«Simply to thy Cross I cling»
Hymns and the Performance of Memory in
Victorian Highgate Cemetery

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At the heart of this paper lies the *affective* force of hymns that silently resound amidst the inscriptions and sepulchral imagery of Victorian Highgate.[1] Bereaved Victorian families frequently chose lines from popular hymns as epitaphs for their loved ones, or selected grave designs and sculptures which evoked verbal or visual images from favourite hymns. It is a hymn's ability to stir the imagination and move the heart that made them ideally suited to memorialise a lost loved one. This emotional power was clearly recognized by writers of the period, such as Duncan Campbell in his study *Hymns and Hymn Makers*: «a good hymn should have certain striking ideas, vividly, memorably expressed, those ideas forming a connected whole. […] A hymn has to do with the emotions rather than with the intellect […].»[2] The affective force of hymn verses or imagery on grave monuments functioned both to memorialise the virtuous life and ‹good death› of the mourned loved-one, as well as providing the stimulus to move the grave monument's audience to emulate these virtues for themselves, stirred by the evocative lines, and recollected tune, of the chosen hymn.

This paper will begin by outlining the Victorian ideal of a ‹good death›, in order to understand how a bereaved family's choice of grave monument formed an integral component of this ideal. Attention will focus on one specific grave-type, the recurrent design of a female figure clinging to a cross founded upon rock, evoking the popular hymn, «Rock of Ages». The lyrics of this hymn will be read in the context of its original composition as well as its later reception in the Victorian era, sensitive to the ubiquity

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1   In line with Juslin 2019, 43–52 ‹affect› is here used as an umbrella-term to refer to a range of evaluative reactions and responses, covering emotions, moods and preferences. The ‹affective› aspect that is the principal concern of this study, however, is a subject's *emotional* response to music (and lyrics). On music and the emotions see Juslin/Sloboda 2010 and Cochrane/Fantini/Scherer 2013.
2   Campbell 1903, xvi.

of allusions to a wide variety of hymn traditions in Victorian garden cemeteries. This contextual backdrop will inform this paper's test-case study: the grave monument of two young girls, Ottilie and Frances Reissmann in Highgate East cemetery. The gendered imagery of their sculptured monument, evoking Toplady's hymn, provides insights into how the virtuous lives of these two deeply mourned girls was memorialised by their family and had the affective power to move visitors to this gravestone to recall and emulate the theological virtue of faith. The affective force of the hymn-imagery in this test-case will be teased-out with the aid of performance theory, reflecting upon the grave monument as the ‹script› of a past and potentially perpetual performance which functions as a medium for the creation of memory.

1. The Victorian Ideal of a ‹Good Death›

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Evangelical movement[3] disseminated a wide range of journals and tracts aimed at instructing the faithful with examples of how to live and die well, often culminating in an idealised death-bed scene. One such publication, the *Evangelical Magazine*, published from 1793–1892, often included a memorial to a recently deceased evangelical, not infrequently a minister, at the beginning of a monthly issue, the idealised death having an exemplary value for readers. Such memorials usually ran to about five pages with the death-bed scene taking-up much of the final page.[4] The convention of such a scene was that the dying person should die peacefully, expressing confidence in the salvation that awaits, confirming their own faith and serving as a model for imitation by others.[5] The faith and devotion of the dying family member was supported by reciting passages from biblical texts, devotional literature or favourite hymns as they lay dying, read aloud by turns, either

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3 See Jalland 1996, 17–38; Riso 2015, 209–226; Vogt 2004, 15–51.
   On evangelicalism, in its broad sense, denoting a complex movement of renewal and revival that arose in the eighteenth century and influenced almost all emerging and established Christian traditions in Victorian Britain (Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Quakers, Anglicans) see Bebbington 1989.

