

## Pastor and People.

### LIVE IT DOWN.

When the world speaks falsely of you,  
Live it down ! live it down !  
Let your every word and action,  
Illustrate a square transaction,  
'This be your best satisfaction,—  
Live it down ! live it down !

Should traducers base malign you,  
Live it down ! live it down !  
Soon they'll hang their heads with shame,  
Cease to trifle with your name,  
Time will show where lies the blame,  
Live it down ! live it down !

Let not spite or envy vex you,  
Live it down ! live it down !  
Build upon a firm foundation,  
Live within your means and station,—  
Do the right and dare creation !  
Live it down ! live it down !

If false friends betray—deceive you,  
Live it down ! live it down !  
Better now that you should sever  
Friendships such as these for ever,  
Trusting to your own endeavour,  
Live it down ! live it down !

Should misfortune e'er o'ertake you,  
Live it down ! live it down !  
Own up error or transgression,  
Never be above confession,  
Cower not beneath oppression,  
Live it down ! live it down !

Heed not sneaking cowards' railing,  
Live it down ! live it down !  
Winds at stern make fastest sailing !  
Right is might and truth prevailing !  
God above is never-failing !  
He is judge—let others frown !

Toronto, Can.

—John Inver.

### THE PRAISE OF THE SANCTUARY.

Praise may be defined to be the ascription of glory to God for His works in creation, providence and redemption, or the expression of gratitude to Him for His goodness, in words of rhythmic cadence and poetic fervour, sung to appropriate music. It is akin to prayer, and, indeed, in some of its outpourings is hardly distinguishable from it save in the measured form which it assumes and the melody to which it is chanted. But in their rudimentary features the two are easily marked off from each other. Prayer in its simplest form is the making of a request, and praise in its root idea is the giving of glad thanks to God; the one is the exclamation of a soul in need, the other is the joyful overflow of a full heart. But both are addressed to God; and as on earth we are constantly travelling between our own emptiness and God's fullness, it is not difficult to understand how it comes that the one merges so often into the other. If, with many, we regard adoration as included in prayer, that is the very essence of praise; while again, if we take the Psalms of David as models of praise, we shall find that the elements of confession and petition enter into them as frequently as those of thanksgiving and adoration. Nor is the philosophy of all this difficult to discover, for the reception of an answer to prayer stimulates the heart to praise; and, on the other hand, the joyful rehearsal of God's goodness to us in the past encourages us to pray more fervently for blessings to come. Still, though they thus run into each other, the predominant feature of the one is request, while that of the other is thanksgiving; and the Apostle James has given us the *differentia* of each when he says: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." They are co-ordinate branches of the same tree—both growing out of our dependence on God and our trust in Him; but in the one that trust is expressed in supplication and in the other in song; the one is a cry for assistance, the other is a celebration of deliverance; the one is a *miserere*, the other a *hallelujah*.

Now in praise, as in prayer, the one great essential is sincerity. First and before all things else must be the melody of the heart. We must appreciate the grandeur of the works for which we give God the glory. The deliverance which we celebrate we must ourselves have experienced. The gratitude which we express we must really feel. This is fundamental. No matter how beautiful the words which we use or the music to which we sing them, there is no real praise unless the heart be in them; while if the soul truly appropriates the sentiment and utters it as its own, the praise is acceptable to God even though the voice may be harsh and the music may seem anything but melodious to a cultured ear.

But while this must never be lost sight of, we must remember also, that for praise we need the poetic form and the musical expression. And between these two, again, we must discriminate in favour of the poetic form. The words are more important than the tune. This does not mean, however, that the tune is of no importance whatever. On the contrary, in its own place, the tune demands special attention. It must be appropriate to the sentiment, so that there may be no division in the soul of the singer, the words taking it in one direction, and the music in another. It ought to be reverent in its associations, partaking of the majesty of Him to whom it is sung, and not carrying our thoughts to the opera or the theatre. It ought to be so simple in its structure that even a child may learn it without difficulty, and so strong

in its texture that it may bear with ease the weight of the united voices of the great congregation. It ought, in fine, to be so wedded to its own spiritual song that any other words would seem to be unfitted to it, and that the moment it is sounded it will bring up the same song to the memory. The music thus should be as perfectly the expression of the words as the words are the expression of the thoughts of the singer; and so in praise we have a trinity corresponding in some sense to the Trinity of Him to whom we raise it—the heart, the words and the music—and it is then only in highest perfection when we can say "these three are one."

