

A  
MANUAL OF PLAINSONG  
FOR DIVINE SERVICE  
CONTAINING  
THE CANTICLES NOTED  
THE PSALTER NOTED  
TO GREGORIAN TONES  
TOGETHER WITH  
THE LITANY AND RESPONSES  
A NEW EDITION  
PREPARED BY

H. B. BRIGGS AND W. H. FRERE  
UNDER THE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENCE OF

JOHN STAINER

(LATE PRESIDENT OF THE PLAINSONG AND MEDIÆVAL MUSIC  
SOCIETY)

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1902

[the title page of the larger edition]

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MANUAL OF PLAINSONG  
FOR DIVINE SERVICE  
(SMALLER EDITION)  
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THE CANTICLES AND PSALTER  
POINTED FOR THE GREGORIAN TONES  
TOGETHER WITH  
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MADE IN ENGLAND.

[n.d.]

[the title page of the smaller edition]

[The preceding title pages are not exactly as laid out, nor are the font sizes quite correct. But they give a similar general impression.]

## Preface

[This section appears in the smaller edition identical with the larger.]

The first edition of *The Psalter Noted* was published in 1849 under the supervision of the late Rev. Thomas Helmore, and secured for the Gregorian Tones a general recognition of the appropriateness for Divine worship. Subsequently Mr Helmore's scheme was enlarged by the issue of *The Canticles Noted*, of *A Brief Directory*, and of three *Appendixes to the Psalter*; and the whole collection was issued in one volume under the title of *A Manual of Plainsong*. The Manual had also two companion books, one of Words only containing *The Canticles and Psalter Accented*, the other a collection of *Accompanying Harmonies*. Thus complete provision was made for the musical performance of the regular services of the Prayer Book. Practical objections, however, to the monotony of the recitation of several Psalms to one Tone without the relief of Antiphons, added to certain difficulties in the pointing, led to the issue of other Psalters which have competed with *The Psalter Noted*, but without obtaining, any of them, a marked supremacy; and nothing has been issued which covers the whole field so completely as Mr Helmore's *Manual*.

Study of the Art of Plainsong during the last half century has, however, undergone something like a revolution; on every branch of the question new light has been thrown, and not least upon the principles of pointing. In consequence of repeated demands for a new editions of the *Manual*, the work of revision was entrusted to the late Sir John Stainer. He readily undertook the task, and called into collaboration Mr H. B. Briggs and the Rev. W. H. Frere, with the result that before his death he had passed for the press the greater part of the revised proofs prepared by them for the new edition. He had also devoted much time to the consideration, with Mr Shebbeare, of the Organ Accompaniments, so that the complete work may be considered as his last contribution to the music of the English Church.

His was not the only loss that this book had to undergo in the course of revision, for on the eve of its completion, Mr Briggs was suddenly called to his rest. So the foregoing words which he had written about Sir John Stainer have now become his own epitaph. Without competing with Sir John Stainer in the wider domain of Church Music he had, in the narrower department of

Plainsong, an influence and a competence which were unrivalled; and whatever merits this book may have are due almost entirely to him.

The *Manual* thus has appeared in a New Edition, revised in accordance with modern standards of taste and science; it does not cover quite so large a field as formerly, for it contains no music for the Holy Communion; but it has the same counterparts as before; this volume contains the equivalent of the old *Canticles and Psalter Accented*, the *The Accompanying Harmonies* prepared by Mr Shebbeare have been issued, including accompaniments for the Responses, *Te Deum*, and Litany, as well as for the Tones.

## I. Practical Instructions for all who use this Psalter

[This section appears in the smaller edition and the larger edition. Text in the smaller edition only is marked with †— †; text in the larger edition only is marked with ‡— ‡]

The Gregorian Tones provide for the musical recitation of the Psalms in the simplest possible manner. They are eight in number, corresponding with the eight Modes of Mediæval music-theory, and each of them consist of three chief parts:—

1. A *reciting note*, on which the greater part of each verse is said. This is in each case the dominant of the mode.
2. A short melodic inflection before the colon, termed the *meditation*.
3. Another inflection at the close of the verse, termed the *ending*.

To these is added, in certain cases, an opening phrase, called the *intonation*.

The mediations proper to each of the tones are invariable, as are also the intonations; but there are various endings‡, each designed to correspond with the opening notes of the Antiphons which, properly speaking, are always associated with the Tone It is the Antiphons, indeed, which, strictly speaking, should determine which Tone is to be sung, and complete the Tone (which of itself more often than not is incomplete), and should thus serve as a melodic cadence in the Mode, or what in modern music would be called a *Coda*‡.