4 Jalland 1996, 21.

5 See Jalland 1996, 23–25 on the sharp contrast between private letters and published accounts of the death of family members. Victorians were well aware of the gap between ideal and reality, knowing from personal experience that loved ones were all too commonly prevented by pain and lack of strength and clarity of mind to attain the ideals of a ‹good death›.

by members of the family around the bedside or the dying person, to the extent that the intensity of the pain permitted.

Victorian expectations of a ‹good death› drew upon and reshaped devotional literature on the ‹art of dying› (*ars moriendi*) from the medieval and early modern period, most notably the influential works of the Anglican bishop Jeremy Taylor, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying*, first published in the aftermath of the English Civil War in 1650–51.[6] In the dedicatory letter to *Holy Dying*, Taylor encapsulates the art of dying well as follows: «it is a great art to dye well, and to be learnt by men in health […]. All that a sick and dying man can do is but to exercise those vertues, which he before acquired, and to perfect that repentance which was begun more early.»[7] The Victorian ideal retained the importance of a virtuous life as preparatory for a ‹good death›, but supplemented this with a greater interest in recounting and memorialising the faithful life of the deceased as exemplary for those left behind.[8]

Consequently, the choice of grave monument and inscription was considered with great care, sensitive to the continuity between a good life and a good death, memorialising the moral seriousness of the deceased and their preparedness for death.[9] As a site of consolation for the family left behind, and remembrance of the virtues of the deceased, the interplay of grave-stone, imagery, and inscription shed light on the manner in which the deceased's family wished their loved one's respectable life and death to be remembered.

2. Victorian Grave Types and the Hymn «Rock of Ages»

A prominently recurring Victorian grave type in Highgate Cemetery is of a plain cross arising out of a rock, or a cluster of rocks. Although the whole monument is fashioned from stone, the cross is sculpted to imitate living wood, replete with bark and rings, whilst the founding stone is suggestive of a weighty granite or limestone. A particularly striking variant of this motif occurs with the inclusion of a figure, usually female or angelic, hold-

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6 See Taylor 1989a (1650); Taylor 1989b (1651). George Eliot includes «Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*» among the limited reading material of her morally serious protagonist, Adam Bede, who sought to improve his lot as a carpenter by attending night-school. (Eliot, *Adam Bede*, 2008 (1859), 231; novel set in 1799).
7 Taylor 1989b (1651), 6.
8 Riso 2015, 209.
9 See Jalland 1996, 292–295.

ing onto a cross founded upon rock. This grave-type alludes to the eighteenth century prayer, which subsequently became a hymn, «Rock of Ages», written by the Rev. Augustus Toplady (1776).[10] Whilst some of the monuments explicitly cite a line, usually from verse 3, «Simply to thy Cross I cling», emblazoned on the cross-piece, others offer a more allusive reference to the sentiment of the hymn by sculpting a female figure clinging to a cross founded upon rock.

Toplady's verse-prayer «Rock of Ages» arose out of a very specific context of polemical pamphleteering between ‹Calvinist› and ‹Wesleyan/ Arminian› interpretations of atonement and sanctification in the late eighteenth century.[11] His original article, which appeared in the *Gospel Magazine* that he edited, in March 1776, was scathing in its opposition to John Wesley, with Toplady adamant that sanctified believers could not refrain from sinful acts in the present life, but by contrast, remained desperately corrupted by sin.[12] Toplady drew an analogy between the rising National Debt and the extent of sinfulness among believers (which he calculated as exceeding 315,000,000 sins by the age of ten), yet in the latter case the almost incalculable debt of sin could be written-off by Christ.[13] The article concluded with a prayer addressed to Christ, the «Rock of Ages», to illustrate his argument, headed «A living and dying PRAYER for the HOLIEST BELIEVER in the World.»[14]

Despite the divisive and polemical purpose of Toplady's original verse composition, its ongoing reception-history softened and reframed the

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10   See McDannell 1995, 123 «A popular marker for graves [in] … Victorian cemeteries was a statue of a robed woman draping her arm around a cross or mournfully leaning against it. The image is not biblical. It comes from the hymn ‹Rock of Ages›.»

