

Consider some of these :

We pray continually for pardon, peace, preservation, everlasting needs of each human spirit. We pray in the very lines of 1 Tim. 2 : 1-2, and in the very order there laid down, for all men, and for those in authority, we observe the divisions there stated also in supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings. We are led to pray too for every variety of human need, for those in times of prosperity—a most needful prayer—for the weak, the fallen, the needy, travellers, the sick, widows, orphans, children, prisoners, our enemies, our slanderers, and those at sea.

Now I would like to illustrate this by two experiences. A few summers ago I spent a few weeks in the wilds of Newfoundland, salmon fishing, with a dear friend of mine, a parishioner. We were far away from any church of any kind,

"The sound of the church going bell, Those valleys and rocks never heard."

But there on the Sunday, far from any human habitation beneath the shade of a canvas tent on the bank of the river, we used to take our Prayer Book and go through the grand old simple service of the Church as we were accustomed to do in the house of God in our city home.

But can you believe it ?

Never did the language of the Litany seem more heart-touching and sublime ; never did the prayers seem to come so close to one's very wants and needs. Never did the words of the "Te Deum" seem clothed with such beauty and glory.

Without a choir, without a vestment, without a pulpit, pew, or people, with no organ to swell the sounds of harmony, and no stately building to suitably set forth the praises of God, the services of the Church of England seemed more beautiful than ever.

It may seem strange and yet it was true. That service which seems of all to need most the accessories of dignity and beauty and ornament and form, was never so sweet and natural, and well suited to the heart and mind, as when simply recited at that lonely river-

side where we two were gathered together.

The other experience is equally interesting.

An earnest Church layman was spending a few days of summer holiday in a mountain hotel, remote from the noise and whirl of city life.

The Sunday came, but there was no Church or Church service. What was he to do ? Let me tell how he did in his own language. "There had been no clergyman here for Sunday, and no service, so after wandering about the wonderfully beautiful woods for a time, I found a quiet spot *where I had the morning service all alone*. I had never had the experience, and almost wondered when I opened my Prayer Book how it would seem. *But the service was as impressive and edifying as ever*. Under the waving woods the voice of prayer and psalm and Litany seemed as natural as in a church with clergy and congregation and organ. It is truly a marvellous directory of worship adapting itself to every variety of circumstances, just as suitable to a service at sea as to the prayers of a congregation in quiet parish church or grand cathedral ; just as edifying when used in a family gathering in a quiet place where no Church exists, or even when used by one individual alone as in my case to-day, no responding voice being near. It was refreshing, indeed, in a very high degree. I took the service in order including the prayer for all men, the General Thanksgiving, the Litany (marvellous !) and the prayer for Parliament, most conveniently in season at the time. I sang two hymns—one beginning "Three in One and One in Three," a grand, solemn strain very suitable to the solitary grandeur of nature's surroundings ; the other a hymn of general worship. The sermon had to be omitted—I could not preach to myself, though really we ought to preach to ourselves when we preach at all. In the same letter this layman refers again to the Church liturgy and its marvellous suitability to the Divine sentiments and needs of the human heart.

"These prayers," he went on to say, "grow upon one still, and more

especially the Litany, which is gradually incorporating itself into my whole spiritual life. Formerly I thought there was too much of a deprecatory character about it, too much crying for mercy—a want of that drawing near in full assurance of faith which is the privilege of the children of God. But as Sunday after Sunday passes, I find it answers much more nearly to the wants and burdens and feelings, and the outcries of the average congregation of Christian people than a prayer which took higher ground. and it has taught me what we are a little too apt to forget—that the best of us need mercy, that we are very unprofitable servants, and indeed miserable sinners. But the breadth and variety of the petitions covering the whole of the Christian life of both the individual and the State, and the depth and tender pathos, always draw the heart out of them and stir up the spirit of prayer, and that kind of sighing that cannot be uttered.

"I could wish," he concludes, "that the Church in general could come to the adoption of the Litany, and this done, a good deal of variation could be provided for and allowed in the metaphysics of theology and even in church government."

Now, this is not the language of a clergyman or a theological professor.

It is the testimony of a busy man of the world, immersed from Monday to Saturday in the seething anxieties of the great business maelstrom. And it only shows how dearly the laity still prize the blood-bought inheritance of the Liturgy of the Church, and how suitable and wonderfully adapted to the need of the human heart our dear old Prayer Book is.

The Book of Common Prayer is not perfect ; no human composition could be, and it is a human composition. It is not inspired as the Bible is inspired, and, yet, taking it for all in all, its like is not to be found in the history of religion.

And we may well agree with the sentiment of the venerable Simeon, that if its excellencies be fairly weighed, its blemishes will sink into insignificance, and if it were carefully examined and compared, there