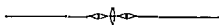


It would seem to be almost impossible to frame a Bill which should have a chance of passing, and at the same time not inflict injustice. But why should not the same be done for the properties of the parochial clergy as was long ago done for those of the cathedral clergy? An enabling Act, empowering them to commute their property with a commission, if necessary a commission created *ad hoc*. Some years ago the present writer had to carry through one such commutation, and can testify to the enormous increase of comfort brought by it to the clergy concerned. Objections may be advanced to this as to every proposal. It may be said, for instance, that the commutation of the tithe rent-charge would facilitate the operations of a minister who wished to carry Disestablishment. The answer is that no such minister would allow himself to be stopped by any character in the property which he intended to confiscate, and further, that the objection would equally apply to any scheme for redemption. Sometimes, indeed, it is urged that it is a great advantage for the clergy to be connected with the land. Something no doubt may be said on that score. But on the Church's side there are also enormous evils entailed by the connection. It is an enormous evil for a clergyman to have to be addressing a congregation on the most serious subjects, some of whose consciences he knows to be uneasy because they are keeping him out of his income.

H. T. ARMFIELD.



ART. V.—THE HYMNS OF THE FRENCH *ÉGLISE*
RÉFORMÉE.

READERS of "Robert Elsmere" will remember a remark passed by the Squire in one of his lucid intervals: "Oh, as to French Protestantism, Teutonic Protestantism is in the order of things, so to speak, but *Latin* Protestantism! There is no more sterile hybrid in the world!" We may venture to think that if Catherine had known even superficially either the history or the present material of the French Reformed Church, she would have been assured that such a generalization was misplaced. It may be conceded broadly that the Gallic mind is not of such a profoundly religious cast as that of the Teutonic races. But this is only a difference of degree, not of negation, and it is only true of the general. And, further, it should always be remembered that Protestantism has two sides, religious and social, both affirming the rights of the individual. Now, it cannot fairly be asserted that in the beginning France was

opposed to or alienated from the religious aspect of Protestantism. For if Germany had her Luther, France had her Jean Chauvin, and if at the present day France is not thoroughly Protestant, it is only because she is not thoroughly religious. Unfortunately for her, the right of investigation which Luther affirmed, and in which lay the germ of both freedom in religion and freedom in society, has in her own case been unduly pushed in the latter direction. Luther laid the foundations of free individual examination. He was interested only in the religious aspect of such a claim; according to him, the layman was the equal of the priest; no more fathers, no more councils; the chain of Catholic tradition was broken; the Church had no other law than the Scriptures, and the Scriptures no other commentary than divinely-aided reason. So far went Luther, and Calvin stayed with him, and whether Frenchmen were deaf to their voice let the wars of the Fronde, the Cevennes, and others, tell. France not Protestant! It is her misfortune that she has been too much so, and has not yet found her balance. Hidden away in the Reformers' speeches lay the thunder of the French Revolution. When at length the thunder was heard, it deafened the French ear to the religious side of Protestantism. The negative religion which proclaimed justification by faith and the powerlessness of works, had not character enough for the mass of Frenchmen when they once found out their freedom. So France refused for a while to accept Protestantism as a religion, while she maintained its principle, the right of investigation, and applied it unduly to secular affairs. When she is calmer there is no reason to think she may not return to the pure and undefiled spirituality of catholic Protestantism.

That the candle of religious Protestantism in France is by no means extinct, the life of the *Église Réformée* shows us to-day. It must always be borne in mind that a spiritual religion is a difficult one, and is more repellent to vice and immorality than a doctrine of easy-going materialism. So if, in France's present unhappy days, the country were roughly divided into believers and unbelievers, and heads counted, no doubt by far the majority of believers would be numbered under the Roman Church. But if she has the greater number of heads it is open to doubt whether she has the greater number of souls. In any case, even if the flame be obscured for a time, the Church which has only recently lost an Adolphe Monod cannot be called moribund. And in that Church's hymn-book, the spirit of willing submission to present blight and discouragement, in the sure and certain hope of an eventual gladness, which no doubt was born in the valleys of the Cevennes and the hamlets of the Nord—will still have a very living significance to its members.