But now restricting ourselves more especially to the substance of praise, which, as I have already said, is concerned with the works of God in nature, providence and redemption, and is the poetic expression of the emotions of the heart regarding these things, it seems clear that if a man has the poetic gift and can make a song for himself on such topics, he is at perfect liberty to use it in the praise of God. Or if he finds that the words of another thoroughly correspond to his feelings at the time, he may appropriate them and make them the vehicle of his devotion. And what one may thus do for himself the members of a congregation may do for themselves. But the great majority of us must be content with the words of others; for as it is not every musician that can compose a tune, so it is not every Christian that can write a hymn. True, there are many hymns which, after they have been written, seem to be so natural and so appropriate to all believers, that each feels that it has given expression to that within him which has long been seeking to find utterance. But it is always so in the highest products of human genius, and for all so simple as it looks, a sacred song of true inspiration has needed the poet's intuition to see the suitable occasion; the poet's imagination to idealize the individual experience, so that it may become the type of that of multitudes; the poet's fervour to give a form in burning words to his breathing thoughts; the poet's eye to look beyond the visible into the spiritual and unseen; and beneath all these, qualifying and quickening them all, the humble, penitent, believing and adoring heart prompting him to bend in lowliness before the throne of God. Some one has defined a proverb to be "the wit of one man and the wisdom of many," and much after the same fashion we may say a psalm or hymn is "the genius of one Christian and the experience of many." The poet has described what multitudes have felt; and so the strains which he sings awake responsive echoes in all their hearts, and carry the feelings of these hearts up with them into the ear of God.

The source of supply for this part of the service of the sanctuary is wide as the history of the Church itself and diversified as the experiences of its individual members; but naturally we find the richest and most valuable material for it in the Word of God itself. So far as we are aware, the first occasion on which praise was sung to God in measured verse and with musical accompaniment was when the enemies of the Hebrews were overwhelmed by the Red Sea, and the tribes stood upon the shore rejoicing over their deliverance. Next after that ecstatic ode—which struck the key-note of every later song of salvation, and is to be in heaven the groundwork of the song of the Lamb—we come upon that psalm of Moses, known by us now as the ninety-third in the Psalter, which even yet is found to be the fittest for lifting up the thoughts of the bereaved from the contemplation of their sadness to the comfort there is for them in the eternity of God.

Then, passing over an interval of centuries, we come upon the finest hymnology the Church has ever known—the Book of Psalms—the principal contributor to which was David, King of Israel. From the days when he followed his father's sheep on to the utterance of his "last words," the son of Jesse seems to have been in the habit of expressing his inmost and holiest feelings to the accompaniment of his harp. It was what we may call the safety valve of his soul. When grief overtook him, that which in other men would have taken the form of tears, clothed itself for him in a hymn; and equally when joy filled his soul, it overflowed in song. His harp thus became a part of himself, and its use became at length almost automatic. Thus he went on singing through life. And what a life his was! He swept the scale of human experience from its deepest sorrow to its highest joys. Through his one heart there passed

All thoughts, all passions, all desires,  
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,

and so his personal history combined with his Divine inspiration to make him a leader of song for God's people of every generation. He knew at the one extreme the solitude of the fugitive, and at the other the lonely glory of a throne. He made trial alike of exile and desertion; of wandering and settled life; of love and hatred; of confidence and suspicion; of the service of God and the service of Satan; of sin and of repentance, and so his songs are comprehensive as the soul and varied as human life. For the lover of nature in her many moods he has sung his psalm of the seasons, which tells of the year crowned with the goodness of God; for the devout astronomer as he contemplates the silent stars, he has left his night song on the greatness of the heavens and the nobler exercise of the mind that can consider them. For every phase of nature and every mood of mind he has an appropriate utterance. And the same is true of the vicissitudes of religious experience. His psalms have given a staff to the weary pilgrim, a sword to the warring saint, a solace to the weeping mourner, a penitential prayer to the backslider, an expression of gladness to the pardoned sinner, and a pillow of peace to the dying believer, while most interesting of all, they were often on the lips of Christ Himself. Never, therefore, while

the Church of Christ exists, can the Psalter cease to have an interest of the deepest sort for the devout believer in the Lord Jesus.

