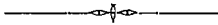


“Midrash Tehillim” is probably scientifically correct when it comments on the verse in these terms :

“In God will I praise a word ; in the LORD I will praise a word.” What is the meaning of “In God” and what the meaning of “in the Lord” ? Where it is written “God” it (refers to) the attribute of justice, and where it is written “Lord” (*i.e.*, Jehovah) it (refers to) the attribute of mercy ; as it is said (Exod. xxxiv. 6), “The Lord, the Lord, an El merciful and gracious.” David said before the Almighty, “If Thou comest upon me with the attribute of justice I will praise Thee” : (that is the meaning of) “In Elohim I will praise a word.” “And if Thou comest upon me with the attribute of mercy I will praise Thee” : (that is the meaning of) “In Jehovah I will praise a word.”

H. T. ARMPFIELD.



ART. VI.—THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL CHURCHES.

IN the anxiety of many excellent persons that there should be as little difference as possible between the chief branches of the Christian Church, they are in danger of forgetting to some extent the independence of different Churches one of the other, and the unimportance of uniformity, or even similarity, so long as they hold the main essentials of the Christian faith.

The origin of National Churches was even to be distinguished in the time of the Apostles, when St. Paul grouped together “the Churches of Judæa,” “the Churches of Galatia,” “the Churches of Macedonia.” Another instance of nationality is seen in the fact that the converts from Judaism were always allowed to continue the Mosaic worship, while the Gentiles were free from its regulations. It was not till the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, about 135 A.D., that the main body of Jewish Christians finally separated from the Law.

Dean Jackson points out that the Churches planted by St. Paul could not appeal to St. Peter, nor those planted by St. Peter to any other Apostle. “Admitting,” he goes on, “the laws and discipline of all the Churches planted by St. Peter, by St. Paul, and other Apostles had been the self same, yet could they not in this respect be so truly and properly said one visible Church, as the particular Churches planted by St. Paul, especially in one and the same province, were one Church, albeit their laws or ordinances had been more different. It is probable, then, that there were as many several distinct visible Churches as there were Apostles, or other ambassadors of Christ. . . . It is, then, profession of the same faith, participation of the sacrament, and subjection to the same laws and ordinances ecclesiastic which makes the visible Church to be

one. It is the diversity of independent judicature, or supreme tribunals ecclesiastic, which makes plurality of visible Churches, or distinguisheth one from the other. That which makes every visible Church to be more or less the true Church of God, is the greater or less efficacy or conformity of its public doctrine and discipline for enacting or fashioning the visible members of it that they may become live members of the holy Catholic Church (the true invisible body of Christ) or living stones of the new Jerusalem. Every true visible Church is an inferior freehold or nursery for training up scholars that they may be fit to be admitted into the celestial academy. . . . There have been as many visible Churches independent each on other, for matter of jurisdiction or subjection to one visible head, as there be several free states or Christian kingdoms independent one of another. The subordination of Church to Church is in proportion the same with the subordination of the several states wherein the Churches are planted. The best union that can be expected between visible Churches seated in kingdoms or commonweals independent one of another, is the unity of league or friendship. And this may be as strict as it shall please such commonweals or Churches to make it. To make the Church seated in one absolute state or kingdom live in subjection to another Church seated in another kingdom, or to any member of another Church or kingdom (head or branch), is to erect a Babel, or seat of Antichrist, not to build up one holy Church to Christ. This practice of usurpation of the Romish Church hath been the reason why the Christian world for these many years hath been more confused and disordered than the synagogue of Mahomet."

When Christianity first began its systematic organization it was all within the limits of one great empire. The Apostles had followed the civil divisions in the founding and extent of their Churches, and their followers carried out the system on the same lines. The Roman Empire was itself divided into dioceses with subordinate provinces. And the Churches obviously took their model in setting up metropolitical and patriarchal power and the union of dioceses from this plan of the State. As in every metropolis, or chief city of each province, there was a superior magistrate above the magistrates of every single city, so likewise in the same metropolis there was a bishop whose power extended over the whole province, whence he was called the Metropolitan or Primate, as being the principal bishop of the province; and in all places the see of this bishop was fixed to the civil metropolis, except in Africa, where the primatery passed from bishop to bishop, according to seniority. In the same way as the State had a Vicarius in every capital city of each civil diocese, so the Churches in

process of time came to have their exarchs, or patriarchs, in many, if not in all, the capital cities of the empire.

It was in consequence of the breaking up of the Roman Empire that Provincial Churches have been succeeded by National Churches.

“The external causes of the change are to be found in the history of the Teutonic kingdoms which rose upon the ruins of the Roman Empire. The limits of those kingdoms were constantly shifting, and were determined without regard to the limits of existing dioceses or provinces. For, whereas the latter had been determined, in Roman times, chiefly by the areas of settlement of the original tribes of the Celts, the latter were determined by the areas of settlement or conquest of the intrusive tribes of the Teutons. Each kingdom found an ecclesiastical organization existing, and endeavoured to incorporate it. The earlier bonds began to give way under the pressure of the new need of keeping the kingdom together. The king gathered together the bishops and clergy within their domain, irrespective of the earlier arrangements. The bishops and clergy obeyed the king’s summons without regard to the questions which have been raised in later times as to the precise nature of his authority. . . .

“It was in this way, by the holding of meetings at which both the ecclesiastical and civil elements were represented, and which dealt with ecclesiastical no less than with civil questions, that there grew up the conceptions of both ecclesiastical and political unity, which, more than physical force, welded together the divers populations of what are now Spain, France, and England, each into a single whole. The older Roman imperial arrangements lasted on, but only for limited purposes. The province was superseded by the nation in almost all respects, except that of internal discipline.”¹ It is interesting to observe that the first consolidation of the English dioceses into a National Church was a purely ecclesiastical act, without any royal assistance; the summoning of the Council of Hertford by the great Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus, which took place on September 24, 673.

The unity of primitive times was a unity of the main points of doctrine, not of uniformity of practice. Every Church was at liberty to make choice for herself in what method and form of words she would perform her services. It was no breach of unity for different Churches to have different modes and circumstances and ceremonies in performing the same holy offices so long as they kept to the substance of the institution. What was required to keep the unity of the Church in these matters

¹ Hatch.

was that any particular member of any Church should comply with the particular customs and usages of his own Church.

The independence of National Churches is illustrated by a primitive rule that every Christian, when he came to a foreign Church, should readily comply with the innocent usages and customs of that Church where he happened to be, though they might chance, in some circumstances, to differ from his own. "This was a necessary rule of peace, to preserve the unity of communion and worship throughout the whole Catholic Church; for it was impossible that every Church should have the same rites and ceremonies, the same customs and usages in all respects, or even the same method and manner of worship, exactly agreeing in all punctilios with one another, unless there had been a general liturgy for the whole Church expressly enjoined by Divine appointment. The unity of the Catholic Church did not require this . . . and, therefore, no one ever insisted on this as any necessary part of its unity. It was enough that all Churches agreed in the substance of Divine worship; and for circumstantialia, such as rites and ceremonies, method and order, and the like, every Church had liberty to judge and choose for herself by the rules of expediency and convenience." The idea of one uniform Church throughout the world is merely an unconscious recollection of the long feverish dream of papal supremacy. "This rule is often inculcated by St. Austin as the great rule of peace and unity with regard to all Churches; and, he tells us, he received it as an oracle from the wise and moderate discourses of St. Ambrose, whom he consulted upon the occasion of a scruple which had possessed the heart of his mother, Monica, and for some time greatly perplexed her. She, having lived a long time at Rome, was used to fast on Saturday or the Sabbath, according to the custom of the Church of Rome; but, when she came to Milan, she found the contrary custom prevailing, which was to keep Saturday a festival; and, being much disturbed about this, her son, though he had not much concern about such matters at that time, for her ease and satisfaction consulted St. Ambrose upon the point, to take his advice and direction how to govern herself in this case, so as to be inoffensive in her practice. To whom St. Ambrose answered, 'That he could give no better advice in the case than to do as he himself was wont to do; for,' said he, 'when I am here I do not fast on the Sabbath; when I am at Rome I fast on the Sabbath; and so you, whatever Church you come to, observe the custom of that Church, if you neither take offence at them nor give offence to them.' St. Austin says, 'This answer satisfied his mother, and he always looked upon it as an oracle sent from heaven.' He adds, moreover, 'That