Oh Zion, do not weep, dry thy tears,
Th' Eternal is thy God, have no fears ;
There cometh glad repose, full of peace,
Lord, bring it, and oh, may it never cease !

The chief characteristic of the "Recueil de Psaumes et Cantiques à l'usage des Eglises Réformées"¹ at present in use is its exceeding thoroughness. There is nothing but the plain thought. It is impossible to believe that the genius of a nation which has called such a collection into being, and has used it, must needs be opposed to Protestant Christianity. These hymns were not written for the sake of their production, not even as a means of clothing spiritual thought in tasteful language, but because the opinions they enshrine were a matter of life and death. They are magnificent ; but they are not literature. One can feel instinctively that there was not much correction or pruning, because one's dearest thoughts are not corrected. If the collection has lost in æsthetic considerations—and perhaps it is a pity that it is so—no one can deny the unmistakable ring of sincerity and the feeling of all-importance which run through it. Perhaps it is a pity, too, as regards æsthetic considerations, that the early Reformers had not acted less on the principle of pure contrariety to Rome in everything. There was surely no reason why French Protestants should stand where the Romans sit, and sit when the Romans stand, simply to contradict them. Of course, it is easy to understand the feeling that prompted these changes ; but to us, who are so happy in our pure teaching and tasteful ritual, a French reformed service would seem somewhat bare.

The history of the hymns is very interesting ; but it is not our purpose to discuss it. We are concerned simply with the "authorised version," for use in the reformed churches, which was recently drawn up. It is the "resultant" of the history of the various struggles of the past. And as possibly it is unknown to many English Churchmen, a short summary of its teaching and method may not be amiss. Naturally the hymns show traces of many of the different stages of Protestantism. There are even a few from Corneille and Racine, who represent the literature of the arch-enemy of the Huguenots, Louis XIV. Of other names we may mention F. Chavannes, Bénédicte Pictet, Vinet, César Malan, A. Monod, Clottu, Empaytaz, Merle d'Aubigné, and Recordon. Some of the writers are Swiss, like Vinet and Malan, of Huguenot extraction. Many hymns are by unknown authors. Indeed, of a certain number it could not even be shown with exactness in what collection they first

¹ The present translations have been made as literal as possible, to preserve the simple form and the spirit of the original.

appeared. No names are appended in the "Recueil" under notice.

The order of Divine service in the "temples" is very simple. After giving out a "sentence," as with us, the *pasteur* reads a lesson, a psalm or hymn is sung, the ten Commandments are read, followed by a confession of sins, and then comes the sermon, preceded and followed by a hymn and by prayer. The Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Levitical benediction close the service. It must be remembered that, though plain, the course of worship is not characterized by the disjointed fervour which prevails amongst some of our Nonconformist brethren at home. A liturgy is used; the prayers before and after the sermon are fixed (though an extemporaneous one may be introduced); there is a very beautiful service for Holy Communion, and services for all the other offices. The hymns partake of this orderly completeness.

The "Psaumes," of course, bound up with the "Cantiques," and interchangeably used, are a metrical translation. They are of no very high merit. The following rendering of the beautiful 9th and 10th verses of *Psa. cxxxix.* is a fair specimen :

Quand l'aurore m'aurait prêté
Ses ailes, sa rapidité,
Et que j'irais, en fendant l'air,
Aux bords opposés de la mer,
Ta main, s'il te plaît de l'étendre,
Viendra m'y poursuivre et m'y prendre.

Included are a rhymed version of the Decalogue and of the Song of Simeon.

The hymns are divided into two parts. From 1 to 112 they are all carefully arranged under different headings. The first is "Praise," to which a large number of hymns is devoted; then follow "Jesus Christ," "Pentecost," "The Christian Life" (Repentance, Faith, Sanctification, Joy, Hope of Eternity, Brotherly Love, etc.), "The Christian Church" (Promises made to her, Missions, Sunday, Worship, etc.), "Ceremonies" (Confirmation, Holy Communion, Marriage, Ordination, Consecration of a Church, etc.), "Seasons" (Morning, Evening, New Year's Day, etc.), ending with 111, 112, two fine hymns devoted to the *Jour de l'An*, of which one verse runs :

May we, protected by Thy Holiness,
And vested fully in a Christ-like dress,
Preserve Thy gift and raise this joyous tune—
Yes, Lord Jesus, come; yes, dear Lord, come soon!

Under all these titles the hymns are ranged with scrupulous care. Then in what is called the "Supplement" 62 additional

¹ Ch. Recordon.

hymns are added for general use, drawn—as, indeed, is the whole collection—from all sources, such as the “Chants Chrétiens” (which is also very widely used in France), the “Recueil de Genève et Lyon,” the “Chants de Sion,” etc. Thus the full number is 174.

It is not too much to say that they are all marked by a spirit of childlike trust and deep gratitude. For example this verse, which occurs in a hymn on the “Peace of Christ”:

His peace! Ah yes, but do you know
What Jesus had to undergo?
Think how He left His bright abode
To pass along life's gloomy road,
And how to save us any loss
Endured the cradle and the Cross.

Or the following hymn, which is for the Holy Communion:

To-day Thy feast of love,
Almighty King, who reign'st above,
Will bring us all beneath Thine eyes.
Lord, let Thy bread of life
Prepare us for the strife
And fit us for the heavenly skies.
Oh, henceforth may we strive
As long as we're alive,
Sweet Father,
To our Great King
Our faith to bring—
To love and serve in everything!
Oh God, who set us free,
Our grateful hymns arise to Thee,
And ever give Thy goodness praise.
Yet make us more devout,
That we may sing and shout
Thy kindness to the end of days!
Enlightened by Thy Word,
We worship Thee, dear Lord;
Oh, bear us—
Then in our mind,
The fruit we'll find,
Of all that was by Christ designed!

The first verse of this hymn runs thus:

Voyez quel amour le Père,
Le Dieu des cieux et de la terre,
Témoigne à ses enfants pécheurs.
Voyez: sa grâce propice
Étend un manteau de justice
Sur nos innombrables erreurs.
Au lieu de nous punir
Sa main nous vient bénir:
Plus d'alarmes!
À ce grand Roi
Gardons la foi;
Et rangeons nos cœurs sous sa loi.

As a general rule, as we have said, the language is extremely plain and simple. Some verses, however, are far more polished than others. In our opinion Hymn 70, on "The believer's death" (one of César Malan's), is artistic from beginning to end. We quote the last verse :

Non, ce n'est pas mourir, Redempteur bien-aimé,
Que de voir consommé
Dans de longues délices,
L'amour dont ici-bas notre âme eut les prémices.

A true thought melodiously expressed, which is poetry's ideal.

A verse of one of the baptismal hymns runs :

Thrice holy God, from heaven's height,
Oh, may Thy kindly glance alight
On this earth-born child.
Good Shepherd, Thou, to bring relief,
Became for us a man of grief ;
Save, oh ! save this child.

And has the untranslatable little chorus :

Seigneur, Seigneur,
Ton Église
Le baptise ;
Renouvelle,
Garde son âme immortelle.

Now and then the usually placid and somewhat plaintive character of the versification breaks out into a gush of brilliant melody. The joyous familiarity of the following strain might not come amiss to the *brav' général*—not him of Jersey, but of Whitechapel :

When will Canaan's river show
Its celestial flow ?
Towards the Jordan—don't you know ?
Christ wishes us to go,
Near to Him—lovely spot !
Storms will hurt us not.
Then we shall sing and never cease
The hymn of peace.

Oh ! what perfect gladness ! what gladness ! what gladness !
After so much sadness !
Oh ! what perfect gladness,
For ever re-united,
The Church will be delighted ;
Will strike up " Hallelujah !"
Praise to Thee, Jehovah !"

A short hymn, too, on the fulness of God is fairly ecstatic :

Oh, Godhead's ineffable measure !
Oh, love's inexhaustible treasure !
What a treasure !
The heavens tell, the heavens tell
Emmanuel ! Emmanuel !
On her knees and at peace the Church consecrated,
In love is prostrated.

But these are exceptions. Although the greater rhyming power of the French language is especially adapted for quick, joyous strains, the prevailing tone is one of quiet devotion. A Pentecost song runs :¹

All our hardness must be bent,
So the Holy Spirit's lent.
Spirit, whom Christ gives away,
Seal, oh ! seal us for *that* day.

Jesus gives us Him as pledge,
Earnest of the heritage
That His blood for us acquired.
Lord, by Him may we be fired.

The following verse is addressed to Missionaries :

Holy heralds, men of love,
Call aloud salvation's tale ;
Never stay your noble aim,
Never let your efforts fail.
All men's rescue, oh ! complete,
Bring them safe to Jesu's feet.

Of course, every hymnology will contain a hymn² which produces the sentiment enshrined in our own " A few more days shall roll " :

Still a little time on earth,
Still a little drought and dearth ;
Then tow'rds its God my soul will haste.
E'en now I catch the heavenly mirth
That marks the struggle's final rest.

Still a few of Satan's harms,
Still regrets and still alarms ;
Yes, still delusions, woes, complaints,
And then I'll know the deathless charms
Of life amidst the Saviour's saints.

Still a few distressing dreams,
All that worldly pleasure seems.
Oh, lustful world ! how sweet thy lies !
But Jesus' blood my soul redeems,
His safety is my dearest prize.

Thus, dear Jesus, full of hope,
Onward to my rest I'll grope,
Waiting till Thou stay'st my woes ;
Though wild the way and steep the slope,
It leads me to my long repose.

The following hymn is characteristic of the French genius :

O Dieu, ton temple
C'est l'univers ;
Quand je contemple
Les cieux, les mers,

¹ Bénédicte Pictet.

² Malan.

Et cette terre,
Et sa beauté,
J'adore, ô Père,
Ta majesté.

Mais, ô folie !
Sujet d'effroi !
L'homme t'oublie ;
Il vit sans toi ;
Et ton ouvrage
Cache au pécheur,
Comme un nuage,
Son Créateur.

Le cœur qui t'aime,
Dieu d'Israël !
Devient lui-même
Un humble autel
Où pour ta gloire
Brûle l'encens :
C'est l'oratoire
De tes enfants.

Par un miracle
Dresse en mon cœur
Ton tabernacle,
Puissant Sauveur !
Que la prière
Du Saint-Esprit
Y monte au Père,
Par Jésus-Christ !

Two verses may also be quoted from a well-known hymn of Vinet's :

Sous ton voile d'ignominie,
Sous ta couronne de douleur,
N'attends pas que je te renie,
Chef auguste de mon Sauveur !
Mon œil, sous le sanglant nuage
Qui me dérobe ta beauté,
A retrouvé de ton visage
L'ineffaçable majesté.

Amour céleste, je t'adore !
Mon esprit a vu ta grandeur.
Il te connaît : mon cœur t'ignore,
Viens changer, viens remplir mon cœur.
Clarté, joie et gloire de l'âme,
Paradis qu'on porte en tout lieu,
Viens dans ce cœur qui te réclame,
Fleurir sous le regard de Dieu !

Perhaps the foregoing extracts, even in their imperfections, will serve to show the strength and the weakness of these French Protestant hymns. Their strength lies *in* their weakness ; that is to say, in the very absence of ornament and skill their unpretending piety and utter faith is the more manifest,