11   See Brooks 1997, 81–98. Stead 1898, 140: «Toplady was a sad polemist, whose orthodox soul was outraged by the Arminianism of the Wesleys. He and they indulged in much disputation of the brickbat and Billingsgate order, as was the fashion in those days.»

12   See Brown 2004, 213.

13   For the full content of Toplady's original 1776 article see: http://www.toplady.org.uk/toplady%20writings/Gospel%20Magazine.htm (accessed June 28, 2018).

14   Brooks 1997, 91 «‹Rock of Ages› [functions] as a gospel homily of focused meditation. Written to make Christ's crucifixion real in popular worship…[emphasizing how] Christ can offer gospel grace to those who, through faith, can hide in his ‹riven side›.»
     The prayer/hymn focuses upon the pierced side of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel's crucifixion account, from which flows water and blood (see Jn 19:33–34), as well as an allegorical identification of Christ with the Rock in the Israelites' wilderness wanderings (see 1 Cor 10:1–4; Exod 17:1–7; see also Isa 26:4).

piece, and as a consequence opened it up to an ever widening audience, as Candy Gunther Brown insightfully comments:

> Ironically, nineteenth-century evangelicals of every denomination – including Methodists – appropriated Toplady's hymn to promote Christian unity…The publication history of Toplady's «Rock of Ages» illustrates how hymnbook editors, compilers and translators acted as cultural arbiters by framing, selecting, and altering hymns to encourage evangelical unity on denominational terms.[15]

An altered version of Toplady's «Rock of Ages», set to a tune by the American composer Thomas Hastings (1830), was published in the *Methodist Hymnal* (1878), «transforming the hymn's theology from a statement denying the possibility of entire sanctification to a prayer for its attainment.»[16] The revised version toned down the extent of human sin emphasized by Toplady and situated the hymn in the section of the hymnbook dealing with a sinner's need for repentance rather than indicative of the continuing sinfulness of the sanctified believer (fig. 1).

«Rock of Ages», became one of the most popular hymns of the Victorian era, evidenced, for example, by its entry in the published survey of a cross-section of Victorian society by the journalist W. T. Stead in 1896.[17] It was also ranked number one in a poll of 3,500 readers in 1897 (*Sunday at Home Magazine*), indicative of the tastes of «late Victorian middle-class evangelicals».[18]

In the second half of the nineteenth century «Rock of Ages» was published in an extensive range of hymn books of various denominations, whilst the British Prime Minister William Gladstone (1848) translated it into Greek, Latin and Italian, with the Latin version sung at his funeral. [19] The hymn was also reportedly a favourite of Prince Albert, who is described as reverently repeating the opening lines as he lay dying in Windsor Castle in 1861, in an idealized death-bed account.[20]

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15 Brown 2004, 213–214
16 Brown 2004, 214–215.
17 Stead 1898, 141 on «Rock of Ages» – «No other English hymn can be named which has laid so broad and firm a grasp on the English speaking world.»
18 Bradley 2005, 213; Bradley 1997, 193. «Rock of Ages» received 3,215 votes, whilst only three other hymns had more than 3000 votes, they were: «Abide with me», «Jesu, lover of my soul» and «Just as I am».
19 Brooks 1997, 91–92.
20 Bradley 1997, 197.

Toplady's Original Version (1776)	Methodist Hymnal (1878)
A living and dying PRAYER for the HOLIEST BELIEVER in the World	
Rock of ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee! Let the Water and the Blood, From thy riven Side which flow'd, Be of Sin the double Cure, Cleanse me from its Guilt and Pow'r.	Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee; let the water and the blood, from thy wounded side which flowed, be of sin the double cure; save from wrath and make me pure.
Not the Labors of my hands Can fulfill thy Law's demands: Could my zeal no respite know, Could my tears forever flow, All for Sin could not atone: Thou must save, and thou alone!	Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no languor know these for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and thou alone. In my hand no price I bring; Simply to thy Cross I cling.
Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to thy Cross I cling; Naked, come to thee for Dress; Helpless, look to thee for grace; Foul, I to the Fountain fly: Wash me, SAVIOR, or I die!	
Whilst I draw this fleeting breath When my eye-strings break in death When I soar through tracts un-known See thee on thy Judgment-Throne ROCK of ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in THEE!	While I draw this fleeting breath, when my eyes shall close in death, when I rise to worlds unknown, and behold thee on thy throne, Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee.

