

WHERE DO THE TUNES COME FROM?

Notes on Psalmody test tunes
to accompany CDs, volumes 1-12
of
“Worthy to be Praised”



Ruins of Torwood Castle

Introduction

All of us who love singing the Psalms and believe they are the ordained vehicle of our praise and worship should have a Psalmody. Within it there is much information for us to learn and appreciate, not only from a musical point of view, but also about our church history. The same information is given in both musical notations, whether one has staff (the red book) or sol-fa (the blue one).

The words are the 1650 metrical translation of the prose, put mostly into ballad metre, which at the time seemed an easy versification to learn. The psalms are generally set out in four-line stanzas. The verse numbers from the prose are written at the beginning of each corresponding verse line. So, if you look at Psalm 2 you will see that there are 12 verses but only 9 four-line stanzas. The numbered lines correspond to those of the prose version.

Even a cursory look at the names of the melodies that we use links us to the history of our Church. The names **St. Paul** and **St. Matthew** link us to the beginnings of the Christian Era. We remember how God used Columba to bring the gospel to Scotland when we sing the tune named after him. **Soldau**, the oldest tune in the book, is associated with Luther. **Old 100th** and **Old 124th** were composed in Geneva in the time of Calvin and the Reformers. **Wigtown, Martyrs**, and others remind us of the Covenanters who gave their lives so that we might have civil and religious freedom.

Many outside of our own denomination associate **Belmont, St. Agnes, Durham, Salzburg** and others with the words of hymns, reminding us of the shift to the use of non-inspired words in praise.

Our Psalmody, as well as telling us the name of each tune, gives us the source, the metre, and the suggested key in which to sing it. At the beginning of the book there is an alphabetical index of all tunes according to their metre, and at the back there is included a very useful subject index of Psalm portions.

This booklet goes hand in hand with our Psalmody, the Psalmody Test Programme and the 12 CDs of *'Worthy to be Praised'* which follow the Test Syllabus. Only 144 of the 191 tunes are dealt with, and they are set out in the same order as the tracks on the CDs.