so that, while plain, they are comely. The literary poverty, indeed, of hymns in general is a well-known fact. It is not exactly easy to say why it is so. But refined hymns seem to be the product only of a refined and rich Church. Then, too, it may be accepted that the genius of French poesy is not so essentially of a religious cast as the English. For English poetry in general, if not pervaded by religion, is tinged by it. Not, of course, would anyone desire to assert for a moment that it is impossible for higher and divine thoughts to find a place in French literature. If Voltaire said, "Christianity is ridiculous," Châteaubriand replied, "It is sublime." No one has offered a more noble and chivalrous defence than he. But England has many a Cowper and Wordsworth; France but few Châteaubriands. Perhaps all the more on that account it is refreshing to find these hymns so strong in faith, in trust, and in love. Their simple evangelistic teaching, too, the pure milk of the Word, is comparatively free from that extreme type of Calvinism, which an eloquent French historian has called "the religion of hate grafted on the law of love, on the Gospel, like a poisonous plant twisting among the branches of the tree of life." Their dominant note is one of subdued resignation ever and anon rising into a call of triumph. And this is, too, the characteristic trait of most of the melodies to which the hymns are sung. One can, as he listens, almost bring to his eyes some little valley girt with pine-trees, in which stand a little company of faithful people chanting their trust in God, even while the wind that moans through the pines brings with it distant echoes of the clatter of horsehoofs and the clank of the scabbard; chanting a hymn that rises even more clearly and loudly into a swelling strain of triumph, for they remember that the Lord is on their side.

Having said so much in praise, what must be said on the other side? The weakness of these hymns is altogether literary. There is not very much nobility of thought or aptness of expression. The *cleanness* of versification and diction which is characteristic of English hymns is missing to an English ear. Of course, some points that strike us as blemishes would not have that appearance to a Frenchman. For instance, they allow "feminine" rhymes, such as *alarmes, larmes; temple, contemple*. Then, too, the metre is more irregular. On the other hand, there are some very elaborate rhymes, which might be expected, considering the natural melody of the language. But the conclusion we must come to, from a literary standpoint, is that, on the whole, French Protestant hymns must be pronounced clear, logical, and practical, but rather commonplace; the very opposite of Luther's hymns and most of the Anglican.

But even if literary art and excellence be not very apparent; that is, after all, of not such vital importance as the simple,

undying faith which is indeed branded into the hymns of the French Reformed Church—branded by years of bitter persecution and steady repression. It is not of such vital importance as the spirit of complete self-abandoning trust before God which could enable the Church of sorrows to sing :

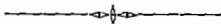
Lord, Thou hast loved me ! E'en before the light
 Gleamed o'er the world created by Thy voice,
 Before the day-star soared into sight,
 And set life's pulses throbbing after night,
 Lord, Thou hast loved me !

Lord, Thou hast loved me ! E'en when cross of shame
 Took Jesu's body in its cruel arms,
 And when, to save me from undying flame,
 Thy Son bore sin that crushed my nerveless frame,
 Lord, Thou hast loved me !

Lord, Thou hast loved me ! Yes, dear Paraclete ;
 When Thou, Lifegiver, visited my soul,
 Quick'ning dead hands and stirring tired feet,
 And I, poor sinner, might with saints compete,
 Lord, Thou hast loved me !

Lord, Thou wilt love me always ! Satan, fly !
 God's gifts can ne'er be stayed by such as thou ;
 Though evil come, yet grace is ever nigh ;
 To Thy love, Father, let my own reply—
 Who lov'st me always !

W. A. PURTON.



ART. VI.—THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL AND PERSIAN CHRONOLOGY.

ONE would naturally think that a prophecy like that of the seventy weeks (heptades) of Daniel—known to have been fulfilled—would admit of easy proof and explanation ; but so far is this from being the case, that (as Professor Stuart justly remarks) “it would require a volume of considerable magnitude to give a history of the ever-varying and contradictory opinions of critics respecting this *locus vexatissimus*, and perhaps a still larger one to establish an exegesis that would stand.” Professor Stuart is of opinion that “no interpretation as yet published will stand the test of thorough grammatico-historical criticism, and that a candid, searching, and thorough critique here is still a desideratum.”

In the first place, commentators cannot agree as to the *terminus a quo*, which must evidently be some decree or order “to restore and build Jerusalem.” “Know therefore and

¹ F. Chavannes.