

Ghost, but the Scriptures themselves are His own writings. I do not draw back from Dean Burgon's declaration, "The Bible is the voice of Him that sitteth on the throne—every chapter, every sentence—not some part of it more, and some less, His voice, but all his utterance, absolute, faultless, unerring."

KNEELING IN CHURCH.

BY THE REV. MONTAGUE FOWLER, M. A.,

Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

To many of us the habit, on entering God's House, of kneeling down to offer a short petition, and of adopting that posture at all times of prayer, is so natural, that the necessity for dwelling upon the duty of "bowing the knee" appears superfluous.

And yet it is impossible to disregard the fact that there is a vast number of people who habitually join in Divine worship, and yet utterly ignore the obligation laid upon the followers of Jesus Christ, to use the recognised method of showing the spirit of devotion.

The Old Testament supplies many instances of this custom among the chosen race. Ezra tells us how "I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, and said . . . In Psalm xcv.—the *Venite*, which we sing daily in the Morning Service—we are invited "to worship and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." We read how Daniel, after the extraordinary decree made by King Darius, "went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed."

Similarly, in the New Testament, we learn how Jesus "kneeled down and prayed," in the Garden of Gethsemane. The same words are used of St. Stephen, St. Peter, and St. Paul, and of the company of the faithful at Tyre.

In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul, quoting from Isaiah, says: "It is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God." And writing to the Christians at Philippi, the Apostle urges that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

The custom of kneeling during prayer has prevailed from earliest times in the Christian Church. It was so universal, the prayers gained the name of "bending the knee."

The importance of the practice is indicated in our Prayer-Book (portions of which date back for many centuries), by the rubrics, or notes explanatory of the service, which give the explicit directions that, at certain places, the congregation are to kneel. If we take the "Order for Morning prayer" as an example, we find this rule laid down, (1) before the Confession; (2) before the Absolution, to pronounce which the Priest stands; (3) before the Lord's Prayer, where Priest and people again kneel together; (4) after the Creed; (5) before the Collects.

And in the Service of the Holy Communion, the "Invitation" (as it is called) commencing "Ye, that do truly and earnestly . . . explain what is meant by the word "to kneel," because it urges those who remain to partake of the Blessed Sacrament, "to make their humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon their knees."

The habit, so common among the men of the congregation a generation ago, of standing up with the hat inverted, and uttering a short prayer while gazing into it, is happily fast dying out. But there are many churches where lounging across from the seat to the book-rest is substituted for the true posture of kneeling. I remember how at one church with which I was connected, where this custom was prevalent, the Sunday School children not, unnaturally,

endeavoured to imitate their elders. But as the pews were wide, and the children small, the result was that occasionally a small boy, who had wedged himself into the uncomfortable position I have described, was unable to avoid slipping, and consequently descended with a crash upon the floor.

I do not wish to lay down a hard-and-fast, rule that under no circumstance is a prayer to be offered to Almighty God in any other position than that of kneeling. (On the contrary, I would urge, and urge most strongly, that the practice of ejaculatory prayer should be encouraged in every possible way. It frequently happens that some critical decision is forced upon us suddenly, or some strong temptation assails us without warning. At such times it is a great privilege to feel that, wherever we may be, and whatever may be our surroundings, we have free access for guidance and support to the Giver of all Good.

At the same time, I would earnestly do what I can to discourage the practice—due partly to thoughtlessness, partly to indifference, and partly to self-indulgence—of sitting or lounging during those portions of the the Church's services which are appropriated to prayer and worship.

When we lift up our hearts in spirit before the Throne of Grace, we are approaching, as humble suppliants, the great Ruler of the Universe, and it is fitting that we should, by our outward gesture, indicate the homage and respect which we feel.

What would be thought of the man who appeared before his sovereign to receive some mark of favour, and refused to kneel when his knighthood, was conferred on him?

And yet there are many who will not pay this mark of allegiance to the God—Almighty and Eternal—at Whose hands they are craving some great blessing!

We are not concerned with the question of whether or not a prayer will be answered if we are standing or sitting, instead of kneeling. The point is, are we prepared to go out of our way to ignore the universal practice of the Christian Church as to the posture in which prayer is offered, and thus fail in devotion and respects to Him Who hears and answers our petitions?

