

ART. IV.—THE CATHOLICITY OF OUR HYMN-BOOKS.

IN his last Charge to the clergy of the diocese of Canterbury the late Archbishop Tait used the following words: "I cannot help remarking what an evidence to a widespread catholicity is afforded by the hymns which are used in public worship. The strains in which we Church of England people sing God's praises are drawn from the most diverse sources. We hear in them the ever-living voices of early Christian fathers, of medieval saints, of Lutheran reformers, of some modern Roman Catholics, and of many English and American Nonconformists. These all unite with our own Church's poets and divines of every school in raising our thoughts in our holiest moments to the throne of God." We propose in the present article to supplement these wise words by tracing the use of hymns in the Christian Church. We are the better able to do this through the publication, a few years ago, of Julian's masterly and exhaustive "Dictionary of Hymnology," and also through the reprint, in taking and convenient form, of the late Lord Selborne's valuable article on hymns in the "Encyclopædia Britannica." In these days, when the subject of the reunion of the churches commands the attention of men of the most opposite opinions, the consideration of the catholicity of our hymn-books may not be altogether inappropriate.

The origin of Christian hymnody is to be found in the Old Testament. It has been said, and rightly, that the whole Bible rings with music, from the first page of Genesis to the last of Revelation. At the Creation the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy; while the Apocalypse closes, in the stately language of Milton, with "a sevenfold chorus of Hallelujahs and harping symphonies." To David belongs the honour, not only of being the first great poet of Israel, but also the founder of the Psalter. He first introduced the singing of psalms or hymns—for the modern distinction between them is purely arbitrary—into the public worship of Almighty God. In Christian times St. Luke must be considered as the first hymnologist. To his care we owe, not only the *Ave Maria* and the *Gloria in Excelsis*, but also the *Benedictus*, the *Magnificat*, and the *Nunc Dimittis*. In the New Testament we read that Christ and His disciples "sung a hymn," probably the Passover Psalms, after the institution of the Lord's Supper; and that Paul and Silas "were singing hymns unto God" in their midnight prison at Philippi. Several times in the course of the Epistles is psalm-

singing insisted on, and more than once we seem to hear a fragment of some early Christian hymn.

In the Eastern Church the use of hymns was customary from the earliest times. Pliny, in his well-known letter to Trajan, seems to allude to antiphonal singing when he says that the Christians were accustomed to "sing a hymn to Christ as God, *secum invicem*, by turns among themselves." An early tradition ascribes the introduction of antiphonal singing to Ignatius of Antioch, who saw a vision of angels thus chanting in heaven. This, we are told by the historian Socrates, led him to introduce it into the Church of Antioch, from which it quickly spread over the Eastern Church. After the conversion of Constantine, "the progress of hymnody became closely connected with Church controversies." The numerous hymns of Ephraim the Syrian were written with a view of enlisting popular feeling on the side of orthodoxy in the controversy with the Gnostic teachers, Bardesanes, Marcion, and Manes, the first of whom had largely employed hymns, set to popular tunes, in the dissemination of his opinions. A further development arose at Constantinople out of the Arian controversy. The Arians were wont to catch the ear of the populace by singing, in the streets and open places of the city, hymns and antiphons expressive of Arian doctrine. Chrysostom endeavoured to neutralize the effect of this heretical teaching by organizing rival processions of the orthodox, who, with crosses and tapers and solemn chanting, nightly perambulated the streets of the city. And from the streets the use of hymns passed into the more recognised services of the Church. It was not, however, until the period of the iconoclastic controversy that Greek hymnody reached its highest development. From the Greek Church several hymns have found their way, through the translations of Dr. Neale, into our English services. Among these may be mentioned: "The day is past and over," from Anatolius; "Christian, dost thou see them," from Andrew of Crete; and, above all, "Art thou weary," which is adapted from a hymn by Stephen the Sabaite.

