

The Committee on Temperance presented a report submitting a constitution based on that of the Church of England Temperance Society. A debate followed upon it, in which the Rev. Canon Pentreath, B.D., Rev. A. J. Garton, Mr. Howell, Q.C., and others strongly advocated it. Mr. Howell also condemned the use of tobacco—the prevalent sister evil habit. His Grace the Archbishop intimated his strong opposition to Intemperance and his sense of the importance of the Temperance movement; but did not feel that the highest condition was that of a total abstainer; and had great difficulty in recognizing the value to himself of taking a pledge and wearing a badge. If it were intended that those who took part in the affairs of the Society must sign a pledge he could not be a party to the constitution; but if otherwise he should be very glad to be a patron.

The report was adopted; later a number of the clergy and laity met in Holy Trinity School House and duly constituted a Diocesan Branch of the C. E. T. S., by signing the pledge and electing officers and council as follows: Rev. Canon Pentreath, B.D., President; Ven. Archdeacon Fortin and Phair and Canon Matheson, Vice-Presidents; Rev. J. J. Roy, Hon. Treas.; Rev. H. L. Watt (Virden) and J. A. Richardson, Secretaries; Rev. W. J. Garton (Emerson), J. J. Anderson (St. Peter's) and E. A. W. Gill (Minnedosa), Exec. Council. It was intended to ask the Very Rev. Dean Grisdale and the Lieut.-Governor of the Province to also act as Vice-Presidents. A committee was appointed to print and circulate the constitution and to send for supplies, so that *parochial* branches might be organized as soon as possible. This is a great step forward indeed in the Temperance movement in the best sense. It was also resolved in Synod to request His Grace the Archbishop to appoint one Sunday in the year as TEMPERANCE Sunday, on which sermons on Temperance be recommended to be preached throughout the diocese.

Another motion of great importance adopted by the Synod was the following: "That it be an instruction to the Executive Committee that they withhold consent from any mortgage proposed to be made on any consecrated lands or buildings."

Sunday Schools seem to be progressing in the diocese, as it was reported at the Church of England S.S. Union meeting, held during Synod week, that there was a gratifying increase of teachers to be noted during the year of 117; and of scholars of 1,700; the contributions also having increased.

The following resolution as to the late Lord Bishop of New Westminster was unanimously adopted: "The Synod of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, now in Session assembled, desires to express to the Synod of New Westminster its brotherly sympathy on the bereavement it has sustained by the death of the Right Rev. Acton Windeyer Sillitoe, D.D., D.C.L., late Lord Bishop of the diocese, which has taken place at a critical period of temporal disaster, when his wise counsels would have been valuable. The Synod deploras the loss to the newly Consolidated Church in Canada of a distinguished Prelate and experienced leader."

THE EIGHTEENTH ARTICLE.

A recent writer, after commenting on the fact that the Church of England, unlike the custom of the early Church, has generally avoided enforcing her teachings under the penalty of anathema, adds:

"But there is one remarkable exception to this moderation. The Church of England," (in which case the Church in America is also included, since she has adopted the Article without change,) "anathematizes one error, one spiritual sin, the sin of latitudinarianism, and

this because the latitudinarian spirit finds logical basis in the abnegation of all objective truth whatsoever."

It is the principle that nothing is so certain in religion that it need be insisted on; that it does not much matter what people believe, if their morals be good; in short, that there are no truths for which a man ought to be prepared to die, no revealed will of God to deflect from which is ruin to the spiritual nature. This is the position that the Church opposes with all her spiritual, God-given power of anathema; a power that she hesitates to use in the case of any other sin. But she does use it in this case, to counteract, if possible, the baneful influence of a theology that is so broad and comprehensive that all views of men (no matter how mutually exclusive or distinctive they may be), are to be allowed the protection of her fold. The same writer, under Article VIII. on the Creeds, says:

"The essence of a revelation is that it must be definite. We cannot conceive God announcing anything to His creatures which is not precise. There is no scope for selection of this or that doctrine, which speaks especially to this or that soul. The one question is, 'What is the sum of revelation?'"

And that revelation we know is built "upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself the chief corner-stone." The illustration of a ship is a very good one. The ark of Christ's Church is a ship with a keel. The keel is narrow and straight, like all truth, and so are the essential Articles of the Christian Faith. Some persons would, if they could, broaden the Church out like a raft, that seems very comfortable in calm weather, but the first heavy gale would tear it all to pieces, and send it as wreckage on the rocks. Assuredly such teachers are not the safest guides.—*Parish Record*.

