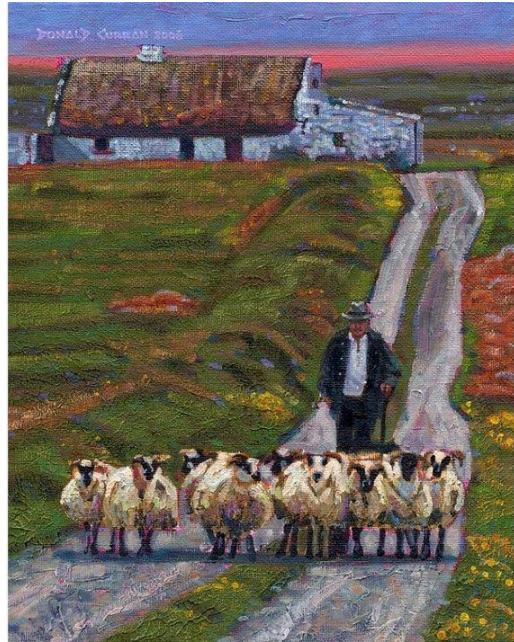


Notes on *The King of love my shepherd is*, Hymnal 1982 #645 & #646

Henry Baker, editor-in-chief of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, wrote this text based on Psalm 23, and it appeared in the appendix of that hymnal in 1868. The text of this hymn has remained very stable. The fifth stanza is omitted from some hymnals, perhaps because this stanza contains more archaic expressions than any of the others. Most hymnals do not modernize the language. The six stanzas of this hymn correlate closely to the six verses of the twenty-third Psalm, while drawing connections between this well-known Old Testament passage and several New Testament images, all on the theme of the Good Shepherd. In the first two stanzas, the connections are subtle. In stanza 1, Baker adds a comment on the two-way, eternal nature of the relationship between the shepherd and the sheep, referring to Jesus' words in John 10:28. By changing the words "still waters" to "streams of living water," Baker recalls Jesus' declaration that He is the source of these streams (John 4:14, 7:37-39). Stanza 3 clearly refers to the Parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7). In the second half of the hymn, the connection between Old and New Testaments is more pronounced by the use of the words "cross" (st. 4), "chalice" (st. 5, referring to the cup in the Lord's Supper), and "Good Shepherd" (st. 6).



Tune:

There are two tunes with which this text is frequently associated and both are in our Hymnal 1982 at 645 and 646 : DOMINUS REGIT ME, and ST COLUMBA. DOMINUS REGIT ME is the opening phrase of Psalm 23 in Latin. John B. Dykes wrote this tune for this hymn in 1868. The editors of the *English Hymnal* were unable to use this tune due to copyright issues, so they adapted ST. COLUMBA, an Irish hymn tune. Both choices are wonderful settings ST. COLUMBA is more popular in the US, and DOMINUS REGIT ME is more widely sung in the UK.