

## Nicholas Temperley

### **Bridging the Interregnum: The Contributions of Edward Lowe and James Clifford**

**ABSTRACT:** When choral services were restored after the Interregnum, there was an urgent demand to recreate the traditions built up in the century following the Reformation. Much could be done locally by verbal instruction and musical demonstration, but the need for uniformity generated two important sources: Edward Lowe's *A Short Direction for the Performance of Cathedral Service* (1661) and James Clifford's *The Divine Services and Anthems Usually Sung in the Cathedrals and Collegiate Choirs in the Church of England* (1663). Each went to a second, revised edition. These four books give many details about the practice of church music in both pre- and post- Commonwealth times. This paper explores some of the less familiar information they contain and the implications they raise.

My understanding of the brilliant achievements of Purcell and his contemporaries at the Chapel Royal is that they resulted in part from a creative conflict between the passionate wish of many churchmen to revive the glories of the past and Charles II's personal liking for lively contemporary French music. As you will have gathered from Anita's paper, the King was no fanatic; he was a modernizer and a pragmatist. He wanted to bring to England some of the delights he had experienced in the French court. In church matters, though secretly a Catholic sympathiser, he was quite willing to compromise with both Anglican and Puritan views, as he did in the deal he made at Breda in 1660, before his return to England.

But he may not have realized how far the pendulum had swung against the Puritan view of religion. At the 1661 Savoy Conference of Presbyterian and Anglican divines appointed to recommend changes in the liturgy, the bishops, led by Cosin of Durham, made virtually no concessions to the Presbyterian representatives, being determined to wipe out all traces of their encroachments. To do this as thoroughly as possible, they wanted to go back in history, not just to the conditions before the Civil War, but all the way back to the Reformation.

This kind of traditionalism can be recognized in other quarters. Gothic architecture survived here and there, most notably at Oxford, already a centre of high-church traditions: as late as 1640 Gothic fan-vaulting was built over the stairs leading to the hall at Christ Church College. Kenneth Clark, in his book on the Gothic Revival, considers that the Gothic style never quite died out in England; and even Sir Christopher Wren erected a few Gothic churches after the Great Fire of London. The period also saw the beginnings of antiquarianism in such works as Sir William Dugdale's *History of St. Paul's Cathedral*, published in 1658, only a few years before that magnificent Gothic church went down in flames.

In the printing trade, "Gothic" or black-letter type, normal 100 years earlier, had gradually been replaced by the roman type we are accustomed to. But it was revived in certain contexts, most notably in publications related to the church. It was used for the first edition of the 1662 prayer book, though as Brian Cummings has pointed out (p. lvii), it was "by now decidedly out of date". As he says, the revisers "wished to make the text correspond to an idea of inherited tradition". John Playford in his *Psalms and Hymns in Solemn Musick of Four Parts*, published in 1671, used black-letter type for the authorised psalm texts taken from Sternhold and Hopkins's *Whole Book of Psalms*, which dated from 1562. He used roman or italic for later translations or non-scriptural hymns that he proposed for the same tune.

In the same spirit, the high-church party, which was now in a politically dominant position, was determined to revive the cathedral services of earlier times in every detail. In a sense the King acted as a figurehead for both the modernizers and the antiquarians. And both parties, in different ways, were opposing the Puritan values that had predominated under the Commonwealth.

William Weber believes that this retrospective spirit in England was the origin of the preference for the music of the past which spread over all Europe and still today governs most people's taste in classical music. I have doubts about this myself. But that is not my topic for today. I want to take a new look at two books that were explicitly designed to assist in the full return to the old forms of cathedral music, by

Edward Lowe and James Clifford. Normally the forms and customs of daily worship are learned by example and imitation, and do not need to be specified in detail. But the special circumstances of the Restoration made it necessary to set them down in print. They give us a uniquely detailed snapshot of what cathedral music was like at that moment in history. These books have been thoroughly examined and described by several scholars, most recently by Ian Spink and Ruth Wilson. (I am sure Robert Shay is right in thinking that more can be gained at this stage by looking at the manuscript sources of the period, which he is going to tell us about. Nevertheless, I believe I can still extract some new information from these printed books, and that is what I am going to try to do today.