Fig. 1: *Toplady's original prayer (1776) and the revised lyrics of the hymn «Rock of Ages» (1878).*

Hymns with near universal popularity in the mid-late Victorian era were typically eighteenth-century Evangelical hymns, like «Rock of Ages». These pieces had benefited from a century-long reception-history which saw them picked-up, re-edited, and set to new tunes in the nineteenth century, leading to crossover success by their inclusion in a vast range of hymn-

books of all denominations. Aside from these ubiquitously popular hymns, favourite forms and styles varied from denomination to denomination (and from hymn-book to hymn-book), influenced by social class and aesthetic preference. The range of styles varied dramatically, from the congregational hymns of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley originating from Dissenting and Non-Conformist traditions, to the antiquarian preference for verse translations of pre-Reformation hymns and chants by John M. Neale beloved by the Tractarians. Particularly popular were the catchy, emotional tunes of gospel and sacred songs popularized by American revivalists, notably Dwight Moody and Ira Sankey.[21]

Citations or allusions to all of these hymn-traditions are exemplified in the sepulchral monuments of the Magnificent Seven cemeteries, of which a few select examples will suffice to illustrate the range. Abney Park's nonconformist heritage is exemplified by the monumental sculpture of Isaac Watts (1674–1748), one of the finest and most influential hymn-writers of the eighteenth century. Nunhead cemetery includes graves with citations of hymns by the evangelical theologian Samuel P. Tregelles («Tis sweet to think of those at rest», 1846)[22] as well as the American revivalist hymn «Over the line» by Ellen Knight Bradford (1878), published in Sankey's *Gospel Hymns*,[23] a hymn tradition also evidenced in the chorus of «When the mists have rolled away» (1883) by Annie H. Barker at Abney Park, another Sankey tune.[24] Finally, a Tractarian preference is exemplified in a ci-

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21 See Bradley 1997 and Gant 2015, 285–310, on different styles and genres of hymns and the production of a plethora of hymnbooks, many of which contained an eclectic mix in the later Victorian era; see also Coffey 1996.

22 Grave of Edith Emily Einchcomb (1924); verse 1 «TIS sweet to think of those at rest, Who sleep in Christ the Lord, Whose spirits now with Him are blest, According to His word.» https://hymnary.org/text/tis_sweet_to_think_of_those_at_rest (accessed June 3, 2018).

23 Grave of Elizabeth Hughes (1907); part of the chorus «‹Over the line!›—Why should I remain, With a step between me and Jesus?» https://hymnary.org/text/o_tender_and_sweet_was_the_fathers_voice (accessed June 3, 2018).

24 Grave of Philip Edward Griggs (1895); final verse «We shall come with joy and gladness, We shall gather round the throne; Face to face with those that love us, We shall know as we are known: And the song of our redemption, Shall resound thro' endless day, When the shadows have departed, And the mists have rolled away.» https://hymnary.org/text/when_the_mists_have_rolled_in_splendor (accessed June 3, 2018).

tation of the closing lines of John Henry Newman's, «Lead Kindly Light» (1833) in Highgate East Cemetery.[25]

3. Grave Monument: Ottilie and Frances Reissmann (Highgate East Cemetery)

The final section of this paper focuses upon the grave of two young sisters Ottilie and Frances Reissmann, in Highgate East cemetery, attentive to the role that the choice of gravestone plays in the memorialized performance of their respectable Victorian lives and deaths. The gravestone is of monumental height, comprised of three interconnected levels (figs. 2 and 3).

