Dr. Dykes's Anthem, "The Lord Is My Shepherd"

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amongst your readers, I may (if you do not object) get a hearing from them through your columns. What I desire to call attention to is an abuse of long standing, which seems to me to be rather on the increase than otherwise. I refer to the light and trifling style of music performed by many organists during the offertory in divine service. Surely it is not seemly or becoming upon such an occasion, when a Christian congregation is assembled in the house of God for His worship on the Lord's day, that an organist should seize the opportunity to show himself off upon the instrument provided for the purposes of public worship. Is there not an abundance of beautiful sacred music, much of it associated with devotional words, which might be played on such occasions, without having all solemnity and good taste outraged by the performance of such pieces as a young lady might play on the piano at an evening party, or a towering fantasia with roulades and extravagances that startle the congregation by their singularity? The truth is that voluntaries at all during the offertory are a breach of the rubric, which has prescribed certain words from Scripture to be read during that period; but if people will not endure these sound words, let us have some music of a devotional or solemn character, and not trifling musical flippancies that are only fit for a concert-room. The clergy are often so ignorant of musical matters that they do not notice these things, but I think some one ought to have control over the self-assertion of certain organists, who would make the house of God a stage on which to exhibit their powers of performance. How different to the feelings elicited by such music are those raised by hearing compositions like "If with all your hearts," "He shall feed His flock," or "Rest in the Lord," played in Church, when the sweet promises of the Scripture are brought to the recollection of the hearer and sung into his ear as it were. Hoping you will allow this remonstrance to reach, through your columns, some of those of whom I complain,

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
MUSICUS.

DR. DYKES'S ANTHEM, "THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—I am far too conscious of the use of honest criticism, however unfavourable, ever to object to be exposed to its ordeal. We all of us learn by our mistakes: and I trust I shall never be foolish enough not to be thankful to any critic who will take the trouble to point out my own. But I object to captious criticism, and to fault-finding for its own sake. I trust, therefore, you will kindly allow me to offer a few words in reply to the critic who did me the honour to review my Anthem, "The Lord is my Shepherd," last month. Although I must thank him for his flattering words concerning myself personally, he yet plainly considers that because I am a parson I have no business to write music; and that, if I do, I must be true to my cloth and make a suitable number of "clerical errors." He sets himself therefore to detect and point out these.

Had he satisfied himself with mere generalities, I should have had nothing to say. But as he has entered into particulars and adduced *instances* of my want of "artistry," I hope I may without impropriety refer to these instances. One of them I cannot discover as he does not furnish the reference. But as regards the others, I confidently appeal to any sound musician, I care not whom, even to my critic himself, in his normal state, whether there is *one single* point really deserving of reprehension in all that he has adduced, and whether the objections themselves do not rather indicate a determination to find fault somewhere. I ask him if he honestly thinks that I should improve my composition by *altering* it in any of the passages against which he has taken exception? Let me with the utmost brevity glance at these.

(1) What thoughtful composer, *e.g.*, would for a moment be scared by fear of "false relation" into altering the alto E (page 3, score 2, bar 2), because the bass, immediately

afterwards, taking up a subject which is repeated in sequence has an E♭?

(2) As for the alleged error at page 8, score 1, bar 1, I can only express my amazement at an intelligent critic seriously drawing attention to it as an error. I invite examination.

(3) My critic objects to the word "Righteousness" being sung in G; but he does not tell us why.

(4) He complains of the "extraordinary length" of the composition. Well, there is a vast amount of short scrappy writing for the Church now-a-days. The Psalm is one of singular devotional and poetical beauty. Why should I not treat it somewhat fully?

(5) He complains that the voice-part in the bass solo, No. 3, lies low for the voice. Surely he must see that there is a meaning in this. After the "green pastures" and "still waters" of the tenor solo, No. 2, we come to the "Valley of the Shadow of Death." Does not the poetic contrast seem to demand that the sense of gloom should find expression in the range and character of the music? As the song progresses the feeling of confidence in the Heavenly Guide overcomes the first sense of horror, and the voice-part rises to a pitch quite high enough for any bass singer to render with comfort and effect.

(6) My watchful critic proceeds to remark on the "strangely extraneous" key of the next movement (the quintett and chorus, No. 4.) Let me explain. The pastoral chorus and tenor solo, Nos. 1 and 2, are in F. Then we come to the "Dark Valley," in F minor; the song ending in the relative major A♭. Suddenly this A♭ becomes G♯; and we find ourselves *out of the Valley*. We are in the bright key of E. I do think my worthy censor must be strangely insensible to musical effect not to *feel* the effect of the return to light and fresh air produced by this transition of key. But he *does* feel it; for, spite of himself, he lays aside for a moment his severe aspect and begins to smile. This is the only movement in which he has condescended to bestow a word of commendation.

(7) He soon becomes grim again; for he now objects, that there is "little skill in the development" of the Eucharistic melody, "Adoro Te devote," which I here introduce. I merely answer, that it formed no part of my purpose to "develope" it. I simply introduced it (to borrow a word from my own profession) for *exegetical* purposes, and in order to suggest the Eucharistic association of the words, "Thou shalt prepare a Table," &c., which, from the earliest times, has been recognised. I should add that the joyous and mirthful character of the music is suggested by the "*Calix incbianus*" of the Vulgate.

