

pointed by God had struck, and *the man* was prepared to do His work. The monk had got back to the Bible; and soon his stout arms were striking at the root of mariolatry, saint and angel worship, and all that mass of superstition that had obscured and overlaid the religion of the gospel; soon, in trumpet tones, he was proclaiming that Saviour who had revealed Himself to his own heart, and who had also unveiled the heart of Infinite Love. And then, with wonder and delight, men saw how vain and useless were human mediators, when the one Divine Mediator had given himself a sacrifice for sin. Then with all the freshness and rapture of a new proclamation of "the glad tidings of great joy," men learned that indulgences, tortures, penances, intercessions of saints were not needed to wring forgiveness from a Father who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." "God is love;" "Salvation is God's free gift in Christ;"—this was the vital message of the Reformation. "Christ," said Luther, "is no law-giver, no tyrant, but a Mediator for sins—a free giver of grace, righteousness and life."

One result of the Reformation in Germany was an immediate outburst of sacred song, expressive of the gladness and triumph of the newly born gospel liberty. A rich and abundant national hymn-literature took its rise at this era, and the great stream of holy song still rolls on in the land of Luther, ever increasing in volume and fertilising and refreshing in its course through the ages and generations. During the long, dark period that preceded the Reformation, the singing of God's praises was a part of public worship from which the people were debarred. Latin, the tongue in which were written those noble hymns at which we glanced in our last paper, had become a dead language. The hymns were not translated into the vernacular tongues; the people ceased to understand them, and were not encouraged to sing them. Besides, the music was so complex that no one could join in it, unless he had studied it scientifically. The Reformation altered all this. It struck the flint rock, and the stream of song gushed forth. Luther led the way as a singer. He not only gave the Bible to the German people in their own tongue but also a hymn-book. He knew the power and value of many of those grand old Latin hymns that embodied the piety of ages, and which he had so often chanted in his monastery; and, purging them from whatever was unscriptural, he poured them forth, fresh and vigorous, in new translations, stamped with his own individuality. Some of the best of the old hymns were

thus employed in the worship of the Reformed Church. But this was not all. Luther was a lover of music and poetry, and poured forth his emotions in sacred song of his own composing. Some of his hymns are sung in the German churches to this day, and one or two have found their way into our English hymn-books. Linked to familiar melodies or airs of popular songs, they flew all over Germany, stirring the popular heart to its very depths, and carrying, as nothing else could have done, the faith they embodied to the homes and hearts of the masses. There are instances on record of whole towns being won by a single hymn to the Reformed faith. As it passed from hand to hand, or from lip to lip, one after another, with joyful voice, took up the strain,—and the great storm of song swept away the old rubbish of centuries. Luther's grandest hymn is undoubtedly his version of the 46th Psalm;—not by any means a literal rendering,—but while the thought of the Psalm is substantially preserved, that thought is made *his own*, and hence had such power in awakening lofty aspiration and holy feeling in the hearts of others. Ever since, it has been the battle song of the German Church, breathing courage into faint hearts in the day of peril, elevating the faith and confidence of the brave, and inspiring hope when the darkest clouds had gathered. Luther composed it when he was on his way to the Diet of Worms, and we need not wonder that it has the inspiring ring of martial music. It is a chant of trust and triumph, worthy of the hero who said, "were there as many devils as roof tiles in Worms, I would on;" who, when confronting emperor, peers and potentates, dauntlessly answered, "It is neither safe nor prudent to do aught against conscience. Here stand I, I cannot otherwise. God assist me. Amen." The following is Carlyle's translation of Luther's grand hymn:—

"A safe stronghold our God is still,  
A trusty shield and weapon;  
He'll help us clear from all the ill  
That hath us now overtaken.  
The ancient Prince of Hell  
Hath risen with purpose fell;  
Strong mail of Craft and Power  
He weareth in this hour,  
On earth is not his fellow.

"With force of arms we nothing can,  
Full soon were we down-ridden;  
But for us fights the proper man,  
Whom God himself hath bidden.  
Ask ye, Who is this same?  
Christ Jesus is his name,  
The Lord Zebaoth's Son,  
He and no other one  
Shall conquer in the battle.