Fig. 2: Grave Monument of Ottilie and Frances Reisssmann (Image: Sean Ryan 2018).

Fig 3: Detail of the epitaphs to the deceased sisters (Image: Sean Ryan 2018).

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25 Grave of Maria Morton (1926); final two lines «And with the morn those angel faces smile, Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.» https://hymnary.org/text/lead_kindly_light_amid_the_encircling_gl (accessed June 3, 2018).

Methodologically, this section of the paper draws upon ‹performance theory› in which artefacts such as sepulchral monuments are interpreted «as focal points of past and future performance».[26] In a performance there are three interrelated aspects: actors, audience and script.[27] In the context of Victorian Highgate, the ‹actors› are comprised of the Reissmann family who commissioned or selected the monument type plus the stone-mason(s) who designed the grave,[28] as well the grave itself, which communicates a performance to an audience. The ‹audience› are those who view the performance within the stage-setting of Highgate cemetery, and as such may potentially refer to a multiplicity of audiences over time, from the original funerary mourners of the deceased girls in the 1880s-1890s, to contemporary paying-visitors to the cemetery in the twenty-first century. The ‹script› is the performance's guiding text, which here denotes «the design of the memorial, which includes features such as its size, material type, decoration, location, and inscription content.»[29]

In the analysis that follows, the focus will principally limit itself to a study of the ‹script› of the Reissmann grave monument as performed in its original ‹staging› in Victorian Highgate of the 1890s, sensitive to the *affective* power of its performance, scripted by the Reissmann family striving to come to terms with the tragic early death of their beloved daughters, staged for a Victorian ‹audience› familiar with the evangelical ideals of a ‹good death›. Each of the three-levels of this grave monument's ‹script› will be interpreted in turn, from ground-level up, paying particular attention to the allusive echoes of Toplady's hymn at its summit.

The ‹script› of the ground-level grave-stone identifies the sisters as the ‹much beloved› daughters of their parents, the German immigrants, Henry and Frances Reissmann. The tragically early deaths of both sisters are precisely documented, with Frances' death poignantly occurring the day after her fourteenth birthday. Yet, amidst this tragedy, there rings out an emphatic declaration of Christian faith – the two sisters are «dead yet alive.»[30]

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26 Jasinski 2013, 60–67(63). See Laneri 2007, 5 on the importance of studying the materiality of (ancient) burial practice and ritual performance, attentive to the extant archaeological, textual and artistic elements which form the «tesserae of a larger mosaic of knowledge».

27 See Alexander 2004, 530–532.

28 For Victorian books detailing grave-type designs for stone-mason see Maliphant 1820 and Clarkson 1852–1865.

29 Jasinski 2013, 67.

30 See Rom 6:11; Gal 2:20.

Ottilie Laura was the eldest and Eugenie Frances the seventh of ten children born to Henry G. Reissmann (Gottlieb Heinrich Reissmann) and Marie Doris Louise Franziska (or ‹Frances›) Reissmann (née Boerngen). Originally from Saxony, Henry was an East India Merchant in lace goods who emigrated to London in the 1860s where he eventually ran his own export company («Henry Reissmann & Co.»), whilst his wife originated from Hanover.[31] Although five of their six sons grew into adulthood,[32] all four of their daughters died tragically young, including the death in their teens of Ottilie and Frances, memorialised on this monumental gravestone. Ottilie died at home, at ‹Saxony Villa› in Primrose Hill, in 1885, following months of heart-disease.[33] Her younger sister, (Eugenie) Frances, died in a hospital on the Isle of Wight, from meningitis in 1892.[34]

Sadly, the premature deaths of these two young girls was all too common in Victorian Britain. Harrowingly high infant mortality rates[35] raised the omnipresent spectre of a ‹bad death› from a rapid demise from fever or typhoid, which may prevent any meaningful farewell with the sufferer's family and prove an obstacle to conscious prayer, confession of sins and repentance. Yet, childhood death, for example by tuberculosis (more commonly referred to as ‹consumption› by the Victorians), was partially coped with by focusing on the time and occasion it allowed for a ‹good death›, such that this illness became romanticised in art and literature of the period.[36]

