

THE PSALMS
of DAVID

*Pointed and Edited for
Chanting by*

GEORGE H. GUEST

PSALMS ARE TAKEN FROM THE
*1928 Book of Common Prayer
of the Protestant Episcopal Church
in the United States of America*



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The Psalms of David: Pointed and Edited for Chanting by George H. Guest

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FOREWORD

This version of Anglican psalmody was arranged and pointed by my husband, George Guest, during his tenure as Choirmaster and University Organist at St. John's College in Cambridge, England. As caretaker of my husband's materials and property, I wholeheartedly grant permission for this volume to be published for general use. It was always George's desire to see this particular collection of psalms made available through Paraclete Press, and so, approaching the tenth year since his death, I heartily welcome the realization of his hopes with this publication. Albeit quietly, he would have been quite pleased.

—Nan Guest



Dr George Guest achieved the rarest of unspoken accolades during his long and distinguished tenure as Organist of St John's, Cambridge—that of becoming 'a legend in his own lifetime'. He was softly spoken, eloquent, witty and efficient; his rehearsals were always a reflection of him. Above all, he had a passion for language, its meaning and place in choral music.

The Psalms are at the heart of the 'Opus Dei' and were deeply loved by George. During rehearsals prior to Evensong, he would instill into the Choir the pace and an expression of the psalms (usually remembering texts without reference to the Psalter), whilst expecting them to be without his presence as conductor for the service. On most days, he would move the organ bench forwards during the Opening Preces and Responses; this was the indication he would accompany. From the first to the final chord, he would weave melodies; create colours, additional descants and harmony whilst listening to the choir and how they were faring. His masterly accompaniments never detracted from the choir's ability to convey the texts in the way he had rehearsed. Just occasionally, he would leave the bench during a verse, peer over the balustrade and then remonstrate about a chorister not blending or some untidy ensemble. If he

felt it necessary, he would rush downstairs into the Chapel to investigate the problem further, leaving the organ scholar the task of continued accompaniment. His appearance in Chapel was an immediate indicator to the choir that he was on a mission. He knew, of course, his arrival would herald a sudden improvement in the choir's performance. Nothing more was said—he had made his point—excellence was once again regained.

He became a good friend and advisor to Cardinal Basil Hume (Archbishop of Westminster), who would occasionally remind everyone that 'Nothing is too good for God'. George would have agreed, not least that in the singing of the psalms lay the foundations of Christianity, liturgy and the entire gamut of human expression in the understanding of God.

It is a supreme testament to the great man that Paraclete has published 'George's Psalter' so magnificently. He would have been delighted, not least, as his entire choice of chants is included. They are integral to an understanding of his approach to Anglican Psalmody. He disliked showy, overly chromatic chants regarding them as a distraction from the texts and how they should be conveyed. He eschewed clarity and the importance of each word and would be quick to berate mumbling or hurried speech that lacked clear enunciation. 'Express the text as if it means something boys—you're singing to the Almighty!' That, and many other anecdotes, will hopefully lend an understanding to those wishing to capture the spirit of the Guest legacy. His favourite psalm was 'Domine probasti me,' Psalm 139, 'Lord thou hast searched me out'. It was one to which he paid particular attention, explaining the theological intention of God's presence in all places at all times. The choir listened intently to him. After the words of instruction, all of us present were left in no doubt as to what he meant. They would sing it so that George himself would be moved.

There is one recording of Psalms recorded by St John's (on the Decca label) of which George was very proud. It was entitled 'Psalms of Consolation and Hope' and the Organist was John Scott. I was privileged to have been present as junior Organ Scholar at the time and can still recall the intensity of the sessions as being some of the most beautiful singing I had heard. I still think that over 25 years later.

—David Hill

INTRODUCTION

The Psalms

A Songbook of Prayer

The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 prayers—prayers that, even from their original composition, were meant to be sung. As such, psalms have played a central part in the worship of God for thousands of years, sung by the Israelites gathered about the Tabernacle as they made their way through the wilderness; by the priests and people of Solomon’s time when the Temple was dedicated in Jerusalem; by Jewish congregations of all sizes meeting in their synagogues around the world; by the earliest Christians meeting in secret in their homes; by desert-dwelling monks who could recite every verse by heart; by the faithful through the centuries of every land and language imaginable.