he had often experienced with grief and sorrow the disturbance of weak minds, occasioned either by the contentious obstinacy of certain brethren, or by their own superstitious fears, who, in matters of this nature, which can neither be certainly determined by the authority of Holy Scripture, nor by the tradition of the Universal Church, nor by any advantage in the correction of life, raise such litigious questions, as to think nothing right but what themselves do; only because they were used to do so in their own country; or because a little shallow reason tells them it ought to be so; or because they have, perhaps, seen some such thing in their travels, which they reckon the more learned the more remote it is from their own country.' Thus he wisely reflects upon the superstitious folly and contentious obstinacy of such as disturbed the Church's peace for such things as every Church had liberty to use, and every good Christian was obliged to comply with. 'For,' as he says in the same place, 'all such customs as varied in the practice of different Churches, as that some fasted on the Saturday, and others did not; some received the Eucharist every day, others on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, and others on the Lord's Day only; and whatever else there was of this kind, they were all things of free observation; and in such things there could be no better rule for a grave and prudent Christian to walk by than to do as the Church did wherever he happened to come. For whatever was enjoined that was neither against faith nor good manners was to be held indifferent, and to be observed according to the custom and for the convenience of the society among whom we live.' This he repeats over and over again as the most safe rule of practice in all such things, wherein the customs of the Churches varied, that wherever we see any things appointed, or know them to be appointed, that are neither against faith nor good manners, and have any tendency to edification, and to stir men up to a good life, we should not only abstain from finding fault with them, but follow them both by our commendation and imitation. By this rule all wise and peaceable men always governed their practice in holding communion with other Churches; though they did not altogether like their customs, they did not break communion with them upon that account."¹

In the same way, "A great many things were at first allowed to every bishop in the management of his own diocese, which were afterwards restrained by the decrees of national councils. As to instance only one in particular: every bishop anciently had liberty to frame his own liturgy for the use of his own Church.

¹ Bingham.

“It is clear that there was no necessity, in order to maintain the unity of the Catholic Church, that all Churches should agree in all the same rites and ceremonies; but every Church might enjoy her own usages and customs, having liberty to prescribe for herself in all things of an indifferent nature, except where either a universal tradition or the decree of some general or national council intervened to make it otherwise. To this purpose is that famous saying of Irenæus, upon occasion of the different customs of several Churches in observing the Lent fast: ‘We still retain peace one with another: and the different ways of keeping the fast only the more commends our agreement in the faith.’ St. Jerome, likewise, speaking of the different customs of Churches in relation to the Saturday fast, and the reception of the Eucharist every day, lays down the general rule, ‘That all ecclesiastical traditions, which did noways prejudice the faith, were to be observed in such manner as we had received them from our forefathers, and the custom of one Church was not to be subverted by the contrary custom of another; but every province might abound in their own sense, and esteem the rules of their ancestors as laws of the apostles.’ After the same manner, St. Austin says, ‘That in all such things, whereabout the Holy Scripture has given no positive determination, the custom of the people of God, or the rules of our forefathers, are to be taken for laws. For, if we dispute about such matters, and condemn the custom of one Church by the custom of another, that will be an eternal occasion of strife and contention; which will always be diligent enough to find out plausible reasonings, when there are no certain arguments to show the truth. Therefore great caution ought to be used, that we draw not a cloud over charity, and eclipse its brightness in the tempest of contention.’ He adds a little after, ‘Such contention is, commonly, endless, engendering strifes, and terminating in disputes. Let us therefore maintain one faith throughout the whole Church, wherever it is spread, as intrinsical to the members of the body, although the unity of the faith be kept with some different observations, which in noways hinder or impair the truth of it. For all the beauty of the King’s daughter is within, and those observations which are differently celebrated are understood only to be in her outward clothing: whence she is said to be clothed in golden fringes, wrought about with divers colours. But let that clothing be so distinguished by different observations as that she herself may not be destroyed by oppositions and contentions about them.’ *This was the ancient way of preserving peace in the Catholic Church, to let different Churches, which had no dependence in externals upon one another, enjoy their own liberty to follow their own customs*

