled *A Selection of Hymns From the Best Authors, Adapted to Dr. Isaac Watt's Psalms*

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and Hymns, and to his own Selections. A tenth edition of this hymnbook was published in 1800 and it contained sixty additional hymns. It was subsequently enlarged in 1827. In 1844, after his death, The Comprehensive Edition appeared. This is more frequently called The Comprehensive Rippon. It contained 1170 hymns, in one hundred metres. Rippon performed an important service to Baptist Hymnody in the preparation of his original book and its subsequent improvement. It is not known with certainty which hymns he authored since he did not put his name on any of them. However, the preface of the tenth edition cites some of the hymns as being his own.

Nearly one fourth of the hymns in the Selection are original. Especially was the compiler indebted to Dr. S. Stennett, Rev. D. Turner, Rev. B. Beddome, and Rev. B. Francis, all eminent Baptists. But a place was also given to the hymn writers of other denominations. "It has not been my enquiry," says Dr. Rippon, "Whose hymns I shall choose, but what hymns; and hence it will be seen that Churchmen and Dissenters, Watts and Tate, Wesley and Toplady, England and America, sing side by side, and very often join in the same triumph song, using the same words."9

Just as the fire of Baptist doctrine was making headway in England, so in like manner did the hymnody begin to become an important factor in the life of local church groups as well as organized efforts. Conventions approved the preparation of hymn books, churches and

9Burrrage, op. cit., p. 631.
pastors compiled books for their own particular use. With the advent of new and select material both from Baptist writers and other denominations, it was quite customary for a single book to have several editions wherein provision was made for additions to hymnody of that time.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, world-famous nineteenth century Baptist preacher, compiled a book entitled, Our Own Hymn Book in 1866.

Our congregation . . . has long used two hymn books; namely, the comprehensive edition of Dr. Rippon's Selection, and Dr. Watt's Psalms and Hymns. Despite the judgment of many to the contrary, we believe that the store of spiritual songs contained in these two volumes is not excelled, even if equalled, by any compositions extant; and we should most probably have been very well content with these books had it not been for difficulties connected with the remarkable complex arrangement of their contents. To strangers it is no small task to discover the hymns selected for singing, for, in the first place, there were two books, which in itself is an evil; but the matter was made worse by the fact that these two volumes were each a puzzle to the uninstructed; Rippon with its parts innumerably, and Watts, with first, second, and third books.

Following a succession of hymn books which were accepted by the Baptists of Britain, there appeared in 1876 a proposition to endorse another hymnal, since there was fostered a desire to embody in their singing hymns of a more recent date than the hymnal of 1851, entitled The New Hymn Book. After much selection which involved adding and rejecting, a committee of ten ministers

10 Ibid., pp. 636-7.
published in the year 1879 what was called The Baptist Hymnal. This title was used under the impression that there were churches in the larger sections of the Baptist body which would be glad to adopt the book, provided there was nothing in the title to prevent. The impression has proved correct, the book has been used in both England and Scotland alike, many entirely disconnected with the Baptist faith.\(^\text{11}\)

So brief a story of English hymnwriters omits salient and illuminating features of a period such as English hymnology was never to know again. Only the major points of creative interest and development as regards Baptists are referred to here. An enormous output speaks of the depth and power of sacred song in expressing the religious feelings of English Christians. Between 1800 and 1900 alone, five hundred hymnals were compiled for the churches of Great Britain, including two hundred and fifty for the Anglican churches and two hundred and fifty for the non-conformist churches.\(^\text{12}\)

Truly, for other churches as well as for the Baptists, this long and rich era in the development of a hymnody suitable for particular needs of worship in its many types and forms, proved the most prolific in the annals of evangelical Christianity. It also proved that a people who were not bound by any state-church form of religion were willing to provide for themselves and others church music which would facilitate their mode of religious expression and which would, at the same time, inspire them to hold fast to that which is good, if only for them.

\(^{11}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 637.}\)

\(^{12}\text{William C. Covert, editor, Handbook to The Hymnal (Philadelphia, 1936), p. xviii.}\)
CHAPTER IV

THE BAPTIST HYMN IN AMERICA

It is a startling revelation that in America today there are more than three hundred different denominations of Christians. These large and varied groups represent the most complicated religious pattern existent in the world at the present time. There have been, and still are, certain outstanding factors to make these divergent elements present in America. Possibly an investigation of what some of these might be will give cognizance to the background that has gone into the lives and practices of Southern Baptists, particularly as regards their music.

The secular happenings of the age have always made an impress upon church art. Those whose great interests are tied up in opera house and concert hall, or who are thrilled by the works of romantic composers, will inevitably long for something comparable in the songs of the church.

The congregational tune must be appealing, stirring, emotional, as the old music doubtless was to the people of the old time, but certainly is no longer. This logical demand the (English) musicians of the present day and their (American) followers assume to gratify . . . and, in spite of the cavils of purists and reactionaries, their melodies seem to have taken a permanent place in the affections of the Protestant English-speaking world.1

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Thus one sees that these songs have been successful not merely for their abstract musical beauty but because their style so aptly expresses for the individual those things which he may feel in his personal devotionals. They become a part of present-day trends in theology and yet are not entirely divorced from the fervent hymns of faith from which they were most certainly directly inspired.

Socio-Economic Influences on Baptist Life

with Particular Emphasis on the
Southern Baptist Convention

American Baptists are divided by Vedder into three natural divisions or movements. The first runs almost parallel with the Colonial Period of the nation's history, and was marked by strong determination and faith to witness to the truth on one hand and bitter persecution on the other. American religion during the colonization period can best be explained by the fact that the churches were established by those who were liberal to the extent of radicalism in their views on politics and religion. Church and state were under attack from every quarter and the early colonists opposed and contested the divine right of kings as well as the divine right of bishops. They fled from the English shores at the time that the old political faith was being questioned and since they were largely poor men who were sorely dissatisfied with conditions in general, they were easily led by radical ideas.
Increase Mather in 1677 stated, "There never was a generation that did so perfectly shake off the dust of Babylon, both as to ecclesiastical and civil constitution, as the first generation of Christians that came to the land for the Gospel's sake." The Puritan colonial leaders from the beginning had visions of a new social order, and they gloried in their escape from the bounds and restrictions of the old.²

Rhode Island, which was the stronghold of the Baptists, offered asylum for those who were termed religious radicals. They also were welcomed by William Penn and his associates in the middle colonies and they joyfully came, happy in their escape from the bitter persecutions of the old country.

The underlying principles of the Baptists, as they struck back at the very foundations of seventeenth century state and church organization, were considered dangerously radical. Continually striking at the heart of state and ecclesiastical powers, Baptists were not slow to assert themselves religiously as well as politically. Finding themselves in a new world offered few restraining forces. Long had radical tendencies been suppressed not only by government but also by high church officials. They moved rapidly to abolish all restraint on social, political and religious institutions. This was true of all classes that made the trek across the sea to establish those truths they believed so important to their lives and to generations following.

Throughout the entire colonial period there was no church official of high rank in America, not an Anglican or Catholic bishop, or any other ecclesiastical official who might have exercised a restraining influence. By the time of the American Revolution the people of America possessed a larger degree of freedom in religion than was to be found among any other people. They had carried on the freest debate on all religious questions without regard to bishops, priests, councils or creeds; thus encouraging an individualism in religion such as existed nowhere else.

The second period likewise corresponds with an era of our secular history, "the time of territorial expansion, and is marked by unexampled growth and missionary activity (1776-1845)."

It was a great achievement for America as her people crossed the continent. The American churches extended their work as they followed westward across the broad prairies the restless, ever-moving population.

The first task of the American churches after the Revolution was to follow this westward-moving population. . . . Throughout this whole period the churches were in continuous contact with frontier conditions and frontier needs, and no single fact is more significant in its influence upon American religion.

With the presence of the pioneer spirit in evidence, it was natural that much independence was to characterize the attitudes of those who were transplanted to America and divided and re-divided as they moved Southward and

3Ibid., p. 4.


5Sweet, op. cit., pp. 4-5.
Westward into the undeveloped frontiers. This self-same independence was the cause of many of the schisms which broke out between the frontier liberalism and the more narrow controls of the established regions. Several contributing factors to the new light of liberalism were economic conditions and distances to eastern areas which made prohibitive the training of many young ministers.

Besides these far-reaching influences exerted by the establishment of colleges on the new frontiers,

The frontier supplemented and supplied that challenge to the heroic without which Christianity seems never to have been able to perform its work. It was the need of the frontier, also, which, when brought to the knowledge of the East, was largely responsible for the beginning of the modern missionary interest, which has supplied one of the chief influences in the life of the American churches. 6

William Warren Sweet gives a most descriptive and enlightening account of some of the early emigrants among the Baptists as they moved Southward.

Among the early emigrants across the Alleghany Mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee were numerous Baptists from Virginia and North Carolina. Generally speaking, they belonged to the class, economically, which would be attracted by the lure of cheap land. The pure democracy of Baptist Church government would also tend to attract them to the freer life and the greater democracy of the frontier. Their preachers came from the people, and were self-supporting, and were themselves, indeed, farmers on the lookout for better land. Thus the Baptists were particularly well-suited in their ideas of government, in their

6Ibid., p. 6.
economic status, and in their form of church
government to become the ideal western emigrants. 7

In his History of Ten Churches, John Taylor, a
typical frontier Baptist preacher, has given a most
descriptive picture of the work of those early back-
woods preachers. Taylor was a Virginia Baptist preacher
who, in 1779, went to Kentucky. He moved his family to
that state in 1791, where in June of the same year the
first Baptist church west of the Alleghanies was formed.
Taylor cites the moving of an entire church from Virginia
to Kentucky. This church, known as the Gilbert's Creek
Church moved en masse from Spottsylvania, Virginia, and
kept up its organization as it moved over the mountains.
It is said that during their march westward they heard of
the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown and made the hills
ring as they fired their muskets in glad rejoicings. Just
as the indomitable spirit of freedom rang within each heart
as the people trudged their weary way westward, so the news
of the surrender of the British forces under Cornwallis
could not bring other than exultation.

As these churches continued to be formed and as the
communities grew and enlarged, there came about the organi-
ization of what is still called associations. This was
brought about as several churches banded together in order
to facilitate the projection of their programs and to
likewise strengthen each other.

7Ibid., p. 312.
Not only did the Baptists from Virginia appear in the mountain settlements, but also those from North Carolina and Tennessee. Sweet, in *The Story of Religions in America*, alludes to the multiplicity of Baptists in these frontier areas. He explains that most of the Baptist churches were formed without too much difficulty as the farmer-preacher came with the settlers, and there were no hindrances to organize a Baptist church. Most of the preachers were themselves farmers who worked during the week and preached on Sundays. Often uneducated, the preacher worked for no salary since there was much prejudice against a paid ministry. He was first licensed; then when he was chosen to take a regular congregation, he was ordained as a Baptist preacher. Much of the initiative in the forming of a new church depended upon the licensed or ordained farmer-preacher who would move into a new community. At regular monthly meetings the activities and business of the congregation were discussed by the entire church body, and decisions made by personal ballot or vote, a practice still held today.

The rude cabins of the early settlers provided the first meeting places for churches, and they were used for several years following the organization of a church. The membership was necessarily small, sometimes between six and twenty and it was the common thing for several decades to pass ere a church could erect a brick or even a frame church.
The third and final period alluded to by Vedder extends "from about the time of the Mexican War to our own day, and may be called the period of evangelism and education." This movement manifested itself in the spiritual quickening and edification of the churches.