Lastly, let us remember how easily others are led by example. Is it right to give a weaker brother, or the young whom we wish to train in habits of reverence, the opportunity of excusing their own laziness by quoting our action?

"Let everything be done decently and in order."

When you sing your praises, *stand*. When you hear the Word read or preached, *sit*. When you pray, *kneel upon your knees*.—*The Church Monthly*.

To the Editor of the CHURCH GUARDIAN:

DEAR SIR,—If Mr. Boydell will take the trouble to look at my letter again he will see that I used the word "missions" as corresponding to "parishes."

There are less than 30 such missions (or head centres in charge of clergymen or catechists) in Algoma, and therefore my argument holds good.

Yours truly,

CHAS. H. MOCKRIDGE.

Toronto, June 5th, 1894.

It is well-known that most, if not all, of the ancient provincial Churches possessed each their own Liturgy, which while adhering to the one grand central point, yet admitted of great varieties of detail; in fact, our own Church in the thirty-fourth Article says: "It is not necessary that Traditions and Ceremonies be in all places one or utterly like, for at all times they have been divers."

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Nature is wonderful, and the existence of a God is not a greater wonder. Indeed, the universe presents to us an unsolvable riddle save on the hypothesis that there is a God. The attitude of assent, dissent, doubt, alike admit the existence of the riddle. It is the will, not the reason, that refuses the natural solution.

The Christian life is based on this primary truth. Modern science confirms it. By its discovery of the correlation of forces, it shows us that there is but Energy in the material universe. This Energy is seen to be an intellectual one, for it requires intelligence to understand it. It is an Eternal one, for it must be self-moved. It is a personal or Self-knowing Energy, for it cannot know less than itself. It is an absolute and unconditioned one, for Personality does not imply limitation, but the want of Personality would.

Psychology also confirms our belief. Man is part of the riddle, and his own nature helps him to the answer. Our mental processes reveal God's existence, just as the act of bodily respiration reveals an atmosphere. We all begin to reason in accordance with a pre-existing, mental law of causation, which is as independent of man's existence as are the laws of mathematics. We assert that some truths are absolutely and entirely and universally true, and we know them to be so, though all that our reasoning processes can demonstrate is that they are *probably* true. In other words, some of our mental processes are preformed just as a machine in a factory moves by being connected by a belt with the great shaft that runs through the room, which is itself set and kept in motion by the great engine out of sight. Thus our mental processes reveal Him in Whom we live and move and have our being, and without using whose intellect we can no more reason and know as we do, than without His Power we can draw a breath. Moreover, having spiritual powers as well as mental, we can as spiritual beings hold communion with God. The hypothesis of reason can be demonstrated by experiment. We can come to know Him. We can not only speak, as through a telephone, and get his answer as from a distant throne, but we can find Him very near indeed, even within ourselves. Let us cease from reasoning, from doubting, and listen and act. "Be still then know that I am God." Every movement of conscience, every aspiration for a better life is from Him. The felt misery, unsatisfaction, emptiness of a life apart from Him, is a proof that interior communion with His Life is needed to give satisfaction, peace and joy to the soul. The soul was made for God and it is full of unrest until it finds its rest in Him, and deep within the soul an all-forgiving, paternal Voice is heard saying "My child come back, come home to God."

Radiant in His moral beauty, stands Jesus Christ among the children of men. If we are united to Him we are in a new and higher way than that of nature united to God. Are we growing in that union? Here are some good signs. If we are discontented with our present spiritual condition. If we are more cognisant of our needs, weaknesses, and have less trust in ourselves. If we are depending less on our resolutions and strength and more on Christ's aid. If we are learning to live one day at a time and leaving our spiritual future to God. If we feel that God has something for us to do in the advancement of His Kingdom. If any special devotion is kindling in our hearts drawing us to an imitation of some feature of our Lord's life. If any one of these signs is to be found within thee, take courage. There is no life so full of joy as a life of devotion. Begin now and let Christ lead thee on.—*The Diocese of Fond du Lac*.