What is it about the psalms that gives them such a timeless and enduring quality? In the introduction to his commentary on the psalms, John Calvin, the great church reformer of the sixteenth century, called the Book of Psalms “the anatomy of all the parts of the soul.” There is not a single human emotion, he wrote, that does not find itself reflected in these verses. We read these poems (for they are, in every respect, poetry) and, much as we might look into a mirror, we find reflected every color of the human heart, every shade of the human experience. Centuries before Calvin, the early church teacher and bishop Athanasius wrote that the psalms so thoroughly express the thoughts and emotions of the soul in its relationship with God that it no longer matters who originally wrote them. They become the immediate and personal words of everyone who prays them. The Book of Psalms, said Pope Benedict XVI to the present generation, gives us the words with which we can bring our entire life, from its lowest to its highest points, into conversation with God.

It is this quality of utter “truthfulness” that has given the Psalter such a principal role in the worship of God and in the liturgy of the church. In these songs, all manner of prayer is uttered—hope, fear, joy, sorrow, longing, anger, confidence, despair—and all manner of praise is given voice—thanksgiving, jubilation, awe, reverence, exaltation, stillness. After

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centuries of use already, it is no wonder that Paul instructs the young church of Ephesus to “be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart” (Ephesians 5:18–19, RSV). This instruction is as pertinent to the church today as it ever was.

Anglican Chant

We may do well here to actually define the term *Anglican chant*. Anglican chant evolved from the plainsong psalm tones, adding other voice parts to the melody, which was usually found in the tenor. During the English Reformation of the seventeenth century, the Psalter was translated from Latin into English. Until this time, plainsong was used to musically illuminate the Psalm texts, but always in Latin. With the new Coverdale psalter, there was fresh opportunity to compose new musical settings for the psalms, and even distinguished composers such as Thomas Tallis began to provide music for these new poetical translations of the psalms.

One of the purposes of Anglican chant is to provide the possibility of matching the natural speech-rhythm of the text to a brief piece of metered music. The music itself is hymnlike, that is, in four parts and moving in homophony. Therefore the psalms are chanted or recited in this way, not sung. While Anglican chant was well established by the eighteenth century, its golden age was the Victorian era, when it became a prominent part of worship and many new tunes were composed.

Use of the Organ

Although Anglican chant can be sung a cappella, it perhaps finds its greatest expression with the use of organ accompaniment. The opportunity for organists to develop their registrational and improvisational skills is found in full bloom with the accompaniment of the Anglican chant. In addition, one does not need to have a large organ with many solo colors to accompany the psalms. Simple flute and string colors can be very effective as countermelodies or chords. Changing the octaves where notes are played can be effective as well. The possibilities are limited only by the creativity of the organist. The organist’s goal should be not only to support the singing of the choir, but also to illuminate the meaning of the text through changes of color, always with discretion and taste.

George Guest

Dr. George Howell Guest (1924–2002) selected the tunes for this psalter and wrote the “pointing” of the individual psalms (the division of each line of text in correspondence with the music). For forty years (1951–1991), Guest was the organist and choirmaster of St. John’s College in Cambridge, England. His career at St. John’s included the production of some sixty choral recordings, countless radio broadcasts, and numerous international tours—evidence of the importance he placed on spreading the sound of sacred choral music beyond the walls of churches and chapels. Even so, Guest was completely dedicated to the choir’s ministry in its home chapel, where it was known that, on the coldest of winter evenings, the men and boys of St John’s Choir would sing Evensong even with only three or four people in attendance. Guest believed that the music was first and foremost a prayer offered to God, not a concert performed for an audience.

During those four decades at St. John’s, George Guest set a standard for musical interpretation and choral sound that still inspires choirs around the world. He was especially concerned that the highest levels be reached in clarity of sound, in shaping of line, and in directness of expression so that the meaning of the text would always be conveyed. Words, he said, were more important than music.

Dr. Guest was deeply influenced by the beauty of the Gregorian chant sung by the monks of Solesmes Abbey in France, a sound that only enhanced his commitment to the highest quality of performance of Anglican Chant. He often remarked, wrote *The Guardian* (4 December 2002) “that you can only reach a man’s head through his heart.” The obituary went on to say, “It is not therefore surprising that, as the years went on, the chanting of the psalms became an ever more considered and thoughtful meditation.” (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2002/dec/04/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries>, accessed January 27, 2012)

The fruits of that meditation are evident here in this Psalter, where one can hear, in the choice of tunes and in the structuring of lines, George Guest’s aim for the most truthful interpretation of the sacred text.