without contradiction. As Gregory the Great said to Leander, a Spanish bishop, 'There is no harm done to the Catholic Church by different customs, so long as the unity of the faith is preserved;' and, therefore, though the Spanish Churches differed in some customs from the Roman Church, yet he did not pretend to oblige them to leave their own customs and usages, to follow the Roman. He gave a like answer to Austin, the monk, Archbishop of Canterbury, when he asked him, 'What form of Divine service he should settle in Britain, the old Gallican, or the Roman? And how it came to pass, that when there was but one faith, there were different customs in different Churches; the Roman Church having one form of service, and the Gallican Churches another?' To this he replied, 'Whatever you find either in the Roman or Gallican, or any other Church, which may be more pleasing to Almighty God, I think it best that you should carefully select it, and settle it in the use of the English Church, newly converted to the faith. For we are not to love things for the sake of the place, but places for the sake of the good things we find in them; therefore you may collect out of every Church whatever things are pious, religious, and right; and, putting them together, instil them into the minds of the English, and accustom them to the observation of them.' And there is no question but that Austin followed this direction in his new plantation of the English Church."¹

"Neither was this liberty granted to different Churches in bare rituals, and things of an indifferent nature, but something in more weighty points, such as the receiving, or not receiving, those that were baptized by heretics and schismatics, without another baptism. This was a question long debated between the African, and Roman, and other Churches; yet without breach of communion, especially on their part who followed the moderate counsels of Cyprian, who still pleaded for the liberty and independency of different Churches in this matter, leaving all Churches to act according to their own judgment, and keeping peace and unity with those that differed from him.' This is further illustrated by the independency of bishops, especially in the African Churches."²

Another instance of divergence and independence was the mode in which the Jewish Sabbath was treated. Some Churches, those of the Patriarchate of Antioch especially, not only observed the Christian Lord's Day, but also the Jewish Sabbath. On the other hand, some Churches used to fast on the Saturday, or Sabbath, as well as on the Friday, because on the former our Lord lay in the grave, as on the latter He was crucified.

¹ Bingham.

² *Ibid.*

Some well-known points of divergence in the first three centuries were these :

1. The time of keeping Easter.
2. Was Saturday a fast or a feast ?
3. Was Lent a period of forty hours, or forty days, or other different periods ?
4. The variety of creeds.
5. The differences in the rules of provincial councils; *e.g.*, Elvira, Arles, and Ancyra.
6. Differences between East and West as to the canonicity of certain books of the New Testament.
7. The gradual adoption of the decrees of the general councils. They won their way progressively, by their intrinsic importance.
8. The number of ancient liturgies. Of these there are said to be no less than one hundred. Every bishop had at first power to draw up his own liturgy. They may be classified under five or six families, according to the Churches in which they were originally used; namely, those of Jerusalem (or Antioch), Alexandria, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Rome. They are also to be distinguished as those of the Oriental and the Occidental Churches.

