

Maria Louise Baum

Maria Louise Baum (1867 – 1941) joined The Mother Church in 1900. She was a resident of Boston, and worked for *The Christian Science Monitor* for a period. I read somewhere that she served as the editor of the Home Forum Page, but I couldn't find confirmation of that fact. Ms. Baum is the author of 7 hymn texts in our Hymnals, each of which was written especially for the music. There are 3 settings of our first hymn, "Here, O God, Thy Healing Presence" (109, 110 & 442), but it was Mozart's music in 109 that she wrote her words for.

Hymn 109

She was identified as the author or principal compiler of the first edition (1933) of the *Hymnal Notes* (to the *Christian Science Hymnal*), and signed the introduction to the Notes. At the end of that introduction, she writes: "The Hymn and Tune Book of Boston, which was the first Hymnal used in Christian Science services, says, in a Preface: 'Choirs do not expect to sing well without careful practice; why should a congregation? Some regularly organized plan to secure general musical culture, and stated rehearsals, should be a part of the working apparatus of each church.'

The words of our next hymn, "In Thee, my God and Saviour," were taken from Mary's rejoicing as recorded in Luke 1:46.

Hymn 153

Ms. Baum worked as a translator for published music. I found 19 instances of her having translated solo and choral music from French, Italian, German and Russian into English -- and these must represent only a small part of her work. She apparently also translated many non-musical works, though the only one I could find was *The Adventures of Grillo, or The Cricket Who Would Be King*, by Ernest Candize, which she translated from the original Italian. It appears that for all her translations, she used the name M. Louise Baum.

As with all her hymns, the words of the next one, "Rouse, Ye, Soldiers of the Cross" were written specifically for the music.

Hymn 296

She wrote an article entitled "Mrs. Eddy's Hymns" that appeared in the February 1914 issue of the *Journal*, and which was adapted as "The Hymns of Mary Baker Eddy" as a special article preceding the *Hymnal Notes*. Our next hymn is "If the Lord Build Not the House." Ms. Baum wrote in the *Hymnal Notes* that this text was written specifically "to meet the need of a 'building song.'"

Hymn 141

In her article, "Mrs. Eddy's Hymns," Ms. Baum makes many observations about Mrs. Eddy's poetry that suggest the thoughts behind Ms. Baum's own poetry: "In religious poetry, for the most part, what may be termed the heart element has always predominated, and when poetry has sought to be metaphysical or theological it has usually ceased to be poetry." Here's more of what she had to say about Mrs. Eddy's poetry: " ...[I]nternal evidence hints that most of them were written under stress, to give comfort, warning, inspiration. It is indeed this expression of the actual need of the hour, either on her own part or that of her church, that gives Mrs. Eddy's hymns their wonderful vitality. They express

herself,—aspiration, abnegation, struggle, victory, unselfish love; the sorrowing and triumphing Leader, the friend of humanity, the mother of her flock." And this: "Her poetry has no flowery hyperbole, no vaguely impassioned or cloudily metaphysical line. Direct, simple, with hardly a word of more than two syllables, her poems take the reader back to days when words meant what they said, and yea was yea." Maybe we can see those motivations in "Like As a Mother, God Comforteth His Children," which was written for music from Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words."

Hymn 174

The next hymn is "High to Heaven Let Song Be Soaring." Once again, in the Hymnal Notes, Ms. Baum explains that the words refer to the following passage in *Science & Health* (p. 568): "A louder song, sweeter than has ever before reached high heaven, now rises clearer and nearer to the great heart of Christ; for the accuser is not there, and Love sends forth her primal and everlasting strain.")

Hymn 112

Maria Louise Baum was apparently a prolific lyricist and translator. Some of the other hymns she has written (and which have been published in other hymnals) are:

- Jesus Meek and Mild (a Christmas carol)
- Now Across the Hilltops (also called "Nightfall")
- The Evening Bells Are Calling

We'll close with "Put on the whole armor of pure consecration," is titled "Protection," and has been called the Dutch Prayer of Thanksgiving. The traditional English lyrics begin, "We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing." But as she explains in the Hymnal Notes, "The words by Maria Louise Baum repeat, as closely as may be, passages from Ephesians 6:11-17 and I Chronicles 29:11, which give the idea of Protection....")

Hymn 292