Editor’s Note: In keeping with current practice in the United States, the “Venite” settings chosen by Dr. Guest have been collected, grouped, and placed at the back of the Psalter rather than being interspersed among the psalms themselves.

Psalms And Music

Much has been written, researched, and conjectured with regard to the music used historically with the singing or chanting of the poetry of the “Book of Praises” (*sefer t’hilim*) of the Old Testament, or the Book of Psalms or Psalms of David, as we know it today. There are ancient indications that musical instruments were used in certain of them, and it is equally certain that during the time of Jesus’ life on earth, no Scripture was spoken, but rather had to be chanted or sung.

The application of these verses to music has been a tradition of the Christian church from its beginnings in the distant past. The earliest records indicate a similarity between some of the older tunes of Gregorian chant and some tunes still in use today by the Yemenite Jews, possibly indicating their origins. The chants of this Psalter, however, are not of such ancient origins, although we believe they are true to the character and dignity of, or at least the intent of, the most ancient melodies extant.

Signs Used in Pointing

The slash (/) used in the text of the Psalms corresponds to the measure bars (|) used in the music of the tunes. A slash is an indication for the chanter of the division of words that correspond to the division of notes in the music. The use of the dot (·) indicates the point of the division of syllables within a given measure of music. Those syllables found in the portion after the slash (/) and preceding the dot (·) are allotted rather freely to the first musical note of the measure, whereas those found in the portion following the dot (·) are allotted to the second musical note of the two-note measure. See the examples below. Finally, there are certain words that should have a slight dwelling, to provide a subtle emphasis and further illuminate the text. These are indicated by italics.

Single and Double Chants

There are two basic types of chants used, the Single chants and the Double chants. The Single chants are repeated in toto, sequentially throughout the verses of the psalms to which they have been assigned. The Double chants, depending upon the number of verses in a given psalm, sometimes require a repeat of the second half of the tune without first singing the first half, in order for the final verse of the tune to end with a satisfying musical

effect. This is indicated by the use of an asterisk encased within parentheses (*), both next to the verse in the psalm to which it applies, and above the portion of music to be repeated.

Music – Text Combinations

There are four basic types of musical-textual combinations that occur in the Psalms. For want of better terms they have been categorized under **Syllabic**, or those psalm verses in which there occurs one syllable of text to one note of music; **Multi-syllabic**, or those psalm verses in which there occurs more than one syllable of text per note of music; **Melismatic**, or those psalm verses in which there occurs more than one note of music per syllable of text (indicated in the text by **bold** print); and **Multi-melismatic**, or those psalm verses in which there occur more than two notes of music per single syllable of text (indicated in the text by double slash (/ /) and **bold** text). Examples of each of these and their performance practice are given on the following page:

The Psalms of David

Syllabic – one syllable of text to one note of music, written as:

Then shall my / night be / turned to / day. **Psalm 139**

Performed as:



Multi-syllabic – more than one syllable of text to one note of music, written as:

For his / mercy · en - dureth · for - ev - er. **Psalm 136**

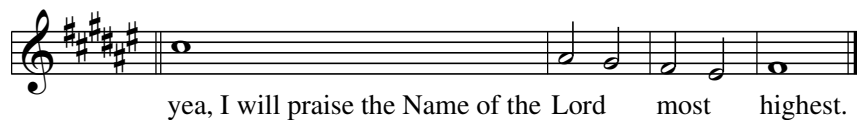
Performed as:



Melismatic – more than one note of music per syllable of text, written as:

Yea, I will praise the Name of the / **Lord / most /** highest. **Psalm 13**

Performed as:



Multi-melismatic – more than two notes of music per syllable of text, written as:

In a // **strange** // land? **Psalm 137**

Performed as:



One of the most important elements of chanting the Psalms is simplicity. Too much emphasis on the form of the music or of the psalm text can effectively defeat the essential character of the Psalms as expressions of man in his personal relationship with God.

It has been said that the Psalms represent an embodiment of all man's variety of feelings in a life lived in relationship with a personal God. Every effort should be made to present these verses in a manner that preserves and enhances this essential character.