Many other ancient Hebrew hymns are to be found in the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and their brethren the prophets, for they were psalmists as really as was David; and though we have no record of their use in the ancient sanctuary, we may believe that such odes as the twelfth chapter of Isaiah and the third of Habakkuk would be often sung to the accompaniment of music. Now the Christian Church, which is the outgrowth and development of the Jewish, came into possession of this precious legacy of inspired hymnology, and the words of Paul to the Ephesians, when he urges his readers to sing in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, seem to imply that the use of these psalms was part of the worship of the early Christians. But they seem also to indicate that the primitive Churches did not feel themselves under obligation to use no other than such productions in their stated services. Besides, we have evidence from the first ecclesiastical historians that other hymns than those contained in the Hebrew Scriptures were introduced into their worship. I cannot, therefore, agree with those who maintain that we are not at liberty to use any other than the Hebrew Psalter in our praise. We have the same liberty as the Hebrews themselves had in this matter; and if our praise is to be distinctively Christian, we must have something that is purely of Christian growth. But to say that is one thing and to neglect the Psalter is another. In former days the tendency was to restrict us to the Psalter; but now, I fear, it is to ignore the Psalter altogether; and that is to be equally deprecated. I like the hymn book, but I am sorry that we make so little of the psalms. It may be said that we may read them regularly, responsively, as some do; but to that there are, in my mind, two objections—namely, that they were written to be sung, and that they are so continuous in their structure that the sense is constantly broken up by the reading of them in alternate verses. But what doth hinder us to chant them? I do not mean that they should be chanted by the choir for us, but that the congregation as a whole, led by the choir, should chant them. It would take a little care and some considerable practice, but by the introduction of a psalm, to be chanted by the people, into the service, we would bring back the Psalter into prominence, and so make more clearly manifest the unity of the one true Church of God throughout both the old and the new dispensations.

For the use of hymns, we have now abundant facilities in the numerous hymn-tune books that have been published during the last thirty years. The poets of the sanctuary form of themselves a goodly constellation in the firmament of song, and the names of the brightest, whether on this or the other side of the Atlantic, will at once suggest themselves to everyone. But their productions must be used with judgment. My own opinion is that most of the hymn-tune books now in use are too large. It is impossible for a congregation to become familiar—so familiar as to sing them easily and heartily I mean—with so many tunes as are required for thirteen or fifteen hundred hymns, and though our language is rich in first-class hymns, I do not believe that there so many as thirteen hundred first-class English hymns. But every pastor, out of these thirteen hundred, can make his own selection, and if he be wise, he will make that selection with special reference to the excellence of the hymns, on the one hand, and the quality of the tunes with which they are connected on the other. It is not enough that the hymn be appropriate to the topic of the discourse, it should also be high-class poetry and the expression of a true Christian experience. Appropriateness is purchased at too dear a price when we have to take it in doggerel or in mere rhyming prose; and a tune that the people cannot or will not sing ought to be forever discarded.

For the rest, let us express our indebtedness to the sweet singers who have enriched us with their sacred lyrics. In ancient times and in Eastern lands, when one desired to be a benefactor to successive generations, he dug a well, out of which they might draw copious and cooling supplies of water. Such a well in the burning heat of life is a good hymn to the Christian pilgrim. Nay, better still, it is like the stream which followed the Israelites in the wilderness, for it goes with us whithersoever we go; it is to us a constant source of refreshing, and our obligation to its author is only increased when we discover, as in so many cases we do, that it came from his own suffering and smitten heart.—William M. Taylor, D.D., in *Homiletic Review*.

### REALITY IN RELIGION.

Religion is a very real, a very inward thing. It is simply setting God always before us; recognizing that bond of obligation—of duty—by which we are tied to Him. It is not an outward ceremonial service—it is not building sumptuous churches for rich folk to worship their Maker in at their ease; it is not the possession of an ancient heritage of formulated truth, or of hierarchical organization; it is not the mere thinking pious thoughts, or having compunctious feelings from time to time aroused; it is not beholding the natural face in that glass, which reveals its ill-favoured features only too truly, and then going our way and straightway forgetting what manner of man we were. This is not religion. It goes below all this, and instead of being a mere passing emotion, or a bright vision of heavenly things, such as those saw for a brief moment who were with their Lord on the Holy Mount, it is like the central strain which the ear catches now and again, and ever amid the rapid and almost bewildering movements of some varied harmony, giving tone, and unity, and character to the whole.—Dr. Fraser.