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Miscellanea

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Miscellanea.

The Choirmaster and His Choir.

Since the pastor of a Lutheran congregation is the liturgist in charge of the entire service, the following paragraphs from an article in the *Lutheran* will be of interest to our readers: —

"Principles Affecting the Service Itself.

"Two considerations make it important that the music of the liturgy be given the first thought rather than the anthems or other special music of the service. The Lutheran Church is a liturgical Church. It provides complete liturgical services with historical texts for each day or festival. It does not expect its ministers and organists to build up 'worship programs.' In the second place, Lutheran worship is fundamentally congregational rather than choral in character. The special music of the choir is important and has its place in the whole scheme. The first consideration in every service must be the presentation of the liturgy for the day with all its appointments.

"In the Roman Church the priest and the choir carry the service. The people 'assist' at Mass by their presence and accompany its different parts with appropriate devotions of their own. They sing no responses or hymns and have no active participation in the music. The Anglican theory of worship also emphasizes choral excellence, with congregational participation limited to hymns and a few brief responses. The longer canticles and other parts of the liturgy are sung by the choir to more or less elaborate settings ('services'), which change frequently, even daily, in cathedrals. Other Protestant communions, having no historic or fully developed liturgy, also regard the special choral numbers as their important musical features.

"Because of these facts the Lutheran choirmaster must constantly hold his choir to the highest point of effectiveness in its rendition of every part of the liturgy. The choir must be made to feel that in singing the service it is a part of the congregation, which has been called upon to exercise its own peculiar gifts of leadership. Every part must be sung clearly and intelligently without mumbling, dragging, or undue haste. Variety in method will add interest and effectiveness. Most of the responses may be sung in four parts. Congregational participation, however, will gain by occasionally singing portions in unison.

"The organist must do more than accompany the choir and the congregation. He is the interpreter of the liturgical texts. He must bring out the contrasts in mood and meaning between such elements as the *Kyrie* and the *Gloria* and even between the different sections of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the *Sanctus*, etc. Similarly in the hymns; by his playing he must teach the congregation to sing the words as well as the tunes. Nothing is more unintelligent and uninteresting than to have every stanza of every hymn sung precisely alike, with monotonous equality of expressionless tone from beginning to end. This is singing with lungs and throat,

but not with head and heart. The organist should study the text before playing the hymn over. He should then follow every stanza closely as the congregation sings it and by changes in registration, slight modification of tempo, and the building up of climaxes, etc., make the thought clear and effective.

"Considerations such as these place before the conscientious organist an opportunity and a privilege demanding study, spiritual insight, and real leadership. Frequently it will be found that adequate accompaniment and interpretation, the mastery of principles and methods of chanting, and similar churchly requirements are more difficult accomplishments than brilliant solo-playing.

"The Special Music of the Choir.

"The preparation of special choir music is an important feature. This calls for scholarship, gifts of administration, technical proficiency in voice production, conducting, etc., and the less brilliant, but equally important gift of working successfully with others. The effort to unite the powers of the many personalities under his direction in the finest possible production of a common work challenges his best talents at many points.

"First, consideration will be given to the introits and graduals in the liturgy. These are specific choir elements, which vary with each service. Additional choir numbers of freer character may be chosen from the great body of harmonized *chorales*, motets, anthems, and cantatas. In each of these groupings there is so much that is worshipful, noble, and beautiful, and in all grades of difficulty, that only ignorance or poor taste can explain the use of unworthy material. Composers, editors, and publishers have made available with English texts a vast store of choir music from all lands and communions. Particular attention should be given to unaccompanied (a-cappella) compositions. These provide a peculiarly churchly and beautiful type of music, which represents the Lutheran rather than the Anglican tradition. Selection will be influenced largely by the ability of local choirs and the preference of local congregations and communities. Popular taste and appreciation, however, as well as the ability of choral groups, can be greatly developed by a progressive use of different and better types of music. Congregational participation and interest will be furthered by providing printed texts of the choir numbers in the church bulletin or on separate sheets.

