

PRAYING BY THE BOOK.

(1.) "Will the coming man pray?" We answer yes, if he is a man—more human than brute; and the more of a man, the more will he pray. The coming man will be very much like the man who has come. He has prayed and is praying; and one may as well ask, "will the coming man breathe?" He will, if he lives; the more lung and nostril, the more breathing. So prayer is a real man's vital breath; the more mind and soul, the more praying.

(2.) Will the coming man pray by the Book? Not all his prayers, but his public ones, generally; and many, if not most of his closet ones. His private ones will be shaped as he grows older, by his book, the same as a child's early ones are by the Primer, or by that earlier and more sacred primer, his mother's lips. Some guide will answer the cry of the heart, "teach us to pray." All the old objections to forms of prayer are vanishing away. Books are put forth for family and public use, by leading men in all denominations. Our Book of Common Prayer is now a Common Book of Prayer, among many who are not Churchmen.

(3.) Will the coming man pray by *this* Book of Common Prayer? It is called "common;" but next to the Bible, it is an *un*-common book. Popular, is the idea, in the best sense. "Let the people praise Thee; yea, let all the people praise Thee." Much of worship is to be public—in concert, and in concord; *i. e.* heart with heart, voice with voice, word with word. "Else, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say 'Amen' at thy giving

of thanks," All Churches sing in the same words and same tune, or try to, though they make discords.

But what minister will say "sing, sing, and go as you please," only sing in the spirit? Much less will one say: "Let *me* sing!" He will not even say: "Let *us* sing;" and then, "hear thou only me," which they seem to do in praying, when no one is heard but the minister! There is too much prayer by proxy. "Let us pray," means common prayer, and that means man, woman and child. Talk of "Congregational singing." It is well; and it does not mean—"us four and no more!"

Thank God, one does not go far in this Prayer Book of ours, but he comes to "the People." The Minister is to say—so and so; and the People shall say so and so. Here comes in the democracy, the commonality of the Prayer Book; the same as in this Church we have lay representation and lay readers. We get only to Genesis IV, 21, and we come to music—Jubal's harp and organ! But, how like harp and organ the music that sounds out in that word "common," on the title page of our Prayer Book, and is sounded again in the words—"as many as are here present." The whole congregation are to say the General Confession, all kneeling; the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, &c. This music is a diapason, when it says, "then shall be said the Apostle's Creed, by the Minister and people standing." Oh! where are the people made so much of as in our service? That is what comes nearest to "*Vox Populi Vox Dei*," in the People's worship with the Priest.—
Rev. J. Wainwright Ray.

A family circle—a wedding ring.