(8) As for the "violent transition" into the key of F, "*which has no warrant in the words*," I have simply to reply that the transition in question *does not require* "warrant from the words," inasmuch it is *not associated with any words at all*. The case is merely this, that the movement in E concludes with a short postlude or symphony, returning, by a modulation very familiar to all lovers of Spohr, to the original key of F, the key of the final chorus.

(9) This last movement, he says, is "long and laboured." Well, it is rather long. The words are doubly associated with the idea of *length*: they tell of earthly perpetuity, and heavenly perpetuity. We have first, "Thy loving kindness and tender mercy shall follow me *all the days of my life*." Then we have, "And I will dwell in the House of the Lord *for ever*." But I do not consider the chorus "laboured," except in so far that it was a labour of love to write it.

But my critic has not let me off yet. We have got to the concluding fugue, "And I will dwell," &c.

(10) In the first place he will only condescend to describe this as a "fugue, *so to speak*."

(11) In the next place, he says that it is wrongly constructed. Here I must join issue with him. He pronounces that the fugue "*must*" follow the course of a *tonal* fugue. I have chosen to treat its three subjects strictly after the manner of a *real* fugue. If he does not like it, I am sorry: I do.

(12) Then he says that "the further conduct of the fugue is unskilful." I reply, that a fugue may be treated in an infinite variety of ways. My one object was to treat it in the way best calculated to do justice to the beautiful words, without caring to introduce into it the entire family of regulation puzzles, by way of showing off my own ingenuity. I simply endeavoured so to construct this final chorus as to give due emphasis and expression to its two noble themes—the unfailing Mercy which is to follow us (1) in this life, and (2) in the Life to come; and then to conclude all by a return to the original theme—the care of the Good Shepherd, to whose loving guidance we owe all.

I leave my Anthem to its fate. Experience has taught me that if music is good and genuine, and written from the heart, no amount of adverse criticism will, in the long run, injure it; and that if it is worthless, no amount of puffing will make it live. I wrote a long Anthem some years ago, "These are they which came out of great tribulation," the only critique of which I ever saw was of a most contemptuous character. The Anthem has survived the criticism, and I am not without hopes that the disparaging remarks of my present and more generous censor will not prove the death of "The Lord is my Shepherd."

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN B. DYKES.

S. Oswald's Vicarage, Durham,
July 17, 1874.

[It would evince the captiousness and fault-finding for its own sake, of which the above complains, to animadvert on the twelve objections Dr. Dykes makes to the criticism, each of which may suggest, to impartial readers, its own reply. If, in the article in question, no instances had been adduced and the remarks had been confined to generalities, the unkindly feeling might have been inferred which Dr. Dykes assumes to have prompted them. Let him be assured that the opinion those instances justify has been formed in good faith, and expressed with the intention of courtesy to the composer and respect for the talent he has proved in other musical productions.—THE WRITER OF THE REVIEW.]

DR. VERRINDER'S RUSSIAN HYMN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MUSICAL TIMES.

SIR,—My Russian Hymn, with variations for the organ, is not a thing of yesterday: it has been received with favour by our most distinguished organists, and has been played on some of the largest instruments in America. The late Mr. Chorley spoke of the melody as "The Grand Russian tune." I took not such high ground, but thought it sufficiently good for my purpose. I am not frightened at your bogie of two consecutive 4ths. I differ from you, with all respect, both as regards the use of *full* harmony, and also *lines* to indicate the progression of parts in organ music; they assist the eye if not the ear, and are intended to serve no other purpose. Wholesome criticism is good, but when Doctors differ both sides ought in fairness to be heard, and I might quote from letters received from the most eminent musicians of our day, whose views are entirely at variance with your opinions. In the end you become pathetic. I will be more practical, and express a hope that you may shortly have leisure to make a further acquaintance with my organ-piece than merely the introduction, 4th variation, and finale, or else write something better on the same theme.

Faithfully yours,

July 10th, 1874. C. G. VERRINDER, Mus. Doc.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

. Notices of concerts, and other information supplied by our friends in the country, must be forwarded as early as possible after the occurrence: otherwise they cannot be inserted. Our correspondents must specifically denote the date of each concert, for without such date no notice can be taken of the performance.

Our correspondents will greatly oblige by writing all names as clearly as possible, as we cannot be responsible for any mistakes that may occur.

Correspondents are informed that their names and addresses must accompany all communications.

We cannot undertake to return offered contributions; the authors, therefore, will do well to retain copies.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF COUNTRY NEWS.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for any opinions expressed in this Summary; as all the notices are either collated from the local papers, or supplied to us by occasional correspondents.