For nearly fifty years following the Great Awakening, which occurred in 1734 under Jonathan Edwards' leadership, there did not appear any marked evidence of revival. However, in the ten years that followed 1790, there was a tumultuous revival wave which swept throughout New England. In the southern and southwestern areas of our country, the evidences and reactions to revivalism caused much disfavor and criticism on the part of the more conservative element of the east. Evidences of sporadic leaps of interest and evangelism characterized the southern areas and remarkable physical phenomena was brought to the surface. Today the attitudes advanced by the more judicious folk, over against those of the more radical viewpoints in evangelism, continue to produce much controversy and misunderstanding between areas of America. It appears that there is coming into being more and more the belief that progress is heightened and made more effective by a steady advance, rather than by periodic waves of religious excitement.

Vedder, op. cit., p. 287.
"Evangelism is no less genuine now than in the days when a Finney or a Knapp stirred whole communities as they never were stirred before, but now an evangelist preaches weekly from nearly every pulpit." 9

In the intervening years the mode and style of preaching has changed considerably. "... it is simple and direct; it aims more consciously at the conversion of men. It is more intelligently adapted to reach the will through the intellect and affection, and to produce an immediate decision for Christ." 10

Close upon the heels of the revival days was the beginning of plans and procedures which brought about the establishment of educational institutions. Even in early years, Baptists felt the necessity of better education for their children and also for their ministers.

The year 1756 saw the establishment of an academy in Hopewell, New Jersey, and there followed like private schools in Philadelphia, New York, and Bordentown, New Jersey.

A logical development was the consideration of a project to establish schools of higher learning. Expenses at existing colleges often made it prohibitive for Baptist students to avail themselves of the advantages, and many of these colleges were anti-Baptist in sentiment and often in teaching.

9Ibid., p. 351.  10Ibid., p. 351
So strong was the feeling toward the Baptists that state legislatures in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania refused to grant charters to such institutions. It is interesting to note that the Philadelphia Association was the first to seek the building of a four-year college, and it was forced to go to Rhode Island where, in 1764, a charter was drafted and enacted.

To all positions in the faculty save that of President, and to all other honors and advantages, persons of all religious denominations were to be freely admitted. Such a charter, while it gave to the denomination that founded the institution perpetual control of it, was in perfect harmony with the spirit of religious liberty that had characterized the colony of Rhode Island from the first.\textsuperscript{11}

Oddly enough, the first President, James Manning, was a student in the first academy organized in Hopewell, New Jersey. Brown University, as this institution was later to be named, is the oldest Baptist institution of higher learning in America. There followed other schools and colleges which have been notable in their attainments in the field of education. Among these, with the dates of their charter, are found Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, Boston (1825); Waterville College, later changed to Colby College, Maine (1818); Rochester Theological Seminary (1850); Colgate University, Rochester, New York, was changed from University of Rochester in 1890;

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., p. 354.
University of Chicago, Illinois (1890); Crozer Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania (1868); Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky (1858); Wake Forest College, North Carolina (1845); Bucknell University, Pennsylvania (1846); Columbian University, Washington, D. C. (1821); Richmond College, now University of Richmond, Virginia (1832); Denison University, Ohio (1832); and Vassar College, New York (1861).

The year 1860 saw the advent of societies formed for young people, and this phase of educational work among Baptists, and more particularly Southern Baptists, has proved to be one of the most striking innovations in the annals of church activity everywhere. Departments were set up according to the pathological age of children and lesson plans and activities pertinent to the particular age-group were brought forth through such agencies as the American Baptist Publication Society. This activity was begun in Washington, D. C., in 1824 and was transferred to Philadelphia two years later. Its area of service was enlarged to the printing of lesson materials, pamphlets, papers and books of high value and many varieties. Besides the work in this country, its influence has been felt to the four corners of the world as the information it produces brings millions to a more complete understanding of the vitality of its work.
Baptist Hymnwriters and Hymnbooks

What of the music of these periods in the nation's history and in the development of a hymnody which would fit the needs of Baptists?

Colonial Period

When the Pilgrims landed in the new world in 1620, the hymn book brought with them was Ainsworth's version of the book of Psalms, often called the Ainsworth Psalter; but rightly titled, The Book of Psalms; Englished both in Prose and Metre. With Annotations opening the words and sentences by conference with other scriptures. By Henry Ainsworth.

An English Separatist, Ainsworth was pastor of the English Church in Amsterdam. His version of the Psalms, which contained a preface and had musical notes, was used at Plymouth, Massachusetts until 1692. The church at Salem, Massachusetts retained it until 1667. However, the Bay Psalm Book as it is generally known, published in 1640, became the most prevalent, and "... was the first book published in the colonies." It is a source of inspiration to the church musician to know that the first book printed in America was a hymnbook.

Following a second edition of the Bay Psalm Book in 1647, it was evident that even this work needed revision

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11-ABurrage, op. cit., p. 638.
and improvement. It fell the lot of President Dunster of Harvard [started originally by the Baptists as a school for educating young ministers] to supervise the improving and revising of the hymnal. In 1650, this revised edition appeared, and in spite of many such revisions it stood the test of time and was extensively used for more than one hundred years, not only in America, but also in England and Scotland, where it was also reprinted and revised on many occasions.

For a time during the latter portions of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth century, the propagation of music in New England was almost at a standstill. John Cotton wrote a treatise entitled Singing of Psalms a Gospel Ordinance which did much to prepare the way for the different versions of psalmody and hymnody used in that time.

