

to re-establish the custom of restricting the services in a parish to one on a Sunday, unless in the case of a very small parish, or where the neighbouring parish church is within easy walking distance. It strikes us, indeed, that any such proposal as that hinted at by the Bishop of Norwich, even if desirable on the grounds indicated by his lordship, would be of small practical use for setting the clergy free for town curacies, unless steps were taken for the establishment of a permanent diaconate. This element of the question is, however, too large an one to be fairly considered at the close of our Article.



ART. VI.—THE MAGNIFICAT.

ITS LITURGICAL USE.

THE Song of the Virgin Mary has become a Song of the Church. Therefore the reflections (presented in a former Paper¹) on its first intention and personal bearing may properly be followed by a few words on its liturgical use.

The Christian instinct has rightly felt that the first utterances of faith and joy at the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ should not be left as silent records in a book, but should sound as living voices for ever, and that the breath of the Holy Ghost, which is in them, should be felt in the congregation to the end of time. These Songs thus become both a means of unity and a refreshment of faith: for thus the devotions of the ages become one with each other, through the element which they all successively inherit from their common source; and, in using the words, every generation feels closer to the time when they were spoken first, and renews its sense of the historic truth of the events which attended the incarnation of the Son of God.

But, besides these benefits from the liturgical use of the Canticles, there is a fitness in the words themselves to become the perpetual voice of the Church. Has not this been always felt? Is it not felt now? How many worshippers still breathe out their own emotions in "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour!" knowing now the full meaning of that word, as she who first uttered it could not at the time have known it. How many, with a larger intelligence than was then possible for her, marvel and rejoice at the "great things," which "He that is mighty has done" for servants in such "low estate!" How many repeat the assurance that

¹ THE CHURCHMAN, p. 301.

"His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation," with a thankful consciousness that this mercy has now descended to their own generation, and lightened on their own souls!

Indeed, this first strophe may be said to be our best instruction in the true principles of praise. It shows us that "if praise express itself in words, it is yet in its essence an internal act," an act in "my soul," and (going yet deeper into my nature) an act in "my spirit," as also appears in the great Psalm of Thanksgiving, "Praise the Lord, O my *soul*, and *all that is within me* bless His holy name." So also when "magnifying" deepens into "rejoicing," we learn that true praise is not only duteous homage, but also spontaneous joy; and when the great name, "the Lord," is followed by the sweeter title of "God my Saviour," we are taught in what kind of faith and experience the reasons for that joy will be found. Again, in the following verses we see how naturally the highest apprehension of blessedness will ally itself with the deepest sense of holiness, and how the view of "great things done to" us will solemnise as well as elevate the mind, disposing to such reverent adoration as is condensed in the ascription, "and holy is His name."

In the second division of the Song the truths proclaimed are also proper to be recorded through the whole course of human history. So long as there is vanity in the imaginations of men's hearts, and arrogancy comes out of their mouths; so long as there is unbelief in the seats of teaching and oppression on the thrones of government; so long as there is in the common mind a worship of wealth and confidence in the arm of flesh; so long, in short, as the world continues what it always has been and still is, so long should the prophetic strain be heard in the houses of God:

He hath shewed strength with His arm.

He hath scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seats: and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich He hath sent empty away.

It is fit that, like the Psalmist,¹ we should feel how great a change passes on the outward scene when we "go into the sanctuary of God;" and how the high things of this world shrink and wither under the breath of the world to come. They pass before us here in their chief forms: the pride of intellect and of the imaginations of the heart; the pride of rank and power and sway over others; the pride of possession and self-sufficiency,

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 17.

which says, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." The Song presents these forms of pride as scattered, cast down, or sent empty away, because at last the truth of things is come. In so doing it celebrates no secondary accident of the Kingdom of Heaven, but its essential principle, that "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the lowly."¹ The same strain is heard from all the voices of the prophets, who have told of the day when "the lofty looks of man should be humbled, and the haughtiness of men should be bowed down," and when also "the meek should increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men rejoice in the Holy One of Israel." With this exalting of the humble, and this filling of the hungry, the Son of Man began His whole course of teaching.

He opened His mouth and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth

Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.

The exaltation thus assigned to one moral state implies a corresponding downfall in its opposite; which indeed, in other places, the Lord spares not to announce, and the express declaration of which is added to these very beatitudes in St. Luke's report (Luke vi. 24-6). But the first place is occupied in the Lord's discourse by the exaltation of the humble, and in the Virgin's Song by the downfall of the proud, because He is "lifting up His eyes on His disciples," and she is lifting up her eyes on the world as it was; He speaking in the midst of a Church which was forming, she at a time when no Church was gathered. But with us the two elements are ever present; the spirit of the world and the spirit of the gospel, working according to their several natures: and to the one is administered a needful warning, to the other a strong consolation, by ever-repeated words which tell in effect that "he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

If the principle of divine government which the Song proclaims is one to be rehearsed for ever, so also is the testimony with which it concludes.