‡The forms of the Tone used at Salisbury have been adopted in this revision of the Psalter, and the pointing is based on the principles followed in

the palmy days of Plainsong, and preserved in the early manuscripts. The *rationale* of this system is explained in the recent works of the Benedictines of Solesmes. The application of it to an English text was first satisfactorily made by the Rev. G. H. Palmer in his *Sarum Psalter*, and the rules explained by him in the Introduction to that work mainly govern the pointing in this volume. Occasional divergences in detail are due partly to the exigencies of modern pronunciation, but, on the other hand, partly to a stricter adherence to mediæval principles, as this appeared to more conducive to simplicity and congregational singing, than the use of modifications adopted with a view to extreme perfection in rendering.‡

‡It will be necessary for all who use this Edition, first to know the tones and their endings by heart (*see* p. x [the start of the Tonary]); secondly, to look in chanting for the syllable printed in italic type and on that syllable to leave the reciting note and begin the inflection; thirdly, to watch for the verses in which notes have to be inserted or omitted in the inflections. When there is an extra note to be inserted the extra syllable will take its not from either the preceding or the following syllable and the tie (^) shows in each case from which of the two it is to be. When there is a note to be omitted its place is marked by [a rhombus] ◇, ( ), or — (*See* examples of p. ix [These are the specimens of the insertion and omission of notes.]).‡

To attain a correct method in chanting, a choir should first deliberately and naturally recite a psalm in monotone; then, setting it to a simple Tone—*e.g.* Tone V—they should add the inflection of the mediation and the ending in exactly the same style and rhythm as were used in the monotone, bearing in mind the following rules:—

1. Do not hurry the syllables sung on the reciting note, or drag those which fall to the inflections.
2. Give every syllable its proper rhythmical accent and a very distinct enunciation, with the full value of a syllable to those words which end in “ed”, such as “blessèd”, “promisèd”, &c.
3. Do not make any gap between the reciting note and the beginning of the inflection.
4. Take a good breath at the colon.
5. Recite the whole *mezza voce* rather than sing it.

6. Sing the last note of the mediation and of the ending, especially the latter, quite softly.

The first half verse should be precented, then the whole choir or the whole of the side of the choir should join in at the colon: the succeeding verses should be sung alternately either from side to side, or men's voices alternating with boys voices, or chanters with full choir. There is no authority for singing the verse of the *Gloria Patri* full.

The music is all diatonic except for the occasional use of the B $\flat$ : the C clef

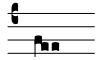


, and F clef,



, indicate the position of those notes upon the staff of four lines. The Tone is not necessarily sung at the normal pitch, and when it is transposed these clefs of course represent respectively the key-note or the fourth of any key in which it may be agreeable to sing the Tone.

The forms of the notes indicate no time-value whatever, for this is entirely determined by the rhythm of the words. When two or more notes are combined in a group it is the first note of the group that is accented, but it is probable



that the opposite accent is intended in the peculiar form of group which occurs in I.8 and III.5.

‡The solemn forms of the Tones which belong to the Gospel Canticles consist of the same four parts as the simpler forms which are used for the Psalms. (*See* the Table of Tones.) The intonations and mediations are extensions of the simple forms; the in the second half of the verse the endings are the same, but in some tones the reciting note has a slight decoration on an accented syllable if the text is of sufficient length; the accented syllable (with any that may precede it) is printed in small capitals.

The intonations have been taken into account in each verse where there are enough syllables to allow of them; when there are not, their omission is indicated by —.

When two notes are joined on one syllable, here as elsewhere, it is indicated by a diæresis.

The *Tonus Peregrinus* is of a more elaborate character than the ordinary Tones, and has a decoration somewhat similar to that of the solemn forms of the regular Tones in each half of the chant: it is pointed on the same principles.‡

## II. The Principles of the Pointing

[This section and the remainder of the front matter are only in the larger edition.]

1. The Psalms were invariably chanted in former times from unpointed manuscripts, and the principle that governed the pointing was that the melodic inflection should be deferred to as near the close of the sentence as possible. The musical form of the endings is based on the ordinary accentuation of the close of a psalm-verse. In the great majority of cases, in English as well as in Latin, an accent will be found on either the penultimate of the antepenultimate syllable, –

e.g. with holy *wór*ship  
 dwell together in *ú*nity [sic: *ú*nity intended?]