It was not until the fourth century that the use of hymns was introduced into the Western Church, when, by a strange coincidence, it was brought about by the Arian controversy. We learn from Augustine's "Confessions" (ix., vii. 15), that St. Ambrose had incurred the resentment of the Arian Empress Justina, in consequence of which sentence of exile was passed upon him. The "devout people" were determined to defend their Bishop, and kept watch in the church night and day, ready, if need be, to die with him. "Then it was first appointed," says St. Augustine, "that, after the

manner of the Eastern Churches, hymns and psalms should be sung, lest the people should wax weary and faint through sorrow, which custom has ever since been retained, and has been followed by almost all congregations in other parts of the world." Hence arose the use of hymnody in the Latin Church, although before this Hilary of Poitiers had written a book of hymns, some of which, together with those of St. Ambrose and of Prudentius, afterwards found their way into the different breviaries.

What is known as the first medieval period—from the sixth to the ninth century—is singularly barren in the production of good hymns. The noble hymn of Cardinal Damiani on the joys of Paradise, *Ad Perennis Vitæ Fontem*, must, however, be excepted, and the celebrated *Veni Creator Spiritus*, "which," says the writer in Julian's Dictionary, "has taken a deeper hold of the Western Church than any other medieval hymn except the *Te Deum*." The authorship of the hymn is doubtful, it having been ascribed, among others, to Ambrose, to Gregory the Great, to Charles the Bald, and to Rabanus Maurus. The story of its composition, as told by Ekkehard in his "Life of Notker," is as follows: "It is told of the blessed man [Notker] that one day when he went through the dormitory he listened, for there was hard by a mill whose wheel was revolving slowly for lack of water, and, groaning, gave out sounds something like words. And the man of God, hearing this, straightway was in the spirit, and produced that most beautiful hymn, the 'sequence' on the Holy Ghost, *Sancti Spiritus adsit nobis gratia*. And when he had finished it, he sent it as a present to the Emperor Charles, who was then staying, probably, at Aachen. And the same Christian Emperor sent back to him by the messenger that which the same Spirit had inspired him to write, the hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus*." If this story is to be credited—and it certainly has an air of truth—the author of the hymn was not Charlemagne, but more probably Charles the Fat, who had paid great attention to Notker during his visit to St. Gall in A.D. 883; and there is no reason why the above incident should not have taken place soon after.

The invention of "sequences" by Notker may conveniently be regarded as the beginning of the later period of medieval hymnody. The origin of the term seems to have been somewhat as follows: It was the custom to sing the word "Alleluia" between the Epistle and the Gospel. The last syllable of this word was prolonged into a number of musical notes, which were called the *sequentia*, as following the *Alleluia*. In the latter part of the ninth century Notker invented the practice of adapting words to suit these notes, and hence the words

came in their turn to be called "sequences." Among the most famous of these medieval sequences, two are attributed to Notker—the "Alleluistic Sequence," *Cantemus cuncti melodum nunc Alleluia*, well known in Dr. Neale's translation, "The strain upraise of joy and praise, Alleluia"; and the *Media in Vita*, "In the midst of life we are in death," which is said to have been suggested to him while watching some workmen building a bridge at the Martinstobel, a gorge of the Goldach, on its course from St. Gall to the Lake of Constance. It is stated by Miss Winkworth that this hymn was "long used as a battle-song, until its custom was forbidden on account of its being supposed to exercise a magical influence." Luther translated it into German as one of his funeral hymns; and the pathetic portion of our Burial Service, beginning "In the midst of life we are in death," down to "Suffer us not at the last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from Thee," is taken from it. The "Golden Sequence," *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, "Come, Thou Holy Spirit, come," considered by Archbishop Trench as "the loveliest of all the hymns in the whole circle of Latin sacred poetry," was probably written by Pope Innocent III.; and perhaps the *Stabat Mater dolorosa*, "By the cross sad vigil keeping," the most pathetic hymn of the Middle Ages. The *Dies Irae*, "That day of wrath, that dreadful day," perhaps the most celebrated of those medieval sequences—it has been called "the great sequence of the Western Church"—was written by Thomas de Celano, the friend and biographer of St. Francis of Assisi; while the famous sacramental hymn of St. Thomas Aquinas, *Pange lingua gloriosi corporis mysterium*, written by him for the festival of Corpus Christi, probably exercised "a not unimportant influence" upon the general reception of the dogma of transubstantiation. Among other hymn-writers of this later medieval period must be mentioned St. Bernard of Morlaix, to whom we are indebted for the popular hymn, "Jerusalem the golden"; and St. Bernard of Clairvaux, whose beautiful hymn, *Jesu dulcis memoria*, "Jesu, the very thought of Thee," has been called by Schaff "the sweetest and most evangelical hymn of the Middle Ages." It is certainly the finest and most characteristic specimen of what has been called St. Bernard's "subjective loveliness," which has since found favour with so many religious minds.