GILLINGHAM.—The Parish Church organ, which was re-opened on Thursday, June 25, was built by Messrs. Robson in 1831. It was celebrated for its diapasons throughout the district, but on account of alterations made in the church choir, it was deemed expedient to enlarge it. The work was entrusted to Messrs. Bevington and Sons, Soho, London, who have preserved the mellow tone of the old instrument and added an effective pedal-organ of open 16 feet pipes, and a wald-flute in the swell, besides carrying the swell organ down to C.C. The music of the opening services was conducted by Mr. James Ley, the newly appointed organist of Gillingham. Mr. Harper Kearton (Vicar Choral of Wells Cathedral) played the voluntaries before and after each service, and effectively displayed the capabilities of the instrument. Offertories were made after both services.

MANCHESTER.—On the 18th ult., at the Cathedral School, Todd Street, two gratifying presentations were made to Mr. J. F. Bridge, Mus. Doc. of Oxford University, and organist of Manchester Cathedral, in the presence of a large audience. The first consisted of a hood of a Doctor of Music, given by the choir and others connected with the Cathedral, together with a handsomely-framed illuminated address. The second was a handsomely bound edition of Dr. Burney's *History of Music*, in four volumes, given by the Bishop, Dean, and Canons of the Cathedral, the inscription on the fly-leaf being signed by the donors. The chair was occupied by Alderman Lamb, and the gifts were presented in fitting terms by the Bishop of Manchester and the Rev. S. Smith, precentor. Dr. Bridge suitably acknowledged the presentations, and a musical entertainment followed.

PLYMOUTH.—The opening of the new Guildhall, which is fixed for the 13th inst., will be signalled not only by an interesting ceremony during that day, but by a musical Festival on the mornings and evenings of the two following days. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has consented formally to open the building, after which there will be a *dejeuner* in the Great Hall, followed in the evening by illuminations and fireworks. The music to be performed at the Festival will include Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Haydn's *Creation*, the band and chorus being composed of the members of the Plymouth Vocal Association, under the able direction of Mr. F. N. Löhr.

WINCHESTER.—On Thursday, the 16th ult., two services were held at the Cathedral in aid of the Choir Benevolent Fund, by permission of the Very Rev. the Dean, and the Rev. the Chapter. The singers were selected from the choirs of the Chapel Royal, the Royal Chapel of St. George, Windsor, St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Cathedrals of Winchester, Chichester, Lincoln, Salisbury, and the Colleges of Eton and Winchester. Dr. G. B. Arnold was organist, and played in his well-known masterly manner; and after each service, a collection was made in aid of the funds of the Society. The morning service commenced at eleven o'clock, the service being from Tallis and Elvey, and the *Te Deum* and *Benedictus*, Gibbons in F. The anthem, Goss's "Praise the Lord," was exceedingly well given. The quartett, "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem," was beautifully sung by Alldridge (New College), Frost (St. Paul's), Hunt (Windsor), and Horscroft (St. Paul's). In the evening, the opening anthem, Purcell's "O sing unto the Lord," went exceedingly well, the quartett being taken by Cooke (Westminster), Barnby (St. Paul's), Carter (Westminster), and Distin (Lincoln); the duet for treble and alto was taken by Cooke and Barnby, and the concluding bass solo and chorus was more than usually well sung by Distin. Certainly one of the most successful anthems of the service was that by Dr. Arnold, "Let the righteous be glad." In the bass solo, Mr. Briggs, of Windsor, fairly delighted the congregation, and nothing could exceed the pureness of delivery of Mr. Whitehouse (Windsor) in the treble solo, "The Lord was ready to save me." After the sermon came Mendelssohn's "My God, my God," opening with a tenor recitative, sung by Dyson (Windsor) and chorus. The bass solo was successfully rendered by Briggs, and the quartett, "I will declare Thy Name," was taken by Cooke, Adams (Windsor), Dyson and Distin. The treble and tenor solos, "The meek shall eat," &c., by Messrs. Cooke and Dyson, went exceedingly well. Byrd's anthem, "Bow down Thine ear," followed, and was succeeded by Wesley's well-known "Ascribe unto the Lord," in which the recit. for alto, tenor, and bass was well given by Messrs. Cooke, Whitehouse, and Alldridge. The chorus, "As for the gods of the heathen," was excellently sung. The trio, "They that make them," was most artistically rendered by Messrs. Large, Carter, and Beckett (Windsor); and the chorus, "The Lord hath been mindful of us," was also highly successful. The collections amounted to £74 15s. 11d.

ORGAN APPOINTMENTS.—Mr. G. F. Tendall, Mus. Bac., Oxon., organist to the Duke of Buccleuch, K.G.—Mr. Edward Cook, organist and choirmaster to St. Stephen's, Bristol.—Mr. K. G. Westlev to St. Michael's, Southampton.—Mr. J. A. Hudiam, to Oak-street Chapel, Heeley, Sheffield.—Mr. T. J. Greaves, to the New Wesleyan Church, Highbury New Park.

CHOIR APPOINTMENTS.—Mr. Harvey Day, lay vicar of Salisbury Cathedral, principal Bass to Trinity College, Cambridge.—Mr. S. Houston Flint (Bass), assistant vicar choral to Hereford Cathedral.—Mr. J. Hughes (Bass), to St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate.