9 October 1937

THE PLAINSONG AND MEDIEVAL MUSIC SOCIETY

SIR,—Fr. Alec Robertson obviously misunderstands my reasons for refusing to be in any way associated with a public discussion, organized by a non-Catholic society, concerning the interpretation of plainsong.

Pope Pius X described plainsong as "the chant proper to the Roman Church, the only chant which she has inherited from the ancient fathers, which she has jealously guarded for centuries in her liturgical codices, which she directly proposes to the faithful as her own." Plainsong, then, is the exclusive property of the Catholic Church, whose official liturgical music it is. The question of its interpretation, therefore, is not, and cannot be, for me a merely musical matter, for it is not merely music but the Church's liturgical music.

Moreover, if non-Catholics wish to discuss how it should be sung, it seems to me that they do so with the primary object of receiving assistance in the singing of plainsong in their own services. I am still further persuaded of this when I find the name of an "Anglican Benedictine" printed side by side with my own name on a leaflet advertising the discussion. I am not prepared to assist non-Catholics in the musical conduct of their services, nor will I take part in a discussion which is calculated to promote the use of the official liturgical music of the Church in heretical worship.

I suggest, therefore, that unless Catholic musicians, especially priests, are particularly careful in questions of this kind, they may easily encourage non-Catholics in the belief that the differences between Catholics and non-Catholics are of minor importance.

I may add that I have acted throughout this matter with the advice and approval of eminent ecclesiastical authority.

Yours faithfully,

(DOM) A. GREGORY MURRAY.

Downside Abbey.

2 October 1937

THE PLAINSONG AND MEDIEVAL MUSIC SOCIETY

SIR,—A printed leaflet has been circulated by "The Plainsong and Medieval Music Society" in which my name is mentioned in connection with a forthcoming discussion, organized by the Society, on the interpretation of plainsong.

I wish to state that this use of my name was entirely unauthorized and was made without my knowledge. Furthermore, I should under no circumstances consent to take part in any public discussion as to the interpretation of "the proper music of the Roman Church" under the auspices of a non-Catholic society.

Yours faithfully,

(DOM) A. GREGORY MURRAY.

Downside Abbey,

Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Nr. Bath.

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