Hymns played a great part at the time of the Reformation. It is a remarkable fact, as a writer in Julian's Dictionary has pointed out, that some of the greatest religious revivals, as the Reformation, and Pietism, and Moravianism, and Methodism, were sung as well as preached; and that the leaders of those revivals—Luther, Spener, Zinzendorf, Wesley,

—were themselves hymnists. To Luther belongs the supreme honour of giving to the German nation in their own language, not the Bible only, but also their Catechism and hymn-book. He is the “Ambrose of German hymnology.” Without adopting the hyperbolic saying of Coleridge, that “Luther did as much for the Reformation by his hymns as by his translation of the Bible,” it may be truly affirmed, says Lord Selborne, “that, among the secondary means by which the success of the Reformation was promoted, none was more powerful. They were sung everywhere: in the streets and fields, as well as the churches, in the workshop and the palace, by children in the cottage, and by martyrs on the scaffold. It was by them that a congregational character was given to the new Protestant worship.” His hymns, some thirty-seven in number—of which about a dozen are translations from Latin originals—were written for the chief Christian seasons; and there is also a very touching song on the martyrdom of two youths at Brussels in 1523. The best known is, of course, the celebrated *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, the national hymn of Germany, “the production,” as Ranke says, “of the moment in which Luther, engaged in a conflict with a world of foes, sought strength in the consciousness that he was defending a Divine cause which would never perish.” “A battle-hymn was this defiant song,” says Heine, “with which he and his comrades entered Worms (April 16, 1521). The old cathedral trembled at the new notes, and the ravens were startled in their hidden nests in the tower. This hymn, the *Marseillaise of the Reformation*, has preserved its potent spell on to our days; and we may yet soon use again in similar conflicts the old mailed words.” Carlyle compares it to “a sound of Alpine avalanches, or the first murmur of earthquakes.” Luther himself sang the words daily at Coburg in 1530. Melancthon and Jonas were greatly comforted in their banishment from Wittenburg by hearing it sung by a little maiden on their entrance into Weimar in 1547. Gustavus Adolphus caused it to be sung by the whole army before the Battle of Leipsic on September 17, 1631. During the Luther celebrations of 1883 it was sung at the Castle Church, Wittenburg, and at the unveiling of Luther’s memorial in the market-place of Eisleben.

The period of the Thirty Years’ War produced one or two hymns of world-wide celebrity. The famous battle-song of Gustavus Adolphus, *Verzage nicht du Häuflein Klein*, “Fear not, O little flock, the foe,” supposed by some to be the composition of the hero-king himself—Knapp calls it “a little feather from the eagle-wing of Gustavus Adolphus”—is said by Julian to have been written, or, at any rate, the first

three stanzas of it, by Michael Altenburg on the receipt of the news of the victory of Leipsic in 1631. This fine hymn was sung by Gustavus and his brave soldiers before the fatal Battle of Lutzen, on November 19, 1632. To this period also belongs—though, according to Julian, it has no immediate connection with the peace of Westphalia—the thanksgiving song of Martin Rinckhart, a pastor of Eilenburg, which has been fitly called the *Te Deum* of Germany. It is well known in England through Miss Winkworth's spirited translation :

“ Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices.”

Among other German hymn-writers who call for notice Paul Gerhardt must not be forgotten. He was a Lutheran pastor at Berlin, and afterwards at Lübben, and is usually considered as the prince of German hymnists of the seventeenth century. His compositions, which may be compared to Keble's "Christian Year," yielded in popularity only to those of Luther. But the difference between Luther's theology and that of Gerhardt was considerable, and is thus summarized by Gervinus: "In Luther's time the belief in free grace and the work of the Atonement and the bursting of the gates of hell was the inspiration of joyful confidence; with Gerhardt it is the belief of the love of God. With Luther the old wrathful God of the Romanists assumed the heavenly aspect of grace and mercy; with Gerhardt the merciful Righteous One is a gentle, loving man." The hymns of John Scheffler, the founder of the "second Silesian school," who after his conversion to Romanism assumed the name of "Angelus," must also be noticed. One of them is familiar to English readers, through Wesley's adaptation, "Thee will I love, my Strength, my Tower." Both as a poet and as a convert to Romanism Scheffler furnishes an interesting parallel to our own Faber. And the hymns of both of them, even after their "conversion," were freely used by Protestant congregations. The keynote of Scheffler's hymns, like those of St. Bernard, is Divine love. It may be well illustrated by his last words: "Jesus and Christ, God and man, bridegroom and brother, peace and joy, sweetness and delight, refuge and redemption, heaven and earth, eternity and time, love and all, have mercy on my soul."

The "Pietist" and Moravian schools produced, among other hymn-writers, Spener, Hiller and Zinzendorf. Spener, who was pastor of St. Nicolas, in Berlin, was the founder of the "Pietist" school, but his hymns, though numerous, are not remarkable. Hiller was a pastor in Württemberg (1699-1769), and his "Casket of Spiritual Songs," which he wrote towards

the end of his ministry, when fallen into feeble health, is still prized by the peasantry of Württemberg next to their Bibles ; and we are told that "the numerous emigrants from that part of Germany to America and other foreign countries generally take it with them wherever they go." As an instance of the reverence and affection with which Hiller's hymns are still regarded, it is said, in Julian's Dictionary, that when a German colony in the Caucasus was attacked by a hostile Circassian tribe some fifty years ago, the parents cut up their copies of the "Casket," and divided the leaves among their children as they were being torn away from them into slavery. The motto of Count Zinzendorf, "I have but one passion, and it is He, only He," may be taken as the keynote of his 111 hymns. They are marked by a deep personal devotion to the crucified Saviour. One of his hymns is well known in England through Wesley's translation, "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness."

Various causes helped to retard the development of hymnody in Great Britain after the time of the Reformation. Among these may be placed the fierce hatred of Rome, which cast discredit on all Latin hymns, and the intense love of the English Bible, which helped to exclude from public worship whatever was not contained in holy writ. But the most powerful cause was undoubtedly the example and influence of Geneva. John Calvin, holding the narrow opinion once held by Paul of Samosata—an opinion which was openly condemned by the Fourth Council of Toledo—that whatever was used in public worship ought to be taken out of the Bible, rejected the entire hymnology of the Breviaries and Missals, and used only the French metrical translation of the Psalms by Marot and Beza. The example thus set at Geneva produced in England what is commonly known as the "Old Version" of the Psalms. It was begun by Thomas Sternhold, an official in the household of Henry VIII., and afterwards of Edward VI., who published a translation of some thirty-seven Psalms in 1549. At his death the work was continued by John Hopkins, a Suffolk clergyman, and afterwards by certain English refugees at Geneva during the reign of Queen Mary. The completed edition of the "Old Version" finally appeared in 1562.