... it is said that at the time Rev. Cotton wrote his pamphlet only three or four tunes could be sung in the churches. Nor were these three or four tunes sung alike by different persons, but according to a contemporary record, "as every unskilful throat saw fit," "like five hundred different tunes roared out at the same time," and, "so hideous and disorderly as is bad beyond expression."12

"The first American Baptist hymn book, entitled Hymns and Spiritual Songs Collected from the Works of Several Authors, was printed in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1766, by Samuel Hall ... ."12-a

12 Ibid., p. 639.
12-a Ibid., p. 640.
Only two copies remain, with one in the *Harris Collection of American Poetry* in Brown University, and the other in Newport, Rhode Island. The book opens with sixteen hymns for use in connection with the ordinance of Baptism. These are followed with seventy-four hymns on the Lord's Supper. The rest of the collection consists of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, forty-eight in number. The compiler is unknown, and the names of the authors of the hymns are not given.¹³

The second Baptist hymnal appeared in 1784, with the title, *A Choice Collection of Hymns from Various Authors Adapted to Public Worship. Designed for the Edification of the Pious of all Denominations, but More Particularly for the Use of the Baptist Churches in Philadelphia.*

Records of the Philadelphian Baptist Association under the date of April, 1788 shows that a committee was appointed to prepare a hymnal for use in that particular association of churches. Two years later there appeared *Selection of Psalms and Hymns Done under the Appointment of the Philadelphian Association.* By Samuel Jones, D. D., and Burris Allison, A. M. This hymnal included eight hymns from the *Newport Collection* of 1766, and many were taken from Rippon's *Selections* of 1787. Samuel Jones, one of the collaborators in this hymnal venture was probably the most influential Baptist minister of the Middle Colonies, and besides the ministry helped establish Baptist schools and aided greatly in establishing Rhode Island College, which later became Brown University.

In 1792, in the city of Elizabethtown, New Jersey, there appeared what was termed the American Edition of Rippon's Selections.

In 1793, A Collection of Evangelical Hymns by John Stanford was released in New York. Stanford was born in England in 1754, and by study of the scriptures he was led to unite with the Baptists. He came to this country in 1786 to open a select school in New York. Holding religious services in the lecture room of his school brought forth the organization of a church in 1795. His Collection of Evangelical Hymns was designed to assist the devotions of his own congregation. It contained two hundred hymns, including selections from Watts, Steele, Beddome, Stennett, Medley, Needham, Fawcett, Robinson, Toplady, Doddridge, Hart and the best English hymnwriters of this time.

An investigation of this nature can not possibly include all Baptists who made contributions to the hymns and hymnbooks of this period, for truly their number is legion. Although the beginnings of Baptist Hymnody in this era were necessarily restricted, it may be truthfully stated that they paved the way for dynamic and prolific activities among Baptist hymnwriters.
The Expansion Period

There are several tangible causes for the advance made by the Baptists during the latter portions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This period in the life of this people has been called by historians the period of the greatest actual and relative advance among American Baptists. Chief among these causes was the granting of religious liberty in all the states. Certainly not to be overlooked is the dynamic missionary activity of pioneer preachers. With the removal of hindrances, political and religious, the Baptist churches grew by leaps and bounds. This expansion was due greatly to the work of men who were not sent by any organization, but who went forth to unchartered territories in answer to, what was to them, a divine imperative to carry the Gospel to the newly inhabited areas. Many are the instances given by historians of men who spent part, or even all, of their lives as itinerant preachers.

These men, uncouth as they would seem now, unwelcome as they would be to the pulpit of any fashionable Baptist church in our cities, led multitudes to the cross of Christ, founded churches in all the new communities of the West, laid the foundations of denominational institutions, on which a magnificent superstructure has since been built.¹⁴

Succeeding pages of this thesis will give proof of the prolific contributions in hymnody of the preachers of this period.

¹⁴Vedder, op. cit., p. 323.
A collection of hymns, known as *The Cluster of Spiritual Songs, Divine Hymns and Social Poems; Being Chiefly a Collection*, by Jesse Mercer, was published at Augusta, Georgia. It may be noted here that in 1845 in the city of Augusta, the Southern Baptist Convention became a reality and received a charter to operate as a convention body. This collection of hymns was first published in pamphlet form. There were three editions before 1817, and the Cluster was subsequently published in Philadelphia as the fifth edition and contained six hundred and seventy-six hymns. Mercer's collection held an important place of service in some of the Southern Baptist churches.

Another well-known Georgia Baptist minister, Hosea Holcombe, was the compiler of a collection of hymns in 1815. Holcombe was born in North Carolina around 1780. After entering the ministry in South Carolina, he moved to Alabama and was prominent in laying the foundations of the Baptist cause in that entire state. For six years he was president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention. There also came from his prolific pen a history of the Baptists of Alabama, published in 1840.

A Kentucky Baptist minister, Starke Dupuy, established *The Kentucky Missionary and Theologian* in 1812, which was the first Baptist periodical to be
published in the Mississippi Valley. He is also well known for *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* published the same year. So popular did this become in Tennessee and surrounding areas that several editions were printed and sold. J. M. Peck, a minister from Illinois, who was in charge of the revisions, stated in the preface of the edition appearing in 1843

Elder Starke Dupuy was a worthy, pious and devoted minister of the Gospel in Kentucky and Tennessee for many years—much respected by the Baptist denomination to which he belonged and by Christians generally.15

The year 1821 saw the publication in Frankfort, Kentucky, of *Selection of Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Songs* by S. M. Noel, and a second edition in which Jeremiah Vardeman assisted.

In one particular, at least, say the compilers in their preface, this collection differs from all that we have noticed. No attempt has been made to improve the work of these Poets. All interpolations and alterations have been carefully excluded.16

Absalom Graves, in 1825, published his *Hymns, Psalms and Spiritual Songs, Including Some Never Before in Print*. Graves was born in Culpepper County, Virginia, November 28, 1768. In 1797, he crossed the Alleghanies and settled in Boone County, Kentucky, uniting with the Bullittsburg Baptist Church. In 1810 he was licensed to preach, and in 1812 he became the pastor of the

15Burrage, op. cit., p. 647.
16Ibid., p. 647.
Bullittsburg Church. In his collection of hymns there were two hundred and seventy hymns and one hundred and eleven spiritual songs.