The first of these manuals did not wait for the revised prayer book. It has a 1661 imprint and came out on January 17, 1662 (new style), if we are to believe the manuscript date added to the British Library copy. Its compiler, Edward Lowe, had been a chorister and later organist of Christ Church cathedral, Oxford, before the Civil War, and was now one of the organists of the reestablished Chapel Royal. He published it, as he said later, in "obedience to the commands of some reverend persons". He laid out very clearly the reason for the publication in his dedication "to all Gentlemen that are true Lovers of Cathedral Music". The wording shows clearly which of the two camps he was in:

It is too well known what hath bin practised in Cathedral Churches (in order to the public worship of God, for many years past) instead of harmony and order. And therefore it may be rationally supposed, that the persons and things relating to both, are not easily rallied, after so fatal a rout. But since the mercy of God hath restored a power, and by it put life into the law, to promote and settle it as it was, . . . to this end a person is willingly employed [him, that is], who hath seen, understood, and bore a part in the same from his childhood.

Lowe then proceeded to set out instructions and the actual music of the entire liturgy as it appeared in the Elizabethan prayer book. This is especially valuable because it is the first complete record we have. It is true that Lowe kept it as simple

as possible, providing for the psalms only three "tunes" (or chants) in four parts, as he put it, "to serve only so long, till the quires are more learnedly musical, and thereby a greater variety used." He recommended unison chants for ordinary weekdays and four-part ones only for Sundays and festivals. Presumably this reflects the fact that in 1661 many cathedrals could not yet assemble a full choir for twice-daily services, and employed part-time singers on Sundays and feast days.

Three years later Lowe brought out a second edition designed to cater for the changes made in the 1662 version of the prayer book. He took the opportunity to correct "all the versicles, responsals, and single tunes of the Reading psalms", making them "exactly the same that were in use in the time of King Edward the Sixth: this I can aver from the perusal I had of an ancient copy (sent me by the Reverend Dr Jones) Printed in the year 1550." Walter Jones, a canon of St. Paul's and subdean of both Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal, was the driving force behind both Lowe's and Clifford's books.

The book printed in 1550 was Marbeck's *Book of Common Prayer Noted*, which had essentially adapted Sarum chant to the translated liturgy of the 1549 prayer book, in monophonic form throughout. But the statement lends a particular interest to the first edition of Lowe, because it shows what changes had accrued in the century since Marbeck's book had appeared. The harmonized portions are undoubtedly influenced by Tallis's and Byrd's 5-part services, as recorded in John Barnard's *First Book of Selected Church Musick*. Ruth Wilson considers that Lowe simply adapted these by reducing them to four parts. But some portions are not quite like either Tallis or Byrd, and my own view is that Lowe was also using his own memories of how the services had been sung at Christ Church and elsewhere before the interregnum.

One such portion is shown in Ex. 1, the first utterance of the choir in morning and evening prayer. Lowe in his 1661 edition recommended simple monotone chants for ordinary days. The example shows the "extraordinary responsals" in four-part harmony for use on festivals, when presumably the choir was more likely to be

complete and well rehearsed. The first two versicles and responses shown here would be left unchanged in the 1662 prayer book, and anyone who has attended traditional Anglican services will find them quite familiar.

Temperley

Ex.1.

**Extraordinary Responsalls upon Festivalls to Foure Parts**

Source: Lowe (1661)

Priest.

O Lord, o-pen thou our lips: And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Response.

And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Priest.

O Lord, make speed to save us: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Response.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

But the rest of it was changed in the 1662 prayer book and required a new musical setting, which Lowe provided in 1664. Thus the second part of Ex. 1 shows music composed or evolved between 1550 and 1640 which Lowe had recalled and set down, but which would never be heard again after 1663.

3  
 Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Ghost:  
 and to the Ho - ly Ghost:  
 Glo - ry be to the Fa - ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho - ly Ghost:

8  
 As it was in the be - gin - ning, and is now,  
 As it was in the be - gin - ning, and is now,

9  
 and e - ver shall be, world with - out end, A - men.  
 and e - ver shall be, world with - out end, A - men.