The former, the trochaic ending, was taken as the model for the musical phrase, and consequently the last note (or note group) but one of the ending is normally accented, because it falls to the accented syllable of the final trochee. If, however, the ending is dactylic, i.e., if the ending occurs on the antepenultimate syllable, there is a redundant penultimate syllable which must be filled in on some convenient note. (See [the cavum note] in the Tables.) Obverse that this must not be done by splitting up the penultimate member of the ending should it consist of a group of two notes, for such groups are always kept intact; but the few three-note groups which occur may be split into two, so as to accommodate the redundant syllable

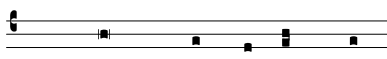
I.1 ... the Lord with holy worship

I.1 ... dwell together in u-nity

IV.1 ... the Lord with holy wor-ship

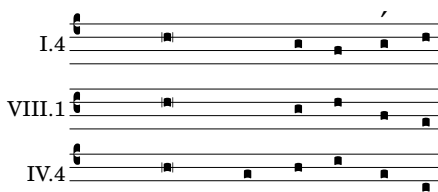
IV.1 ... dwell together in uni-ty

It is only in exceptional cases in English (about eight per cent. against half as many in the Latin) that the latest accent in the verse occurs so far back as the fourth syllable from the end, e.g., *téstimonies*, *Náme of the Lord*. Then the difficulty has to be met as in parallel cases in the Latin, viz., by treating the accented penultimate note of the ending as *rallentando* rather than *accented*, and singing to it the penultimate syllable, even though that be unaccented, the effect of an accent being avoided by singing the weak syllable softly. The alternative of singing the last three syllables to the final note is impossible, as the over-weighting of this essentially weak note completely destroys the musical form of the Tone.



... of all thy mar-velloús works.  
 ... unto thy tes - ti-mó - nies.  
 ... in the Name of thé Lord.

The principle which forbids the splitting up of a note-group equally forbids the combination of two distinct members of an inflection by a slur. This rule is only subject to exception when the main accented syllable of the ending is preceded by another accented syllable following on two that have no accent, e.g., *súch as are trúe héarted*, where two notes of the inflection must be grouped on *true*. It is not necessary to apply this exceptional treatment to the sixth tone.



... such as are trúe .. hearted

- Beyond the penultimate note of member of the ending, which is common to all Tones, the Fifth and Seventh Tones have a second fixed musical accent in the endings. In these the inflection begins four places from the end on a rising note, and therefore demands an accented syllable, while in all the others the inflection begins on a note which is lower than the reciting note, and is consequently equally well suited either to

an accented or unaccented syllable. In these latter the notes preceding the penultimate will naturally accommodate themselves to, and take the accentuation of, any syllables that happen to fall to them. But in the Fifth and Seventh Tones an accented syllable must be allotted to the first note of the ending, because it is higher than the reciting note. There is no difficulty in this if the rhythm at this point in trochaic-

e.g.: ... Lord with | hólly | wórship. (Double trochaic)

... midst a- | -móng thine | énemies. (Trochaic, dactylic)

But if it is dactylic there will be, as before, a redundant syllable to be filled in :-

e.g.: ... people im- | -áigine a | vaín thing. (Dactylic, trochaic)

... dwell to- | -géther in | únity. (Double dactylic)

This accent may thus be found as far back as the sixth syllable from the end in a double dactylic ending, but in no case can it be set farther back than that. Musical example of this will be seen in the appended tables.

3. The mediations of the Fifth and Sixth Tones consist of a fall of a tone on the penultimate syllable before the colon, whether accented or not, and a return to the reciting note on the last syllable. The pointing of these is therefore quite uniform, and presents no difficulty. The mediations of the Second, Fifth, and Eighth Tones rise a tone, and this rise must be set on the accented syllable nearest the colon, with a return to the reciting note on the unaccented syllables following, should there be any. The mediation of the Fourth Tone is somewhat similar; the accented note, however, is preceded by two notes, but since these do not rise above the reciting note, they have no special requirements, but accommodate themselves to any syllables which may fall to them.

The mediations of the Third and Seventh Tones contain four notes, and each case the first of these requires an accented syllable, because it is higher than the reciting note. With regard to the other notes the treatment of the two Tones differs. In the Third Tone the penultimate note, being lower than the reciting note, is sung, as in the First and Sixth Tones, to the penultimate syllable, whatever its accentuation, and any redundant syllables, even if one be accented, are filled in on the preceding note, which is the same as the reciting note. In the Seventh Tone the penultimate note, which in this case is the same as the reciting note,

requires an accented on quasi-accented syllable, so that the preceding note is only repeated in the case of a redundant unaccented syllable.

When the text does not admit of the full form of these two mediations, the *abrupt* form is adopted, in which the non-essential notes are omitted (*see* [a rhombus]  $\diamond$  in the Tables). In all the Tones, if the half-verse does not contain enough syllables, the mediation may be omitted entirely when the intonation is used. The same principle of omission also applies to the endings, only such notes being used as suffice for the syllables in the half-verse.

4. The notes of intonations in the Psalm-tones are never grouped on syllables; if there are not enough syllables the intonation may be shortened. In some cases the intonation is altogether omitted.
5. The florid forms of the Tone which belong to the Canticles consist of the same four parts as the simpler forms which are used for the Psalms. The intonations and mediations are extensions of the simple forms, and in the second half of the verse the endings are the same, but the reciting note has a slight decoration on an accented syllable if the text is of sufficient length.
6. The *Tonus Peregrinus* is of a more elaborate character than the ordinary Tones, but is pointed on the same principle; except that, though the first note of the mediation is lower than the reciting note, it is always accented, because the next and final note is still lower. Where extreme simplicity of rendering is desired the second half of the verse may be begun at once on the G, the second intonation being omitted.
7. It may be well to remark that the accentuation of the ending of the Second Tone is different from that which, by some accident, is current in England. Also that *World without end, Amen*, is thus accented as the equivalent of *seculórum Amen*.
8. Only the simpler endings have been used in this book, but in case any should prove to ornate the same pointing can be applied to another form of the same ending.

### III. The Method of Chanting

The structure of the Tones shows that the Psalms are intended to be chanted to them exactly in the style in which they would be read in monotone, but at the same time it suggests certain musical refinements in the rendering. The trochaic close implies that there should be, as a rule, a *rallentando e diminuendo* at the end of every Psalm-verse, and the same rule will affect the mediation to the extent of making its final syllable more or less *piano*. This rule is specially to be observed where that syllable, though weak accentually, is, through being a monosyllable, allotted to the rising tone of the abrupt mediation of the Second, Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth Tones – e.g., *and ever shall be*. Unless these final monosyllables are sung softly as compared with the preceding syllables the effect will be given of a false accent, but by care in this point the false effect may be avoided. The division of the Psalm-verse into two parts also suggests that a definite pause should be made at the colon long enough to cause a cessation of all vocal sound in the building, whatever its size. The antiphonal singing of the verses implies, on the other hand, that there need be no more interval between them than is necessary to make the alternation of voices clear, and to prevent the effect of overlapping, or the drowning of the *sostenuto* on the last note of one verse by the beginning of the next.

The recitation of a Psalm in monotone distinctly and deliberately, but yet naturally, will show that the words have a rhythm of their own, rather more regular than that which would be produced if they were read it a speaking voice, but quite distinct from the duple or triple time of modern measured music. When the Psalms are chanted, the music must therefore follow this rhythm, so that both recitation and inflection will be in the same *tempo*. To attain this, pains should be taken that the words on the reciting note are not sung too quickly, nor those on the inflection too slowly, and that there is no hesitation in beginning the inflection. If the recitation is taken too quickly there will be an unconscious effort to complete the rhythm by a pause before the inflection. But if it be deliberate and rhythmical it will flow easily into the inflection, the rhythm of which will be the same as that of the recitation; in other words, the inflection must be begun without the slightest gap immediately after the last note of the recitation. In order to assist this even flow of the words and obviate any pause at the end of the recitation, a few of the reciting notes are in this edition inserted *in extenso* before the mediation and endings.

When the Psalms are correctly chanted, it will be found that a regular rhythmical movement is created, which may be represented by a series of beats, which will coincide with many, though not all, of the accented syllables in the verse. Such beat, however, is distinct from a time-beat in measured music in being *indivisible*, insomuch that, though it may contain two or three syllables or notes, it cannot be divided into two, three, or four equal or proportionate parts. In the recitation, moreover, though a certain number of syllables may be covered by the duration of two beats, the second of these will not necessarily fall exactly on an accented syllable. In the inflections, however, if a simple syllabic Tone, such as Tone I.4, be chosen, the last syllable of the mediation and the next preceding accented syllable will coincide with two of these beats. A space equivalent to two beats will then represent the pause signified by the colon, and the next beat will fall to the first accented syllable in the second half of the verse. The penultimate note of the ending will fall to one beat, the last to another, and after a *sostenuto* of one beat, the next verse should be begun.

The pause of one beat at a semicolon is marked by a half-bar, and where a quick breath is necessary, an asterisk is inserted in the text. No pause should be made at commas, as the effect intended by the punctuation should be obtained by slightly sustaining the preceding syllable.

All the Tones do not conform exactly to the above rules of rhythm, but when the chanting of a simple Tone has been perfected, it will be easy to apply the principles to the more elaborate Tones and endings. Good chanting is above all perfectly natural, and there should be nothing forced wither about the pitch, the rhythm, or the *tempo*, which must vary according to the size of the building, the number of the singers, and similar conditions.

H. B. B.

W. H. F.