Victorian children's hymns commonly addressed the topic of death, recognised as an ever-present reality among its young audience. [37] Children's hymns had a clear didactic function, seeking to teach children to face the death of their siblings, their school-friends, and even their own untimely death, with faith and courage, grounded in the hope of blessed reward in heaven. In line with the theological reasoning of consolation literature of the period aimed at their parents, Victorian children's hymns also

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31 Source: Census data 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, plus Grant of Probate and Will of Henry Reissmann.

32 Charles, Richard, Alfred, Edwin and Felix.

33 Source: Death certificate. Ottilie was baptised in the church of St John the Baptist, Savoy Strand, the German Church, by Rev. Dr Scholl on 29 August 1869.

34 Source: Death certificate.

35 Jalland 1999, 237. One quarter of all nineteenth century deaths were babies dying during their first year, whilst the overall death rate among children remained fairly constant from 1840–1900 at circa 150 deaths per 1,000 live births.

36 See Jalland 1999, 234.

37 See Tamke 1978, 75–90; Wheeler 1990, 48–50; Jalland 1996, 119–142; Bradley 1997, 112–120.

strove to present a theological rationale for the untimely death of children to their young audience. An early death was a benevolent act of God, sparing a child from growing-up in this world of pain and sin, this ‹vale of tears›, removing them to the blessedness of heaven, where they await the future reunion of the whole family.[38]

Children, and their families, drawing near to death might draw strength and comfort from children's hymns on the topics of death and heavenly reward. This is strikingly exemplified in the actions of Cattie (aged 10) and Chattie (aged 5 ½), two of the five children of the future Archbishop of Canterbury Archibald Tait and his wife Catherine (née Spooner) who all tragically died of scarlet fever in 1856 in Carlisle.[39] The two sisters, when approaching death, encouraged the whole family to sing a favourite hymn together with the chorus «Oh! That will be joyful, when we meet to part no more!»[40] Victorian children's hymns could provide constructive resources for the ‹art of dying well›, reducing children's fears of the omnipresence of death by continually preparing them throughout their young lives to cope with the loss of loved ones, or even their own untimely death.

The central level of the Reissmann monument's ‹script› cites a portion of the *Nunc Dimittis* (Luke 2:29–32) according to the translation of the King James Version, a New Testament Gospel canticle which has been prayed and sung in the daily liturgies of the church since at least the fourth century AD.[41] In its original context the canticle is a blessing addressed to God by an aged prophet, Simeon, on greeting the infant Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple, that he can now be discharged from his service to the Lord, departing this life in peace, having seen the future salvation of all people, Israel and Gentiles. In Victorian Britain the *Nunc Dimittis* was included as an Evening Prayer in the *Book of Common Prayer* and often

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38 Jalland 1996, 122–123, who also refers to consolation literature aimed at parents, eg. *Our Children's Rest; or Comfort for Bereaved Mothers* (1863); *To a Christian Parent on the Death of an Infant*, Religious Tract Society, no. 351 (1852); *Early Death: Thoughts for a Week of Mourning*, London, SPCK, 1861.

39 See Jalland 1996, 127–139 drawing on the journal and memoir accounts of both parents: Archibald Tait: Tait papers vol. 39 fols. 1–128; *Catherine and Crauford Tait, Wife and Son of Archbishop A.C. Tait: A Memoir*, ed. Revd. William Benham (1879), 251–253, 403, 408–409. Only two of their seven children will survive this outbreak of scarlet fever.

40 Jalland 1996, 133–134. Both sisters request to sing the hymn «Here we suffer grief and pain» by Thomas Bilby (1831–1832). https://hymnary.org/text/here_we_suffer_grief_and_pain (accessed June 23, 2018).