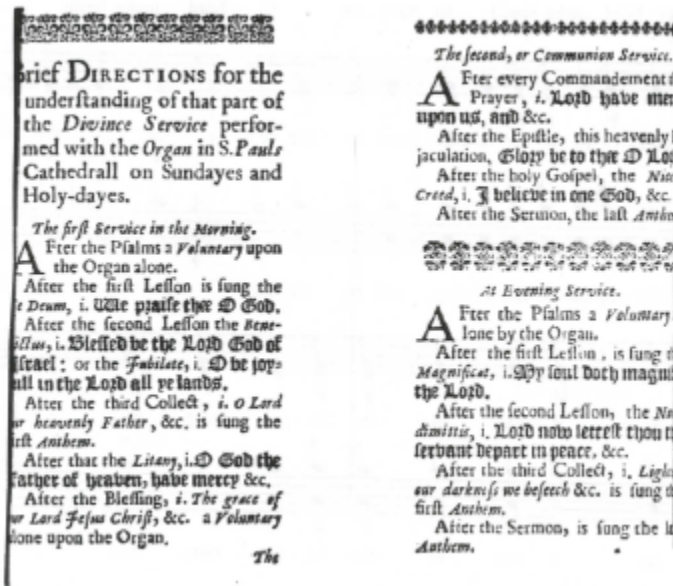
10  
 Praise ye the Lord, praise ye the Lord.  
 Praise ye the Lord, praise ye the Lord.

Before turning to Clifford, I will mention a couple of significant changes in the prayer book of 1662 (which became law by the Act of Uniformity on May 19 of that year). One is the fact that the biblical readings were now based on the Authorized or King James version of 1611, which the puritans considered more faithful to the Hebrew original (and thus to the word of God) than the Great Bible translation of 1534. But this was not really a concession to the puritan side, because most of the bishops wanted it as well, probably for different reasons.

On the other hand the prose psalter from which psalms were chanted was still in the Great Bible version, thus conforming with the high-church wish to go back to the earliest years of the Reformation. This was now, for the first time, made part of the prayer book itself. I will later explain the significance of this fact.

Clifford, in giving "Brief Directions for the understanding of that part of the Divine Service performed with the organ on Sundays and Holy Days" (Ex. 2), specified that "After the third Collect" is sung "the first Anthem," and called for a "second anthem" after the sermon; similarly with evening prayer. (Notice that black letter is used only for the authorized sung texts.) Clifford's book was printed in November 1662 and has a publication date of 1663, so it reflects the changes of the new prayer book, though they did not affect the music he was describing here.

Ex. 2. From Clifford (1663).



The main content of his book was to provide the texts of 171 anthems "usually sung in the cathedrals and collegiate choirs". Not surprisingly, these were all old compositions, but, as Peter Le Huray pointed out, "they were not merely twenty but forty or more years old, since composers of Charles I's time were very poorly represented," with the exception of Adrian Batten (1591-1637), who had the most of all with 33 anthems. The next in order were Byrd with 12, Tomkins with 11, Gibbons, Weelkes and Tallis with 10 each. These were the most important composers of the reigns of Edward VI, Elizabeth and James I, and their survival, through the preservation of pre-Commonwealth manuscript sources as well as Barnard's printed collection, ensured that the greatest music of the Reformation

period would form the bedrock on which the cathedral tradition would now be rebuilt.

We may note which portions of the service Clifford said would require organ accompaniment. Ruth Wilson found an order in the Westminster Abbey minutes dated 18 December 1660: "It was ordered that the back door of the organ loft be shut up and that the organist come into the choir at the beginning of prayers and betake himself to his stall until towards the end of the psalms . . . then go up the stairs leading from the choir to the organ and perform his duty." Wilson concludes that the organist's duty began with the canticle after the first lesson, but Clifford's list shows that he first had to perform a voluntary. This "middle voluntary", as it was sometimes known, was probably a relic of the medieval respond, where the organ had first accompanied and then gradually replaced the voices of the choir. It lasted in some churches until the late 19th century.

Clifford's first edition claimed only to cover the music performed at St. Paul's, but in his second edition, published in January 1664, he extended his plan with "an Addition of what more I could Collect for the general satisfaction of all Choirs in England and Ireland", and he now printed no less than 393 texts for 411 anthems. This enormous increase in little more than a year was only partly due to a sudden spurt in composition. Many were earlier works that had survived in provincial cathedrals and colleges. But there is a block of nearly 50 texts that appear to be from recently composed anthems, including 14 by three of the Children of the Chapel Royal: Pelham Humfrey, aged 17; Robert Smith, about 15; and John Blow, 14 or 15. William Turner, who was about 12, was just too young to be included. Smith's anthems have not survived.

I will use my remaining time to comment on the anthem texts printed in Clifford's books. In histories of cathedral music, much less attention has been paid to the texts than to the music of anthems. Ian Spink, the leading authority on Restoration cathedral music, says "The Restoration anthem may be defined as a musical setting of a sacred text drawn from Scripture (most often from the Psalms) or from the



Book of Common Prayer" (p. 28). A recent article by Peter Horton based on an examination of Victorian anthem texts, makes a similar claim about anthem texts from the early 19th century, using wordbooks that are direct descendants of Clifford's. Horton found a significant change after 1850, when "other books from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and increasingly from the 1860s onwards, metrical texts (usually hymns) began to be used."

Ex. 3.

	Clifford 1663		Clifford 1664		Pearce 1795		Novello 1923-1930	
Dates of composition	1545-1645		1645-1664		1545-1795		1545-1930	
No. of anthem texts	163 <sup>1</sup>		180 <sup>2</sup>		445		41	
Text sources:	%		%		%		%	
Prose: Psalms	79	48	108	60	347	78	5	12
Other OT books	4	2	9	5	48	11	5	12
New Testament	16	10	9	5	22	5	6	15
BCP	19	12	16	9	8	2	...	0
Other	19	12	16	9	9	2	2	5
Verse: Metrical psalms	8	5	10	6	4	1	...	0
Hymns	20	12	11	6	7	2	21	51

<sup>1</sup> Excluding nos. 164-171, which appear to have been newly composed.

<sup>2</sup> Nos. 172-393, except those known to have been composed before 1645.

When we look at the Clifford texts as a whole, however, they tell a somewhat different story (see Ex. 3). We can assume that most of the 171 anthems whose texts are in the 1663 edition, excluding a group at the end by named composers which may have been newly composed, all date from before the Civil War; indeed most of them were much older than that. Less than half, 48%, were drawn from the psalms; some are from other parts of the bible. 12% are from the BCP -- these are mostly collects, a form of set prayer much disliked by the Puritan party. Another 12% are mostly anonymous prayers coming from primers of the 1540s, often translated from Latin: these were used by Tallis and Byrd among others. There is also a fair number of settings of metrical psalms and hymns, some taken from Sternhold & Hopkins's *Whole Book of Psalms*, which was popular with the Puritans.

Now look at the second column, showing texts added in 1664, excluding those known to have been by pre-Civil War composers. Texts from the prose psalms are

now up to 60%. The third and fourth columns, compiled from figures given by Horton, shows that the preference for psalm texts was even stronger by 1795, almost completely replacing texts from the BCP and from metrical psalms and hymns. But by the 20th century this had given way to a fondness for hymn texts. (This table is very much a preliminary finding. I am planning a more thorough survey of anthem texts from 1660 to, say, 1714.)

In Clifford's 2nd edition there is a remarkable group of anthems, towards the end of the book, by people closely connected with the Chapel Royal. All are taken from the psalms: 14 by Henry Cooke, master of the children; four by Henry Lawes, also a gentleman of the Chapel Royal; three by Matthew Locke, and 13 by the three young boys already mentioned. There are also nine anthems by Edward Lowe, Turner's teacher; these too have texts all drawn from the psalms. So it looks as if there was a strong movement to use the book of psalms as the preferred source of anthems texts, and that Cooke was pointing the young composers in that direction.

What was the reason for this change of emphasis? Remember that the psalms in the Great Bible translation had now become part of the prayer book, and hence fell under the purview of the Act of Uniformity. Puritans had favoured the psalms because they were scriptural, hence inspired directly by God. Now the high-church traditionalists favoured them for a different reason: they had the authority of the King.

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