The first Baptist hymn book for the Sunday School appeared in 1829 and was printed in Boston. The title, *Choice Hymns, for Social and Private Devotion and Lord's Day School, selected by Jonathan Howe*. It happened that Howe was a printer and a member of the First Baptist Church of Charlestown, Massachusetts.

A hymn book which had an extensive circulation over the Southland was *Dossey's Choice* compiled by William Dossey, then Pastor of the Baptist Church on Society Hill, South Carolina. When the first edition appeared is not known, nor the second. However, historians set the year 1830 for the publishing of the third edition, and 1833 for the fourth edition. The third edition contained seven hundred and forty-six hymns, and the copyright was in the name of William T. Brantley.

The *Manual of Christian Psalmody* was published in 1832 in Boston. It is said that this was a Baptist edition of *Church Psalmody*.

Rev. Rufus Baccock, Jr., then pastor of the First Baptist Church in Salem, Massachusetts, recognized the superior merits of this hymn book compiled by Lowell Mason and David Greene, and adapted
it to the tenets of Baptist churches. Professors Chase and Ripley, of Newton Theological Institution, commended it "to the favorable regard of the public," adding, "we trust that the time is not far distant, when a book like this will exert its happy influence in all our churches." 17

In 1834 there appeared a book published by the minister of a Baptist church of Pleasant Hill, South Carolina, entitled The Baptist Harmony, being a Selection of Choice Hymns and Spiritual Songs for Social Worship.

The number of revivals of religion, says Mr. Burdette, and the great increase of members to our churches, make a great demand for a suitable new Hymn Book. And at the present, when there is so much doing for the spread of the glorious gospel of the Blessed Redeemer, by means of the various benevolent institutions of the day, it is of importance that we should have hymns suitable for the different occasions. 18

This collection, which seemingly evidenced the feeling of the southern areas regarding the style and form of music they desired as opposed to that of the northern churches, contained five hundred and four hymns. A new edition was printed in 1842.

Also, in 1842, there was printed in Louisville, Kentucky, The Baptist Hymn Book; Original and Selected. It was compiled by W. C. Buck, Pastor of East Baptist Church in Louisville. This book was in two parts with the first containing eight hundred and sixty-eight hymns, and the second part about two hundred songs. Within two years, about ten thousand copies of this hymn book were sold,

17Ibid., p. 651.
18Ibid., p. 652.
chiefly in the states of the Mississippi Valley, and in 1844, one year prior to the chartering of the Southern Baptist Convention in Augusta, Georgia, a new revised hymnal appeared. This enlarged compilation long held an important place in the Baptist churches of the Middle, Western and Southern States.

The halfway mark of the nineteenth century saw The Baptist Psalmody published in Charleston, South Carolina. It was compiled at the request of the Southern Baptist Publication Society by Basil Manly and his son, Basil Manly, Jr. Containing over one thousand two hundred and ninety-five hymns, this first edition was received with as much favor in Baptist churches in the South as the Psalmist hymnals were received in the Baptist churches of the North. The elder Manly was born in Chatham County, North Carolina, January 25, 1798. Graduating from the College of South Carolina in 1821, he was ordained in 1822. In 1826, he became pastor of the historic First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina. Ten years later he accepted the presidency of the University of Alabama, a position he held for eighteen years. He returned to South Carolina as pastor in the same city where he formerly was active. He died in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1868.
The year 1855 saw the publication by the Southern Baptist Publication Society of *The Sacred Lute*, which was compiled by E.T. Winkler, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina. Winkler was at this time Secretary of the Publication Society. In 1860, a second edition was published in this same city, and contained four hundred and seventy hymns.

Many and significant were the events which characterized the expansion period in the development of Baptist Hymnody.

The road has not been unlike that by which the mountain top is reached -- now up steep ascents, now across broad plains, now down through deep gorges; but ever tending upward and on towards the glorious summit.  

Evangelistic Period

It is illogical to assume that music utilized in church services in this time and era in the national life would assume any other character than that of the people it was to serve. Elements of austerity, almost entirely absent in the lives and thinking of these who felled the trees and forded the streams seeking new territories, would have disavowed every cardinal principle and habit of their personal, social and religious beliefs. One could not expect, in the remotest sense, for the hymns used in their worship to have the very elements from which they were seeking to remove themselves religiously. If their

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security lay not in the forces and ideologies from which they sought to separate themselves, then by what justification may they be judged for employing musical devices which were, and still are, entirely foreign to those from which the disorders sprang? Erik Routley gives a rather discerning and illuminating consideration to Ira D. Sankey's The Ninety and Nine.

... It is simple and although its harmony is impoverished, its rhythm is carol-like and its melody has a conspicuous climax. This we can regard as symbolic of a music designed for homeless people. It was what they were used to; it proclaimed for them the gospel of peace "in the arms of Jesus." 20

The hardness of the economic life of these homeless wanderers made them seek a music form which would give them the greatest exaltation with a minimum of effort. Notwithstanding the fact that its intellectual content might be tenuous to the point of illiteracy, and that it included both the trivial and pretentious with an exaggerated amount of caricatured homeliness, it still brought delight to the heart of the working man and woman. Routley compares such with a man rescued from a raft at sea. Those who rescue him have no right to withhold aid, neither do they have a right to grudge aid purely because the raft experience was not theirs. Neither should they criticize him for the experience from which he was rescued. No condemnation of him can be just which does not direct the greater force on the earlier disaster which made aid necessary.

Although this study has particularized itself with one segment of religious life of the world, investigation will show that other churches have not been without their trials in the matter of church music. The astonishing outbreak of illiterate and poverty-stricken music which the evangelical churches have accepted is merely the outgrowth of the same forces which produced the bad music of the cathedral and parish. Those in places of authority and leadership, seeking to produce a desired result, merely utilized certain styles and forms in order to bring such to pass.