41 Westermeyer 1998, 48.

prayed or sung as part of a funeral service. The central level of the Reissmann monument is consistent with the tenor of Victorian consolation literature, which sought to comfort bereaved parents that their children had ‹departed› to the Lord, removed from an unhappy world of illness and pain. Consolation literature also commonly included images such as an angel carrying-off a sleeping child to a happier existence in heaven, which are replicated in popular grave-monuments in Highgate and other Victorian cemeteries.[42]
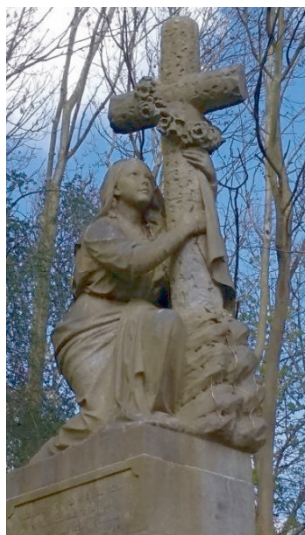

Fig. 4: *Ottilie and Frances Reissmann Grave Monument, detail (Image: Sean Ryan 2018).*

Fig. 5: *First Communion Photograph (1911), (Hobbs 2006, 55).*

The upper level of the Reissmann monument's ‹script› offers a visual exegesis of Toplady's hymn, «Rock of Ages». A veiled, female figure, embraces a stylized wooden cross, founded on rock (fig. 4), encapsulating a line from verse 3, «Simply to thy Cross I cling». The figure gazes upwards at the cross, garlanded with roses.[43] Strikingly, such a posture, of a woman ten-

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42 Jalland 1999, 238. See the contribution by Natalie Fritz in this volume.
43 On the range of meaning of ‹roses› in Victorian floral emblems, including ephemeral beauty, love and virtue, see Ann Jeffer's contribution «Animal, Vegetable or Mineral?» in this volume.

derly embracing a Cross, representing Christ, was repeated not simply in monumental art but also in photographic portraits of the period. June Hadden Hobbs has identified a number of late Victorian and Edwardian photographs of young girls, often taken when they were making their first communion, imitating this pose (fig. 5).

A female figure embodying unswerving fidelity to Christ, and especially his atoning death on the cross, could be transposed from allegorical depictions of an Evangelical virtue, to a role for believers to imitate in performing a good life and death. As Hobbs perceptively notes, the ideals valorized in the hymn «Rock of Ages» and reproduced in Victorian grave-monuments that illustrated it could also be used to create or even encourage ideals as to how the faithful should perform a good life and a good death: «Ideal faith is like a pious woman clinging to a cross that is her only support in the storms of life.»[44]

The upper level of the Reissmann monument has a performative function in exhibiting the good lives and good deaths of the two young girls, memorializing their Christian virtue of ‹faith›. The sculpture of the veiled young woman at the summit of the Reissmann monument personifies Christian faith. The image is a Victorian re-imagining of Faith ‹*Fides*›, one of the three theological virtues (faith, hope and charity), which was represented in medieval and renaissance art as a young woman holding a cross and a chalice.[45] As a result the upper layer of the Reissmann monument embodies the affective ideals of Toplady's hymn, of remaining lovingly faithful to Christ alone, the «Rock of Ages», who alone can save. Ottilie and Frances, who are buried here, are perpetually identified with this personified theological virtue through the monumental art of their gravestone.

The Victorian ‹audience› of this monument may have been moved by the *affective* sentiment of this most popular hymn, «Rock of Ages», vividly recalled in sculptured personification (upper level), to retain in their memory the good lives and faithful deaths of these two young Christian daughters (ground level), who have departed, as faithful servants like Simeon in the Gospel, to be with the Lord (central level). The visual evocation of the hymn aims to stir its original Victorian viewers to recall the unstated lines of this most popular of all 19th century hymns, to remember and silently

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44 Hobbs 2006, 64.