THE CANTICLES AT MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER.

By THE REV. E. I. GREGORY, M.A., Vicar of Halberton, and Prebendary of Exeter.

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THE BENEDICTE.

This is the only one of the hymns which we include under the general name of Canticles, which is called a Cantic in our Prayer Book.

The original is not found in the Hebrew Scriptures, but the Greek Septuagint version inserts it as part of Daniel iii. It forms, in that version, part of a circumstantial account of the deliverance of the three faithful Jews, Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, from the fiery furnace. The Greek editor—clearly a Greek-speaking Jew—of the Book of Daniel appears to have incorporated with that book some fragments of traditional record which he found in existence, and they may possibly have had a Hebrew original which has now perished. At any rate, although, as we possess them, Greek in language, these traditions are essentially Jewish in their thought. They owe their origin, at least in their extant form, to that great outburst of Jewish literary activity which characterised the two or three centuries before our Lord, and gave us those books of the Apocrypha of which our Article says, adopting the words of Jerome, "The Church doth read them for example of life and instruction of manners."

One result of the Captivity seems to have been the more-widely-spread sense amongst the Israelites of individual responsibility. It had been present in the individual soul before, as more than one Psalm testifies, but it was reserved for the great Captivity prophet, Ezekiel, to proclaim to his people, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man . . . hath

walked in My statutes, and hath kept My judgments to deal truly, he is just, he shall surely live."* The Jewish youths in the court of the King of Babylon felt this. Come what might, their conscience must be kept clear. If the Chaldean punishment of death of fire † must be theirs, still they would not serve the king's gods, nor worship the golden image which he had set up. They were learning that difficult lesson—how to be in the world, and yet not of it; how to hold something dearer than all its glitter and power. They belonged to "that small transfigured band, whom 'the world cannot tame,' who, by faith in the Unseen, have, in every age, 'stopped the mouths of lions and quenched the violence of fire.'"

The Septuagint account tells us that after they were thrown into the furnace "Ananias, Azarias, and Misael walked in the midst of the fire, praising God and blessing the Lord." Then Azarias, perhaps the eldest of the three, and their spokesman, offered up a prayer to God, acknowledging that their nation had sinned, and that everything He had done to them had been done in true judgment. Yet he prayed for deliverance, and the deliverance came. "The Angel of the Lord," we read, "came down into the furnace . . . and smote the flame of the fire out of the furnace, and made the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist, whistling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither hurt nor troubled them."‡ And then they sang the "Benedicite," prefacing it with six Beatitudes, which are not included in our Cantic.

This grand song, "the very crown and flower of the Old Testament," § is a call to all creation, animate and inanimate, to bless, to praise, and to magnify the Lord for ever. Each is taken in its order: Heaven with its angelic host, and then, with a very evident reminiscence of the language of Genesis, those powers of the Lord, which, if we may use the expression, have the firmament for their home: those exhaustless reserves of rain, as they must have seemed to the early, but unscientific, observer; those mighty powers of storm, and lightning and thunder; those heavenly bodies ruling the day and the night:—these must all praise their Creator. Then the Cantic addresses itself to earthly phenomena:—the passing seasons, the alternating day and night; the dews of summer; the frosts of winter; the equinoctial gale;—all must bless God. Three verses then call upon the animal creation:—the fish of the sea; the fowl of the air; the wild beast of the field; the cattle of the pasture;—to join in the hymn of praise. Finally, man too, all the children of men, in their several callings and occupations, must unite in the great act of worship. Nor must those who have passed within the veil be left out in the common call: for "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity." Therefore "the spirits and souls of the righteous," which are in the hand of God, must join in the common chorus, and anticipate, so, the Christian doctrine of the Communion of Saints: for they are "numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints."||

Such in brief outline is this beautiful Hellenistic hymn. There are one or two expressions in it which call for some remark.

(1) Thus, the call to the angels reminds us of the intimate relation in which the angels, as the sacred Scriptures teach us, stand to man. They minister to him, touching his lips with the live coal from off the altar; they sympathise with his sorrows—for one comforted even the Lord Himself; they rejoice in his recovery from sin; they vindicate the ways of God to man;

* Ezek. xviii. 2, 5, 9.

† Jer. xxix. 22.

‡ Song of the Three Children, ver. 26, 27.

§ Kingsley.

|| Wisd. ii. 23, iii. 1, v. 5.