It is, in fact, altogether impossible to use the word "Catholic" of any ecclesiastical custom. Catholic applies to truths and to institutions, but not to ceremonies. The definition of St. Vincent of Lérins, a well-known presbyter of Gaul, who died about 450 A.D., "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus," will hold good of truths and institutions, but not of ceremonies. No ceremony can be proved to have so august a usage. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are institutions attended by ceremonies—not ceremonies themselves. They are themselves Catholic, but the way of celebrating them has greatly varied. The descriptions of Pliny, of Justin, of the teaching of the twelve Apostles, and even of Cyril of Jerusalem, contain the germs of what has been elsewhere developed, but they are not identical with subsequent rites.

It is in accordance with these principles that the preface to our Book of Common Prayer lays it down "that the particular forms of Divine worship, and the rites and ceremonies appointed to be used therein, being things in their own nature indifferent, and alterable, and so acknowledged, it is but reasonable that, upon weighty and important considerations, according to the various exigency of times and occasions, such changes and alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in place of authority from time to time seem either necessary or expedient."

To the same effect is the Thirty-fourth Article on the tradi-

tions of the Church: "It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one, or utterly like; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries; times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.

"Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."

In the same way our Book of Common Prayer, in the Introduction on Ceremonies, declares that: "Although the keeping or omitting of a ceremony, in itself considered, is but a small thing; yet the wilful and contemptuous transgression and breaking of a common order and discipline is no small offence before God, 'Let all things be done among you,' saith St. Paul, 'in a seemly and due order.' The appointment of the which order pertaineth not to private men. Therefore no man ought to take in hand, nor presume to appoint or alter any public or common order in Christ's Church, except he be lawfully called and authorized thereto."

And again in the same introduction: "Christ's Gospel is not a Ceremonial Law (as much of *Moses' Law* was), but it is a religion to serve God, not in bondage of the figure or shadow, but in the freedom of the Spirit: being content only with those ceremonies which do serve to a decent order and godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified."

And at the close of it: "And in these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe anything but to our own people only: For we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition; and that they should put away other things, which from time to time they perceive to be much abused, as in men's ordinances it often chanceth diversely in divers countries."

When, therefore, men go behind the "Book of Common

Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church according to the Use of the Church of England," and speak of the customs or practices of a Catholic Church to which they owe allegiance, they are not only transgressing a principle of Catholic order, but they are talking of what absolutely does not exist, and is impossible. They mean only that there are certain rites and ceremonies which they admire long in vogue in the Roman Communion, or even going back to the time before the division between East and West, and now laid aside by the Church of England, which was forced, in the course of time, to declare its independence and autonomy.

Such, then, are the rights of National Churches: independence of jurisdiction, independence of custom, independence of ritual, independence of definition, so long as there is unity with the principles of the greatest and most important assemblies of the whole of the united Churches, such as the First Four General Councils, in subordination to the supreme authority of the word of God contained in Scripture. And as we are anxious that all Christians living in one nation should belong to the same pure and Apostolical Church, we should take good care, by only insisting strongly on things of primary importance, to make easy to them the way of return.

Short Notices.

A Key to the Epistles of St. Paul. By the Ven.^s J. P. NORRIS, D.D.
London: S.P.C.K.

THIS is a course of addresses delivered in Bristol Cathedral, which are marked by the author's well-known carefulness and lucidity. He had a great gift of expressing theological truth in clear and persuasive language; it is eminently exemplified in these addresses.

The King of Sorrow. By the Rev. W. S. BOURNE. London: S.P.C.K.

A series of Lenten addresses on the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; clear and perspicuous, if not containing much that is original.

Northern Lights on the Bible. By the BISHOP OF SELKIRK, Canada.
London: J. F. Nisbet and Co.

Dr. Bompas has pressed into the service of this pleasing little book any experience during his twenty-five years' work in Canada which seemed to throw light on the Bible. Such a treatment is decidedly novel, and not without much charm. Many valuable illustrations are to be found. The jaded preacher or teacher will meet with much to refresh and stimulate his mind. An admirable index of texts quoted adds greatly to the value of the book.