45 Mâle 2000, 113: «The Faith of the Middle Ages is the belief in the virtue of the sacrifice of the Cross, but it is also (as the chalice proves) faith in the perpetuity of that sacrifice day by day miraculously renewed on the altar.»

re-vocalise the familiar lyrics for themselves, particularly the resounding declaration of faith in divine grace at its heart: «Simply to thy Cross I cling». In this way the ‹script› of this sepulchral monument functions as a hymn-script for its 19th century audience, encouraging them to join in this chorus of praise, and even more to perform and imitate the virtue of ‹faith› that the young sisters who this monument celebrates, embodied in their young lives. Additionally, the *affective* force of this hymn would encourage its Victorian viewers to re-live and recall instances in their own lives, striking moments from their own episodic memory, perhaps at an earlier funeral of one of their own loved ones, in which they heard and sang these same lyrics before. As Patrik Juslin stresses, songs (not least hymns) can function as powerful memory-cues: «Emotion serves as a marker for episodic memory […] Listeners are more likely to retrieve a spontaneous memory when they are cued by a song that moves them emotionally.»[46] Finally, this sepulchral monument also carries with it another ‹anagogical› layer of meaning. This resting-place reunites the mortal remains of these two deeply mourned daughters, Ottilie and Frances, with their mother and father, buried together in this Reissmann family grave in Highgate (1880s-1910s), indicative of the hope of *eternal* family reunion in the heavenly homeland, the predominant hope of Victorian consolation literature in response to the tragic death of a child.[47]

4. Concluding Chorus

The choice of gravestone monument played a significant role in the *perpetual* performance of a good death in Victorian memory, as an integral component of «recounting a faithful life».[48] The piety, fidelity, and trust in the atoning death of Christ that a Victorian Christian typically strove to adhere to in life – as a continual preparedness for death (*ars moriendi*) – could be honoured in the choice of grave-stone monument. In this way a family's memorialization of a deceased love one in the ‹script› of a chosen grave monument – all too commonly the grave of a deceased child – could continue to present their loved-one's virtues as a model for the ‹audience› to the stage-set of Victorian Highgate Cemetery to imitate, in perpetuity, as a

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46 Juslin 2019, 317–318. ‹Episodic memory› refers to memory of personally experienced events.
47 Henry Reissmann chose to be buried in the Reissmann family grave in 1918 with his first wife and two daughters, although he had remarried (Eleanor) in 1908.
48 Riso 2015, 209.

form of evangelization. The affective power of this message could be further heightened by explicitly citing lines from popular hymns or more allusively sculpting their sentiment in stone, to multiply the senses of a graveyard's ‹audience› that may, potentially, be moved as their eyes, ears and heart recall a sacred song.

What of contemporary visitors to Highgate, the present-day ‹audience› of this extensive back-catalogue of sepulchral hymn-scripts, inscribed on so many of these Victorian grave-stones, either lyrically or visually? Has the ‹performance› of these sculpted sacred songs fallen-silent, rendered mute by a religiously and secularly diverse ‹audience› largely incapable of recognizing these verbal cues to memories their minds do not contain? Are contemporary visitors essentially excluded from the Victorian chorus schooled in the lyrics of Isaac Watts, Moody and Sankey and Toplady? Perhaps, for many, that is indeed the case. Yet, the latent power of these Victorian hymns remain, peeping-out from under the ivy of a half-covered grave-stone, to beguile its innocent audience of 21st century Highgate visitors to search the web for the fragments of that unfamiliar poetic line just uncovered. The intrigued explorer, the would-be ‹ethnomusicologist›, is encouraged to search more deeply online for web-links of organ recitals or choral performances of these almost forgotten 19th century lyrics, beguiled like a modern-day Lomax, by the stone (rather than wax) cylinders, strewn across the burial-fields of Highgate, awaiting resurrection in performance.[49]

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49 Alan Lomax (1915–2002), a folklorist and ethnographer who collected, recorded and archived folksongs and music in the USA from the 1930s onwards.

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