He remembering his mercy, hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

We see how great stress is laid in the Holy Word on the continuity of the plan of God. A thousand links, some obvious, some intricate, bind the New Testament to the Old. As many as are the references in the pages of the Old Testament to the

¹ Prov. iii. 34, quoted, James iv. 6, and 1 Pet. v. 5, *αντιτασεται τοις ερηφανοις*. Sets himself against them, as in battle array.

things which shall come after, so many are the references in the pages of the New to the promises which had been made before. It is of great moment to the due appreciation of the gospel that we regard it as the scheme of God from the beginning, in which the law itself was but parenthetical, and that we recognise the salvation which was once presented to anticipation, that which we now enjoy at present, and that which is "ready to be revealed in the last time," as successive stages of one everlasting covenant.

For us the words "to Abraham and to his seed for ever," are associated with a voice which echoed them, and a teaching which explained them; that in which the Apostle of the Gentiles contracts the seed of Abraham into the single person of Christ, and in so doing expands it to all that are in Him, in all nations and through all ages.

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, "And to seeds," as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ.

As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.—Gal. iii. 16, 27, 29.

Thus to its last word the Song is all our own, and claims of right the Doxology to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with which we end it, and by which the Church adopts as its own the proleptic psalms and hymns, and *naturalises* them, so to speak, in the perfected revelation of truth.

One concluding observation remains to be made concerning the Liturgic use of the Canticles, and in particular of this, the first voice of New Testament praise. Thus incorporated into the devotions of the Church, they become examples of the *tone* of Christian song, and give the key-note to the general praise.

The tones of Christian song must be various, as are the emotions which it expresses, and the themes which it celebrates. But this variety makes it all the more necessary to maintain the influence of the examples divinely provided, as permanent standards of the best type of devotion. This benefit is more than ever to be appreciated in the day in which we live. A certain facility of composition is widely diffused, utterance is become voluble, the standard is generally taken from the popular taste, and there is an ever-increasing confusion of religious voices in the air. For the hymns of such a time there will be various kinds of danger, but especially that of a free indulgence in bold and heated expression, and of an easy, familiar tone on sacred topics, which must in its ultimate effect impair and depreciate the general character of religion. Over this tendency

the Canticles sung in our Churches exercise a kind of oblique restraint, attuning devout minds to reverence and lowliness, and to that grave and tender reserve which suggests more than it utters, and chastens holy joy in order to exalt it. Thus, through all the variations of feeling incidental to place, to time, and to individual temper, the strain of Christian song is kept in tune with the voices which lead it, among which was heard first, and is heard still, "The Magnificat, or Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

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NOTE.—To these observations on the Magnificat, I will venture to append the expression of a wish that we had an authorised selection and collection of the scriptural and chief ecclesiastical Canticles, with some greater liberty for variation and interchange in their liturgical use. Such a collection is found in the famous Utrecht Psalter. A beautiful MS. volume of a late date (1514), in the Cathedral Library at Wells, contains, I think, the same selection and in the same order, only that the Psalms, instead of being illustrated, as in the Utrecht Psalter, by curious pictures, are accompanied throughout by explanatory glosses and many admirable Collects.

The contents are as follows:—

1. The whole Psalter, with the additions mentioned.
2. Canticum Esaie, Is. xii.
3. Scriptura Ezekie Regis, Is. xxxviii. 9-21.
4. Canticum Anne, 1 Sam. ii. 1-11.
Oratio Abacce pro ignorationibus, Hab. iii.
6. Canticum Moysi, Exod. xv. 1-19.
7. Canticum Moysi, Deut. xxxii. 1-44.
8. Ambrosii et Augustini. Te Deum.
9. Canticum trium puerorum. Benedicite.
10. Canticum Zacharie. Benedictus.
11. Canticum dive Marie Virginis. Magnificat.
12. Canticum Symeonis. Nunc dimittis.
13. Symbolum Athanasii. Quicumque vult.

It is interesting to see how entirely the "Athanasian Creed" was reckoned, not as a Creed properly so-called, but as a hymn or Cantic in expansion of the Creed, or a song of defence against assaults of heresy.

ART. VII.—THE DOCTRINE OF THE FATHERS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Eucharistic controversy, as waged between the different sections of the Church of England, has long been in a state eminently unsatisfactory. The question at issue turns in this, as probably it does in all other cases, on matters of fact. The ultimate authority is admitted by all parties to lie in the intention of Christ, and in the words by which the Sacrament was