On the accession of Queen Elizabeth the "German Psalmody" was at once brought into use, and for over a hundred years the "Old Version" of Sternhold and Hopkins continued to be the sole hymn-book of the English Church. In 1693, under the authority of "the Court at Kensington," the "New Version" of the Psalms by Tait and Brady appeared, and eventually, after a long struggle, succeeded in displacing

the older translation. The standard of merit of both these versions is miserably low; and surprise must be felt that "in the country of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, and notwithstanding the example of Germany," nothing worthy of the name of congregational hymnody arose until after the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is true that the seventeenth century was not altogether indifferent to the power and value of congregational hymnody and music. Even the Puritan John Milton could sing:

"Let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

And Milton himself wrote "hymns" on the Nativity, the Circumcision and the Passion. The earliest attempt at an English hymn-book was made by George Wither in 1622, in the publication of his "Hymns and Songs of the Church." The volume included hymns for all the Church seasons and festivals, as well as hymns of a more private and devotional character, and was "at once a 'Christian Year' and a manual of practical piety." The publication, however, only involved its author in loss and persecution. Two writers belong to this period, both of whom were eminently qualified to be hymn-writers—George Herbert, whose "Temple" was printed in 1633, and Francis Quarles, whose "Emblems" appeared in the following year. During the time of the Commonwealth Jeremy Taylor published some hymns, which he describes as "celebrating the mysteries and chief festivals of the year, according to the manner of the ancient Church." Later on appeared the "Poetical Fragments" of Richard Baxter, to whom we are indebted for the hymn, "Lord, it belongs not to our care." Dryden's translation of the *Veni Creator* must also be mentioned, and, above all, Bishop Ken's Morning and Evening Hymns, which first appeared in 1697, appended to the third edition of the author's "Manual of Prayers for Winchester Scholars."

To the Independents, as represented by Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge, belongs the honour of being "the real founders of modern English hymnody." Watts's "Hymns" appeared in 1707, and he may justly be regarded as "the father of English hymnody." "It has been the fashion," says Lord Selborne, "to disparage Watts, as if he had never risen above the level of his 'Hymns for Little Children.' No doubt his taste is often faulty and his style very unequal, but looking to the good, and disregarding the large quantity of

inferior, matter, it is probable that more hymns which approach to a very high standard of excellence, and are at the same time suitable for congregational use, may be found in his works than in those of any other English writer." Among his best-known hymns may be mentioned, "Come, let us join our cheerful songs," "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," "O God, our help in ages past," "When I survey the wondrous cross," and, above all, "There is a land of pure delight," which is said to have been suggested by the beautiful prospect over Southampton Water. To Doddridge we owe "Hark, the glad sound," and "My God, and is Thy table spread"; and to Simon Browne, another Independent, "Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly dove."

The "Methodist" movement of the eighteenth century, which may be divided into the Wesleyan branch, under the leadership of John Wesley, and the Calvinistic branch, under the leadership of George Whitefield, produced a large number of hymn-writers. Of these by far the greatest was Charles Wesley. He wrote the prodigious number of over 6,000 hymns, of which perhaps the two best are, "Come, O Thou Traveller unknown," founded on the incident of Jacob wrestling with the angel, and which Watts said was "worth all the verses he himself had written," and the hymn on Catholic love, beginning, "Weary of all this wordy strife." His most generally popular hymn is probably "Jesu! lover of my soul"; while John Wesley preferred, above all his brother had written, "Come, let us join our friends above." Of the other Wesleyan hymn-writers, Olivers, a Welsh shoe-maker, is best known through his beautiful ode, "The God of Abraham praise." To the Moravian Methodists belonged John Cennick, the author of "Children of the heavenly King"; and James Montgomery, who wrote, among other hymns, "Go to dark Gethsemane," "Hail to the Lord's anointed," and, best of all, "For ever with the Lord."

The Calvinistic section of the Methodist party produced a larger number of hymn-writers. Augustus Toplady will be ever remembered for his most beautiful hymn, "Rock of ages," perhaps, as Dr. Pusey said, "the most popular hymn, the very favourite—very beautiful is it." William Williams, the apostle of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales, was the author of two well-known hymns, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah," and "O'er the gloomy hills of darkness." Rowland Hill wrote the popular hymn, "Exalted high at God's right hand"; and Thomas Haweis, "O Thou, from whom all goodness flows." But the "Olney Hymns," which, as Lord Selborne says, combine "the tenderness of Cowper with the manliness of Newton," are entitled to be placed at the head

of all the writers of this Calvinistic school. To Newton belongs the tender hymn, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds," and the soul-inspiring strain, "Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God." Poor Cowper contributed over sixty hymns to the Olney collection, many of which speak the language of his own pathetic experiences. Among these may be mentioned, "O for a closer walk with God," "When darkness long has veil'd my mind," and "God moves in a mysterious way," said to have been written on the very eve of his second attack of insanity. In Lord Selborne's opinion, the best of Cowper's hymns is the one beginning "Hark, my soul! it is the Lord," and containing the exquisite lines :