In the religious context man's conscience is raw, and his experience is most elemental, for the judgment of the Word beats upon him. If he meets judgment with penitence, a new creature is made. If, however, he meets it with pride, only corruption can result. Therefore, in the religious one finds the most terrifying cruelties, the deepest corruptions, and the most pernicious lies brought to being. Whether one blames or praises any era in church music, nothing other than the theological will give sound ground for judging. Herein lies the criterion for an investigation into the music of any people; for musical ideas and ideals find ground and fertility for growth in this religious context, although they might appear to others to be simple, ignorant and even crude.
Non-conforming Baptists were guilty, if at all, of only sincerely endeavoring to make their music fit their lives. They held to no mere artistic approach for purely art's sake alone. To them, as they ventured into new wildernesses, concerned entirely with finding a home for their families and worshipping God as they saw fit, it was entirely proper to sing in their churches and homes music which brought forth the true, inviolate expressions and feelings hidden deep within the recesses of their hearts and souls.

The old song books contain various sorts of religious pieces. Among these are the early psalm tunes, evangelical hymns, spiritual songs, religious ballads, "fuguing" songs, and anthems. Each of these varieties represents loosely a phase of, or a period in religious, musical, or poetic development. Some are folk-songs, many are not.

The expressions which were uttered by Baptists and those like them were actually the free expression and not merely a carry-over from English days and continental forms. Such forms as psalm tunes and fuguing tunes were really not the people's music since their forms were involved in previous musical ideas brought over to America by settlers.

Jackson illustrates three distinct types which might be said to belong to the people and may be considered

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21 George Pullen Jackson, Spiritual Folk-Songs of Early America (New York, 1953), pp. 4-5.
as pure folk products: viz, religious ballads, hymns, and spiritual songs.

The religious ballads were songs primarily for individual singing rather than for groups. A story was told in song. The ballad "Wicked Polly" tells of a bad woman who died in sin and went to hell; on the other hand, the "Romish Lady" tells of a good woman who, for proclaiming the Protestant cause, was burned at the stake. Many ballads used scriptural events to depict their stories, such as Daniel in the lions' den, the baby Moses in the rushes, the birth of the infant Jesus, the parable of the Prodigal Son, the raising of Lazarus and Christ's crucifixion.

They usually begin by telling the religious experience of the singer and close with a warning as to the tragic results of worldliness and an exhortation to turn from "this vain world of sin." These songs are quite similar to the worldly ballads in form, and their tunes are of the common folk stock.22

Along this same line of thought, Jackson continues his defining of the character and style of the spiritual folk-songs of early America and gives a clarification of folk-hymns.

The ballads (excepting the experience variety) probably did not originate in any particular organized religious movement. The folk-hymns were,

22Ibid., p. 5.
on the other hand, bound up genetically with the Protestant evangelical activity which followed John Wesley's lead in England and then in America.23

Just as the Revival of Wesley began on an ordered, small-group basis and spread to affairs that involved the masses, so the song movement with the freedom of text offered by Watts and Wesley spread far beyond the texts and tunes allowed by the authorities. This continued until most religious gatherings of this era were musically liberated. John Wesley, as he travelled throughout England gathered folk-tunes and set them to good hymn texts, thereby contributing to the people something that was their own and expressed in their devout way.

Thus began the pattern which was later to be accepted even in America during the spread of evangelism in the southern and western areas of our country. It became the people's music and the churches which would exert influence and authority over its music became powerless to check the sweep of the impetus this development carried. One may look through the folk-hymns and find scores of tunes such as "Barbara Allen" and "Lord Lovel" and other ancient ballads. The oddity is that these tunes might be set to words by such as Watts and other English religious poets of the eighteenth century.

23Ibid., p. 6.
With so much overlapping of social and religious influences in this period of the development of Baptist hymnody, it is rather difficult to give a date as to the beginnings of the making of the folk-hymn in America. However, one can assume that these beginnings were a part of the spread of revivalism which originated somewhere around the 1770's. Since the inland and upper southern regions were the areas of the most pronounced revival activity, these proved to be the places where the folk-hymn was the most prolific and popular.

The third and final distinctive type suggested by Jackson, and which today is one of the characteristic music forms, is the Revival Spiritual Song. Of this he states:

The revival spiritual songs represent a further advance of the song movement which brought forth the folk-hymns, toward the folk level. As the eighteenth century expired the post-Wesleyan religious tide was high and the camp meeting, the significant institution which became the cradle of the revival spiritual songs, was born.24

Held in open wilderness surroundings, these camp meetings took on the aspects of tremendous holiday gatherings, and clearly defined the total personality of the pioneer and the character of his environment. Away from authoritarian control, this wilderness settler made even his music free from any denominational encumbrances.

24Ibid., p. 7.
Even the folk-hymn, which came out of less boisterous surroundings, did not satisfy these new wilderness conditions. These revival spiritual songs were so simple that singing them was no hindrance to general participation. If the texts offered by Watts and the Wesleys demanded intelligence of learning and remembering, these spiritual songs were over-simplified to the point that after a modest beginning, they became characteristic of the camp-meeting. Lacking not only in educational advantages, but also in provisions for printing and editing, the songs of the wilderness necessarily had to be simplified in order to create and maintain the interest of those in attendance. None was excluded from singing, and indeed sporadic were the instances where one did not participate. Invariably, the style most used was that of four lines of text followed by a chorus of the same length; the leader lining out the stanzas and all joining on the chorus.

The greater portion of the so-called evangelistic hymn of today had its inception from one or more of the categories mentioned by Jackson. Revivalists, in attempting to induce singing and to facilitate the projection of their procedures, have been content to utilize these simpler music forms. This might appear to many to be inept. However, in large gatherings mass singing cannot be done when those in attendance are unfamiliar with hymns which are not a part of their heritage or taste. Hence, the birth of the
spiritual song, and even the chorus, which was short and easy for groups to learn and which, in turn, facilitated the activities and procedures of the evangelists. Lomax, giving a somewhat different viewpoint of the how and why and results of such singing, refers to the Sacred Harp singing movement, which is still in effect today.

