

naments of the Church and of the ministers thereof as were in use under the first Prayer Book of King Edward VI. I believe further that this rubric, with other rubrical directions of the Book of Common Prayer, ought to be interpreted—(a) On the principle of the continuity of the Church of England, that is to say, that omission is not, as such, equivalent to prohibition, but that intrinsic reasonableness and ancient usage are, on points not expressly determined, the recognized guides of the English Church. (b) On the principle of equity. Absolute uniformity of practice in all places and under all circumstances being unattainable and undesirable; this fact ought to be taken into account in the administration of the law. Otherwise endless prosecutions for defect as well as for excess must follow. (c) The liberty thus conceded upon the ground of equity must be regulated by two principles—loyalty to the doctrine of the Church of England, and the edification of her children. In judging of the latter I should attach great weight to national temperament and to local customs. As to the former, I hold that as it is laid down for preachers by the Convocation of 1571 'that they shall never teach anything from the pulpit to be religiously held and believed by the people but what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old and New Testament, and collected out of that very doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and ancient Bishops,' so we must repudiate any ceremonial observances which express beliefs or tend to bring back usages which the Church of England, following the authority of the Primitive Church, rejected at the time of the Reformation. The same principles would apply with still greater force to doctrine or forms of devotion which have grown up or been authorised in the the Roman Communion since that period, which bear the stamp of novelty upon their face." The learned counsel, proceeding with his address, referred to the manner in which this prosecution had been promoted by the Church Association, who had sent Mr. Walsh and Mr. Clements—two strangers—down to Lincoln to obtain evidence. It was difficult for him to restrain his language in the circumstances of a Bishop having been drawn from the natural duties as a chief pastor to answer charges which, as Sir Horace Davey admitted, involved no questions of doctrine at all. Passing, however, to the strictly legal aspects of the case, he would point out that in dealing with the Ornaments and other rubrics they could not overlook the fact that the rubrics were neither explicit nor exhaustive, and he contended that the services of the Church could not be carried on without reference to documents outside the Prayer Book. With reference to the question of ornaments, what ornaments were in use by authority of the Parliament in the second year of King Edward VI. was a matter which had given occasion to considerable controversy and discussion. But when they had found the ornaments, when they had settled that the ornaments were in use by authority of the Parliament in the second year of Edward VI., then the process was perfectly simple for arriving at the conclusion that the ornaments must be used, and he apprehended they must be used in the same way under the present Prayer Book. When they were looking at the state of things with which Queen Elizabeth and her Parliament had to deal, they must remember that Mary had been on the throne for five or six years, that she had reintroduced the ritual of the time of Edward VI., and possibly had made the Church a great deal more Roman than ever it was before, and the second Prayer Book of Edward VI. had never really got a hold of the people. Therefore it was only natural that the Parliament of Elizabeth should have compromised, should have kept the last Prayer Book with one or two material alterations, and should have kept to those ornaments to which the people had become accustomed. As

to the lawful use of the cross in baptism, he quoted the 30th Canon, which dealt with the lawful use of the cross at that ordinance, and said that things of themselves indifferent in some sort altered their natures when commanded or forbidden by a lawful magistrate, and that they "may not be omitted at every man's pleasure, contrary to the law, when they be commanded, nor used when they are prohibited." In reference to the use of flowers, he quoted the judgment of the Bishop of Exeter, who, in 1847, held that flowers were an innovation, and jumped to the conclusion that they were illegal. In 1890 nobody now questioned that they were legal, they were not inconsistent with the rubrics, and were generally used. That was one example of how matters, against which there was prejudice on the part of people who did not desire change, passed out of the category of objection and were generally adopted.

(To be Continued.)

"MISERABLE SINNERS."

Another expression in the Prayer Book which we fear is regarded by many as highly conventional is this, the acknowledgment that we make more than once in our Liturgy that we are "miserable sinners." We think it is Emerson, in his "English Traits," who pours ridicule on the expression. He paints the sleek, well-to-do, pampered Englishman, in his softly-cushioned pew, simpering out the hackneyed phrase, "miserable sinners."