The Psalms of David

Composers of Chants -Index

SINGLE CHANTS

COMPOSER	KEY	PSALM	CHANT NO.	PAGE	COMPOSER	KEY	PSALM	CHANT NO.	PAGE
Alcock, S.	A	95	105	140	Jones	D	95	176	247
Aldrich	G	19	27	32	Keeton	B \flat	95	55	72
Anon.	A	95	70	94	Lloyd	A \flat	61	84	112
Aylward	B \flat	138	202	280		b	140	205	284
Barnby	D	4	5	5	Macfarren	A	95	33	41
Bennett	a \flat	120	183	258		B \flat	95	111	151
Burton	F	95	62	83		D	95	92	122
Champneys	G	95	133	184		g	89	126	72
Croft	b	41	60	79	Medley	G	119	179	252
Crotch	A	95	195	270	Nares	A	95	1	1
	c	19	26	31		A \flat	95	170	237
	D	95	209	288	Norris	a	36	51	66
	d	123	186	261	Novello	G	133	197	273
Elvey, G.	A	95	100	131	Ouseley	D	113	161	222
	E	1	2	2		E \flat	93	131	181
Elvey, S.	A	87	122	166	Purcell, T.	G	6	8	7
Farrant	G	95	25	30		g	6	7	7
Felton	E \flat	16	21	22	Rimbault	F	95	139	191
Foster	D	95	11	11	Russell	F	95	78	105
Garrett	A	95	49	62	Scottish	G	131	194	269
	A \flat	95	127	174	Selby	B \flat	67	91	121
	c	36	52	66	Smart	A	95	151	209
Gibbons	G	15	20	21	Stainer	D \flat	95	164	226
Goodson	c	95	19	20	Stanley	A \flat	95	85	113
Goss	e	40	59	78	Stevenson	G	108	153	213
	G	11	15	16		G	109	155	215
Greene	A	95	203	281	Stewart, R.	A	95	157	218
Guest	c	28	39	49		C	108	154	214
Hine	A	23	32a	38		G	95	41	51
	G	5	6	6	Tallis	C	134	198	274
	G	70	99	130	Taylor	A \flat	54	75	101
	g	70	98	130	Thorne	G	125	188	263
Hopkins, E.	E \flat	20	28	33	Tonus Peregrinus	e	114	162	223
Hopkins, J.	c	95	120	163	Travers	E \flat	95	182	257
Humphrey	D \flat	117	166	229	Turton	G	76	107	142
Hylton Stewart, C.	C	106	150	208	Walmisley	E	95	144	199
	c	77	38	48	Weldon	f	53	74	100
	c	130	193	268	Wesley, S.S.	g	81	115	157
	d	137	201	279	Woodward	A	122	185	260
	E	23	32b	39		C	8	10	10
	F#	12/13	17	17/18					
	f#	12/13	16	17/18					

Composers of Chants -Index

DOUBLE CHANTS

COMPOSER	KEY	PSALM	CHANT NO.	PAGE	COMPOSER	KEY	PSALM	CHANT NO.	PAGE
Alcock, S.	b ^b	56	79	106	Goss	B ^b	57	80	107
Alcock, W.	D	89	124	169		d	79	112	152
Aldrich	F	148	214	296		D ^b	91	129	177
Atkins	F	103	141	194		E	107	152	210
Attwood	A ^b	34	48	60		f	55	76	102
	D	124	187	262		G	68	93	123
	E ^b	98/100	136	187/189	Gray	E	71	101	132
	E ^b	101	138	190	Havergal	D	75	106	141
	E ^b	119	168	233		D ^b	119	173	242
Barnby	a	88	123	167		f	38	56	73
Battishill	a	119	180	253	Hemmings	B ^b	85	119	162
Bayley	E ^b	142	207	286	Higgins	E	115	163	224
Boyce	E ^b	62	86	114	Hopkins, E.	A ^b	119	175	245
Boyle	B ^b	149	215	297		b	77	108	143
Brewer	E ^b	84	118	161		F	66	90	119
Bridge	A ^b	92	130	179		G	10	14	15
Cambridge Chant	a ^b	74	104	138		g	10	13	14
Camidge, M.	d	80	113	154	Hopkins,].	D	112	160	221
Clarke	g	7	9	8	Horsley	g	58	81	108
Cobb	A	105	146	202	Jones	A ^b	32	46	57
Cooke	c	44	64	85	Lemon	A ^b	127	190	265
	G	45	65	87	Lloyd	A ^b	116	165	227
	G	144	210	289		B ^b (irr)	136	200	277
Cooper	G	119	177	248		D	110	158	219
Corfe	C	44	63	84	Luther	C (desc)	46	66	89
Coward	A ^b	119	169	235		c	147	213	294
Crotch	A	48	68	91	Macpherson	b ^b	102	140	192
	A ^b	73	103	136	Mann	D	9	12	12
	d	35	50	63	Martin	A ^b	97	135	186
Davy	D	47	67	90	Massey	E ^b	18	24	28
Dupuis	C	145	211	291		G	89	125	171
Elvey, G.	D	132	196	271	Matthews	E ^b	119	171	238
Elvey, S.	A	50	71	95	Monk	A	105	145	200
	C	26	36	45	Morley	d	51	72	97
	D	119	178	250	Mornington	D ^b	119	174	243
Fitzherbert	G	111	159	220	Norris	A	2	3	3
Flintoft	g	59	82	109	Oakeley	F	64	88	116
Garrett	F	60	83	111	Ouseley	A ^b	119	172	240
	G	31	44	54/56	Parratt	c	104	143	198
Gauntlett	A ^b	18	23	25	Pring	A ^b	83	117	159
	A ^b	37	54	70	Pye	D	14	18	19
					Randall	E ^b	33	47	58