... the leader intones the pitch; leads the congregation through a sol-fa rendition of the tune; then off these country singers sail through all the stanzas, singing four-part harmony at the tops of their wonderful strident voices and with more ease than most trained choirs could manage. They produce a sound that is like nothing else we have ever heard, unless it is the folk choirs of Southern Russia, at once strident and soaring, harmony without blend, polyphony in the old Bachian sense. ... When you ask one of these old singers what they intend by their songs, he'll look you square in the eye and say, "Brother, every word is true, true as the gospel. That's why I've memorized them all, yes sir, and that's why I sing them with my whole heart and soul."25

Admittedly, there has been error and seeming lack of classic music form; admittedly, there has been a tendency toward the tawdry and vulgar; admittedly, there has been ignorance. But when one considers the semantic and aesthetic elements involved in how these folks enjoy their music he sees that there is something fundamental and basic in why they feel as they do in employing these musical idioms and devices. To those who are unfamiliar with

their place in life and their ways of life it would appear that these folk must never have heard of the motto of old Johann Sebastian Bach, purportedly placed on every composition, "Soli Gloriae Dei." Instead, the opinion is held in many places among the musician's musician that their tonal dementia and turbulent seethings come more readily under the heading of "Soli Gloriae Diaboli."

Gospel Song Compared to Classic Hymn-forms

Since the advent of the twentieth century, there has raged in many quarters a heated discussion of the relative merits of the classic hymn form as opposed to that of the gospel song and their place in public worship. Although arguments have abated somewhat of late, many learned leaders in the field of hymnody, and ministers and teachers of various denominational groups, have discussed this valid subject to the edification of all concerned.

Among Southern Baptist churches, the general feeling seems to be that a well-balanced program of hymnology for a church is to give consideration to both, with a definite need for the true hymn form and for the so-called true gospel song. Both, it appears, are necessary to meet the needs of the entire congregation.

Possibly at this juncture it would be well to make some comparison as to the styles involved in
these two church forms, since they both have their merits as they serve a particular group or denomination.

A study of the hymn reveals that according to accepted criteria each hymn poem must meet certain standards. Some of the more important elements of the hymn are: it must be scriptural or have a scriptural background; it must convey adequate concepts concerning God; it must contain words and ideas within the experience level of the group; it must contain a really great truth; it must have fitness to musical cadence; it must be suitable for mass singing; it must be universal in doctrine; it must have literary excellence; and it must have spiritual reality as its central theme.

Notwithstanding the fact that much debate has been carried on regarding the hymn in recent years, many who are aware agree that one of the fundamental elements of the hymn is its content of scriptural truth. So much of the vitality of the hymn poem will depend on its adherence to scripture. This question has been of long standing in the annals of church history. Benson observes that this question prevented the Lutheran and Reformed churches from worshipping together, and even in the early days of American Presbyterianism much strife and bitterness was rampant over this issue. It is at this point that departure is usually made in the style of the gospel song.
In investigating the gospel song it is evident that one of the defining characteristics of it is its transiency. There has been much evolving in style through the years in this people's music form.

When gospel songs first appeared in the early years of the nineteenth century the general theme used in them was the salvation of persons to Christ. As their popularity increased their place in the lives and activities of people became strongly implanted. Since those early days the content has changed from salvation to a social gospel and to songs of personal experience.

Today there are many levels of the gospel song. Some of them sincerely seek to present the word and work of Christ in a medium that can be understood by the masses. Others, and these cannot be called true gospel songs, sink to the depths in sentimentality, with no standard or concept evident as to textual firmness or musical correctness. These songs are not worthy of a place in divine worship. Containing weakness in textual content, poor progressions of harmony, syncopated rhythmic patterns floating amidst "barber-shop" chromaticisms, these measured manglings do more to pat the foot than to feel the person of God present in worship. Dance rhythms or tunes are unsuitable media for great religious experiences. The poet must have a sense of
the sacredness of words. As with the use of rhythm and symbols of music, the words should accurately convey the prevailing mood. True hymn poetry avoids obvious or trite words or phrases. Words which are common to the life of the people do not contain the bombastic or artificial. Great thoughts and great music go hand in hand.

In January, 1955, there appeared a survey of church music made by the Department of Music of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tennessee. This survey included the ten favorite hymns and gospel songs of Southern Baptists. They were: "Amazing Grace," "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name," "The Old Rugged Cross," "At the Cross," "Just As I Am," "Blessed Assurance," "Standing on the Promises," "Jesus Saves," "Heavenly Sunlight."

Even a cursory glance at these titles would cause one to see that a large majority of Southern Baptist churches are still involved in the forms of church music which are meager musically; and yet, even today, they manage to hold their place in the thinking of a large number of people.

From this list "Amazing Grace" and "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" might be called the only two hymns which bespeak of a musical heritage vital enough to produce correct concepts. The former was an outgrowth of the so-called surge songs which followed the psalm
singing style of New England colonial puritanism. Lomax compares this style, still prevalent among negroes, with that of a great organ, breathing in solemn chorals. "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name", set to Oliver Holden's Coronation tune, gives a glowing example of true hymn form. The poetry is mature, and suggests the spiritual dynamic so vitally necessary when one seeks to suggest praise and adoration. There is no suggestion of sentimentality in lyrics of personal feeling. Seeking to heighten religious emotion to a good purpose, this hymn keeps man and God in proper relationship, the finite and the infinite, and man does not cross the breach through undue familiarity in hymn or tune. The rise and fall of poetic accent is happily wedded to the music cadences, for the most effective expression of the word depends on the proper relation of the musical cadence. By cadence here is meant the consistent rise and fall of strong and weak patterns. Each stanza rises to its own full climax, with closing measures which are in keeping with the solidity offered in the music and poetic phrases.

By comparison, let us look at the gospel song "Standing on the Promises" which was included in the list of Baptist favorites. Typical of the lack of creative imagination within the harmonic structure utilized in the gospel song form, this song employs only three of
the seven chords of the scale in which it is written; namely, tonic, subdominant and dominant. The quadruple measures are involved in a consistent and unimaginative repetition of dotted eighths followed by sixteenths for one measure, then the succeeding measure includes three quarter notes and a quarter rest. This figure comprises the entire stanza, with the chorus offering little variation from this set pattern of highly rhythmical one-four-five chord structure. With the unequal melodic line which comes as a result of the extreme in syncopation, there can seldom come any worthy ideas about God and His Kingdom. The intervals of the melody itself are of such nature as to reduce what might be great thoughts to mere sentimentality, which would seem to overstep the bonds of religious propriety. Words which might be used poetically to define the true character of God and praise to Him are made impotent by the lack of animation which might be expressed through the classic forms of poetry combined with the correct musical procedures.

Incredulous as it may seem, there are still large segments of the population of the South living in areas where opportunities for participation in what is termed worldly activities is restricted due to philosophies held by these folk. They are not the social or moral problems of society since their idealogies and precepts
are quite foreign to those in the large cities where opportunities for diversion are numerous and varied.

Refusing, as they do, to accept a life of mere social conformity, these folk have found a satisfaction in highly secularized gospel music. This satisfaction, they feel, involves the spiritual simply because words such as God, Heaven, Hell, love, trust, obey, promise and others numerous beyond mention are brought into play. However, the baser appeals to mankind are also satisfied in that the ultra-rhythmical forms of jazz and the sentimentality produces a reaction which is rationalized as being permanent and fundamental, but which, in reality, merely provides a reaction of the moment. It is for this and other reasons that the gospel song cannot expect to approximate the true hymn style. Titles such as "Every Drop of Blood Bought a Thousand Years for Me," "Life is Like a Mountain Railroad," "Farther Along," "Let the Sunshine In," performed in a crooning style, or possibly with piano assistance which could not be called accompaniment since it includes embellishments far beyond the point of sensibility, do nothing but call attention to those performing and not to the God of Heaven and Earth.

How much more of the true character of God can be exposed through hymnody were these titles changed to
"O God, Our Help in Ages Past," "Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts," "How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds," "When Morning Gilds the Skies," "Praise My Soul the King of Heaven."

Baptists have been no more guilty in this area than other denominations, for truly this problem is outstanding among all the evangelical churches of today. There has been so much for "amor agendi"--the love of results--that we have not bothered about what the results would actually bring upon our people. Too much attention has been given to mere standards of church music and not to the proper concepts which would bring about the correct standards.

One can have a standard of great music and never come to have an understanding of the vitality of what he believes and how it fits into his life. On the other hand, if his concepts of music and God can be made correct through precept and example, then his selection of music and forms of worship will find themselves providing adequacy because they will be the natural outgrowth of the great truths hidden within the person's heart. Standards alone will not produce great concepts; but great and proper concepts will automatically provide correct standards. Standards in themselves are not needed where proper concepts exist. The building of such
concepts is a work that endures to eternity. That kind of work never was done with ease or without pain and loss and investment of much time. Patient study of the problems involved is a part of the price all must pay.
CHAPTER V

PRESENT TRENDS IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST HYMNODY

Meager though the beginnings were in the development of a hymnody for Baptists, and multitudinous though the trials and frustrations were, today finds this denomination making a tremendous advance toward the bettering of church music over its entire convention. As education came to the rural southern areas [statistics show that over eighty-three per cent of the Baptist churches in the South are rural] it brought about increased efficiency in techniques and methods of teaching and training.

The Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee, was delegated in 1941, by the Southern Baptist Convention, to organize the Department of Church Music. Immediately a program of graded music education for the churches of the convention was offered, and a series of studies on how to proceed was made available to every church in the convention territory. Effort was made through consultation with outstanding pastors and church musicians to devise a program that would meet the needs of the churches and also provide an emphasis which would engender the proper attitudes and concepts regarding church music.
Today finds this department on an equal footing with the other departments of the convention. It is headed by a Secretary who is charged with the responsibility of promotion, methods, materials and education in this division. It is making an outstanding contribution in calling to the attention of the churches the necessity for more serious and adequate concern relative to the place and standards of music and verse in the worship of God. The personnel of this department is today adequate to meet the needs of setting up such a program of music education.

This program is set up on a four-fold basis—convention-wide, state-wide, associational-wide, and the local church. There are being added annually state church music secretaries who give direction on that level; and even the associations are set up musically with a director in charge who helps promulgate better music standards and procedures. For some areas this is still in the transitional state, but as techniques and methods of teaching and training change with the times, Baptists have every right to take courage in the fact that this emphasis on church music education is providing an impetus for good, in a most acceptable manner with satisfying results being achieved musically.
The Music Department has set up study courses which are held for one or more weeks over the southland. The year 1954 saw over fourteen thousand music awards given for completion of the music study course. This total has been increasing noticeably in prior years. Those in responsibility feel that future years will produce generations of church members who have been taught the true task of church music as applied to worship, and the place and permanence of concepts which will make this music vital to the adherents of this faith.

Summer assemblies on state and convention basis are held; here outstanding church musicians lead conferences and the more extended forms of church music are performed. Persons attending these conferences, in turn, hold music conventions in their local areas. This makes available, to all who choose to accept, proven methods of church music procedures.

Southern Baptists are diligently seeking to educate through music as to the correct forms necessary to suggest correct theological ideas. They are making progress; and they can well take hope as their music leaders say, in effect, such progress is "... our chance to pay to tomorrow all that we owe to yesterday."¹

¹Henry F. Cope, Religious Education in the Family (Chicago, 1915), p. 3.
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