"There is no limit, except that of endowment and training, to the qualities which a competent choirmaster may exercise in his work. All his powers of insight and imagination, of sensibility to mood and meaning, of magnetic leadership, and of mastery of method will be brought into play. The finest devotional and artistic effects can be attained only by painstaking and intelligent work. This will cover all details of voice production, intonation, enunciation, phrasing, rhythm, and *ensemble* qualities. A choirmaster who grasps the essential significance of the church's services and the finest values in the church's music and who has the ability to lead others in mastering technical difficulties and expressing musical thought, will be able to attract and hold capable singers and maintain standards."

P. E. K.

The English of the Pulpit.

The following paragraphs, taken from Hunt's interesting book *Ethical Teachings in Old English Literature*, offer valuable food for thought in these days of overorganization, with its menace of superficial preaching: —

"The Protestant pulpit of England and America may justly be expected to present an exceptionally high type of English speech and style. It is with this 'big Book' and with this 'good Book' that the clergy have specially to do in the secret meditations of the study and in the public administration of religion. By daily contact with it as a book they should naturally become imbued with its teachings and spirit so as to avoid 'big, swelling words' in their preference for 'great plainness of speech.' In a sense applicable to no other class of men their professional and daily language should be conspicuously clean and clear, and cogent, because steeped in Bible influences. They may thus be presumed to be an accepted standard in the use of the vernacular to all other professions and to the public to whom they minister. Certainly no body of men are in a more favorable and responsible position relative to the use of their native tongue. Through the medium of their academic, collegiate, and theological training they have learned the distinctively literary use of English. By their official and personal relations to the public they must perforce learn the language of every-day life, while, in addition to all this, they enjoy the peculiar advantages arising from the ministry of that Word, whose sacred dialect becomes their common speech. The clerical profession, as any other technical profession, legal or medical, has a special vocabulary of its own, with this remarkable anomaly, however, that the Bible, as the basis of that vocabulary, has a larger element of idiomatic language in it and a more pronounced native character than the popular speech itself. Such a fact must be telling in its influence.

"Nor is it aside from the truth to assert that our Protestant English pulpit has, in the main, illustrated, and is illustrating, such an order of English. The list of English preachers, from old Hugh Latimer on to Jeremy Taylor and Smith and Henry, and Robert Hall, and on to such American names as Mason, Nott, Summerfield, and Edwards, would substantiate such an assertion. It is gratifying, both in a professional and philological point of view, to note that no better English is spoken or written at the present day than that in use by the educated clergy of England and America. In accounting for this result, the English Bible may be assigned the first place. So potent indeed is this influence that many an illiterate evangelist with whom the only text-book is the Bible has, by the sheer education of the Bible itself as a book, developed a plain, terse, and copious vocabulary.

"In every course of theological, literary, and linguistic study, as in every discussion of the popular speech, there should be included a thorough study of the Christian Scriptures in their manifold influence on the vernacular. The Bible is *the* book of all books.

"The English Bible is *the* book of all English books. Whatever may be true of merely technical terms, the vernacular of the English peoples is the language whose best expression is found in the English Bible versions. The best elements of our literary and our daily diction are

from this sacred source, and here as nowhere else lie the solid basis and the best guarantee of the permanence of historical English.

"From the days of our oldest English to the present it is largely by reason of the influence of this English Bible that the language which we love has become the accepted language, the world over, of modern progress, of Protestant Christianity, and of the rights of man." P. E. K.

The Formula of Infant Baptism Not Tritheistic!

In answer to several inquiries concerning the formula to be used in Holy Baptism it should be said that we ought to use the words accompanying the act of baptism just as they are found in Matt. 28, 19: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." This is the form given in all Lutheran agendas since the days of Luther, and it should be used also to avoid misunderstandings. At several points of liturgical history we meet discussions answering the objection that the Christian formula of baptism is tritheistic. If a pastor should (most likely inadvertently) use the form: "I baptize thee in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," this would undoubtedly not invalidate the baptism, but it is a matter of wisdom to adhere to the form which eliminates all suspicions. P. E. K.