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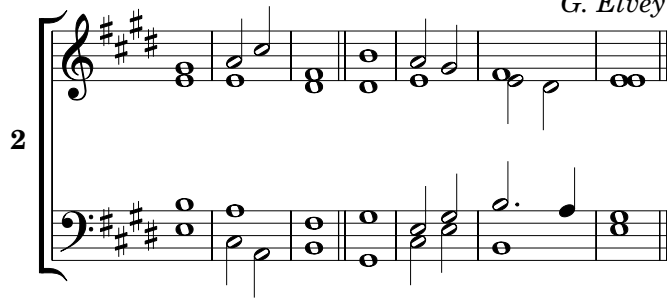
DOUBLE CHANTS

COMPOSER	KEY	PSALM	CHANT NO.	PAGE	COMPOSER	KEY	PSALM	CHANT NO.	PAGE
Robinson	E	24	34	42	Walmisley	A ^b	17	22	23
Rootham	b	78	110	147/150		C	40	58	77
	G	78	109	145/149		D	81	114	156
Russell	E	25	35	43		E ^b	82	116	158
Selby	B ^b	63	87	115		F	49	69	92
Sinclair	B ^b	94	132	182	Wesley, S.	G	42/43	61	80/82
Skeats	E	139	204	282	Wesley, S.S.	E.	119	181	255
Smart	G	146	212	293	West	E ^b	37	53	68
	g	31	45	55	Whitlock	A ^b	99	167	230
Soaper	D	3	4	4		A ^b	118	137	188
Spohr	G	141	206	285		A ^b	143	208	287
Stainer	e	68	94	125		B ^b	65	89	117
Stanford	A ^b	21	29	34	Woodward	G	135	199	275
	C(irr)	150	216	299					
	E ^b	96	134	185					
Stewart	A	22	31	37					
	A	52	73	99					
	b	106	148	205					
	C	109	156	217					
	c	39	57	75					
	c	69	95	126					
	D	106	147	204					
	e	22	30	35					
	e	106	149	207					
	f	90	128	175					
	G	69	97	129					
	g	69	96	127					
"Trent"	G	104	142	196					
Tude	A ^b	128	192	267					
	D	30	42	52					
	d	30	43	53					
	E	86	121	164					
	E ^b	27	37	46					
	E ^b	126	189	264					
	E ^b	128	191	266					
	F	55	77	104					
	G	29	40	50					
Turton	B	72	102	134					
Walford Davies, H.	E	121	184	259					

Psalm 1

Beatus vir, qui non abiit

G. Elvey



mf

FULL

BLESSED is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the / way of / sinners, *
and hath not sat in the / **seat** / of the / scornful.

2. But his delight is in the law / of the / Lord; *
and in his law will he exercise him- / **self** / day and / night.

3. And he shall be like a tree planted by the / water- / side, *
that will bring forth his / **fruit** / in due / season.

4. His leaf also / shall not / wither; *
and look, whatsoever he / doeth / it shall / prosper.

5. As for the ungodly, it is not / so with / them; *
but they are like the chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the / **face** / of
the / earth.

6. Therefore the ungodly shall not be able to stand / in the / judgement *
neither the sinners in the congre- / gation / of the / righteous.

7. But the Lord knoweth the way / of the / righteous; *
and the way of the un- / godly / **shall** / perish.

Glory be to the Father and / to the / Son, *
And / to the / Holy / Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now and / ever / shall be; *
World without / **end** / a- / men.