"Can a woman's tender care
Cease towards the child she bare?
Yes, she may forgetful be;
Yet will I remember thee."

"Mine is an unchanging love,
Higher than the heights above;
Deeper than the depths beneath,
Free and faithful, strong as death."

During the first quarter of the present century the example of the Wesleys in introducing hymnody into public worship was generally followed among the Evangelical section of the Church. The High Church party, however, held aloof from the innovation, as lacking ecclesiastical authority, and as savouring of dissent, and continued to use only Tait and Brady's "New Version." But in 1827 two publications appeared, which, says Lord Selborne, "introduced a new epoch, breaking down the barrier as to hymnody which had till then existed between the different theological schools of the Church of England." These publications were Bishop Heber's "Hymns" and Keble's "Christian Year." Shortly afterwards the "Lyra Apostolica," containing John Henry Newman's celebrated hymn, "Lead, kindly Light," was published, and since then a flood of congregational hymnody has been poured forth upon Christendom by writers too numerous to mention. Catholics and Protestants, Churchmen and Non-conformists, Sacerdotalists and Evangelicals, have alike contributed to swell the number of our hymns and hymn-books. They have alike borne witness to the existence of that one religion to which, whatever they may call themselves, the good, the just, the pious, the devout all belong, and who, whatever their differences on earth, shall know and recognise each other in heaven. They are members, one and all, of that universal Church of which the saintly Lacordaire truly said: "Where there is the love of God, there is Jesus Christ; and

where there is Jesus Christ, there is the Church with Him." Yes, "coming from every religious movement, our hymns betoken," says a distinguished living writer, "an unsectarian catholicity such as marks all true religion. On the neutral ground of hymns we rejoice alike in the classic sweetness of Addison, in the simple faith of Ken, in the fervent devotion of Toplady, the poetic tenderness of Heber, the chastened sadness of Cowper, the saintly strength of Newman, the soothing peacefulness of Keble, the passionate yearnings of Faber and Neale. What matters that some of these were Bishops and some Dissenters, some Puritans and some Roman Catholics, some Armenians and some Calvinists? A true hymn, simple and passionate, natural, manly, fervent, thrilling with spontaneity and vigour, knows nothing of the petty distinctions of Ritualist or Evangelist; it knows only of Christ and God." In the calm light thrown by our hymn-books on the consoling truth of the inward unity of Christendom, we can make with confidence the great confession, "I believe in the communion of saints."

JOHN VAUGHAN.

ART. V.—PARTY SPIRIT.

THE third and last subject for National Repentance mentioned by the Bishops in the appeal which they made last January for united prayer during the dying year of the century is one that will be very popular with all of us. It alludes to a fault which we all see in our neighbours, though we are very unwilling to detect it in ourselves. It is *Religious Party Spirit*.

"We cannot disguise from ourselves," say the Bishops, "that the greatest hindrances to the advance of the kingdom of Christ among men are to be found in the bosom of Christendom itself. Next to the irreligious lives and inconsistent spirit of many professing Christians, perhaps the chief hindrance is to be found in the unhappy divisions in the Church of Christ. The divisions of Christendom, the present troubles in our communion, and, more grievous still, the acrimonious temper which too often characterizes religious controversy, are deplorable impediments to the progress of the Gospel. All these hindrances are again a call to prayer." What excellent advice! we say, and how admirably suited for those who do not agree with us!

The party or schismatic spirit comes from an exaggerated