But yet let us look at the expression from different points of view. Let us try, in the first place, to think of the Fall and endeavour to conceive what were the feelings of the first pair of mankind when they found themselves all at once shut out from the blessings of the Paradisaical world, and when they realized that they were the subjects of a tremendous curse, which had fallen on them in consequence of their transgression. What a gulf from that moment forward separated them from their Creator! Well has Milton pictured for us the immediate consequence:—

"Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan:
Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad
drops
Wept at completing of the mortal sin.
Original! Up they rose
As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
Soon found their eyes had opened, and their
minds
How darkened! Innocence, that as a veil
Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was
gone.
Just confidence and native righteousness
And honour from about them, naked left
To guilty shame. . . . They destitute
and bare
Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
Confounded, long they sat as stricken mute."

This is Milton's picture, and it is not overdrawn.

The reflection that the human race are the inheritors of this tremendous tragedy would lend a new emphasis to the confession that we are miserable sinners, if duly reflected upon. But it is with us as with people born in a garret and condemned to a gutter existence; we are in a measure born to it, and the burthen of the fall, consequently, sits lightly upon us.

Another thing that robs this confession of its reality with so many is their inadequate sense of sin. Their standard of transgression is measured by offences that shock society, or would place them within the cognizance of the law. Their attitude with respect to God, the Great Lawgiver, is overlooked; yet in the General Confession this is everything. "We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost

sheep. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders." This is a humiliating confession to have to make; and the man who makes it with a full consciousness of its import will not resent the imputation that he is a miserable sinner.

The Litany was drawn up as a solemn deprecation of God's anger, and in its opening sentences, appealing in turn to the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, and then to Them all together as the "Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons and one God," we implore of them to have mercy upon us, "miserable sinners."

It may occur to some to ask the question, is it desirable to put such language into the mouths of men which, in the case of many, must be unreal? The answer to this question is to be found in the fact that a similar difficulty lies with regard to the use of a different kind of language in our Prayer Book, the language of high spiritual emotion, of praise and thanksgiving. The standard of the Prayer Book is high, whether we take into consideration the profound acknowledgment of sin or the ecstatic language of devotion; the aim of every true spiritual worshipper will be to descend into the depths of conscious abasement in the presence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and also to rise on the wings of praise and exaltation, and sing at Heaven's gate as a pardoned soul.

There is a third place in our Liturgy, where we find the expression, and where, probably, the least difficulty is felt in making it our own. It is in the very beautiful exhortation in the Communion Office, and which we fear is increasingly less heard amongst us. We there use these words, "Who did humble Himself even to the death upon the cross for us miserable sinners who lay in darkness and the shadow of death." The language, indeed, is here retrospective, as if we had been delivered from this our misery by the death of Christ, but not the less can the expression be used of the present, just as St. Paul says:—"Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The fact that we have been redeemed by Christ, and made partakers of His Spirit, should intensify the feeling of our miserable estate when we realize what an ill requital we make for all this mercy!

When we make the above consideration ours, and others which we may mentally add to them, we shall come to the conclusion that the confession "miserable sinners" is singularly appropriate on the lips of every genuine Christian when he draws near to God in public worship.—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

PREACHING at York Minster the Dean of York, referring to the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln, said it must pain tender hearts, shock sensitive minds, and harden sceptical and cynical observers, when they saw by the agency of one party in the Church a Bishop, whose piety, efficiency, and zeal were unquestioned, arraigned for not strictly complying with some of those rubrics and directions which the very members of that party did not profess to have entirely observed, and would not if they were required to do so. The effect of such prosecutions might kindle a flame not easily, if ever, extinguished.

If we labor for ourselves alone, for our personal future, we know that what awaits us in the future is death. And death will destroy all the fruits of our labor. Consequently a life for self can have no meaning. G. McDonald.