

A VISIT TO LAMBETH PALACE.

(By a member of the C.E.W.M.S.)

(Concluded.)

As often as these windows were destroyed, they have been replaced, and to-day the Church of England tells the same Gospel story, on the model of the *Biblia pauperum* which she originally told in the pre-Reformation windows." We could with difficulty repress our heartfelt approbation of these noble words; but the sanctity of the place checked the outburst of applause which would otherwise have escaped us. Presently, when we had been told of Parker's consecration, how Bishops Coverdale, Scory, Hodgkin, and Barlow, represented different schools of thought in that day; how groundless was the modern Roman (the Archbishop enforced this distinction) doubt of the legality of that consecration; how Coverdale wore a simple cassock, at the consecration, while Barlow wore a cope; and how then, as now, and ever, the three marks of the English Church were continuity, unity, comprehension;—his Grace suggested that we might have a short service. Needless to say this met our very heart's desire. One of our members volunteered to play the organ, and if another had not prudently intervened, the Archbishop's chaplain would have gone to the organ loft to blow! Was the like ever heard? The Archbishop knelt down before the altar, we all knelt towards the altar; and a short extemporary service, such as I shall bear in my memory to my dying day, began. A few collects (one of them very special to the occasion), the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, "The Church's One Foundation," and the Apostolical Blessing. That was all, but how it touched us! There were one or two fewer dry eyes after that service than before. A long while we knelt after the blessing; the associations of the place awed us into profoundest reverence. Then the Archbishop rose, and signified his intention to leave us in charge of his chaplain. Already he had been with us the better part of an hour. Again we surrounded him, and Mr. Ingram, one of our vice-presidents, thanked his Grace on our behalf. We are plain, matter-of-fact, hard working men, not much given to sentiment, but our hearts were then very full indeed of gratitude. The Primate, looking more a Primate than ever (which is my poor way of saying that he realized our ideal of a great prelate), replied, to our astonishment, "I can assure you this is a day I shall never forget. I shall never forget the way you sang 'The Church's One Foundation,' certainly as it has never before been sung in this chapel. I can only say, in the words of the old Saint: 'May the Lord bless you, and increase you a thousand fold, and may you raise seed to Him throughout the generations! God bless you?' And so, with another clasp of the hand for each, we filed past the most noble (I wish that these words were less conventional) prelate, in whose person we recognize the head of Reformed Christendom.

THE PRAYER-BOOK.

By Rev. W. H. PLATT, D.D., LL. D.

Except the Bible, no book has a more interesting history, a more divine sanction, or a more blessed influence than our Book of Common Prayer. I propose, therefore, to consider its antiquity, its scripturalness, and its conservatism.

I. THE ANTIQUITY OF THE PRAYER-BOOK.

From the earliest ages of the Church of Christ there have been manuals or primers of devotion, for both public and private use. For instance, the Dioceses of Salisbury, Hereford, Bangor, and others, in England, each had its own Prayer-Book, or Use, as it was called; in the main alike, but differing to suit local wants, and to be adapted to peculiar customs. These Prayer-books were, in turn, compilations from other and earlier ones in different parts of the world. For a long time the several services of the Church had each a separate service-book. One was a little book containing anthems and certain responsive services; another contained merely the hymns; another the lessons and short prayers called the "Collects," so called because they collected into a short prayer the spirit of the whole service. There were other little primers, such as accounts of the lives of the Saints, etc., not necessary here to be noticed.

As might be expected, the most approved of these gradually grew into general favor, and from time to time consolidations of them were made, rejecting all superfluous prayers and expressions, inappropriate or of doubtful propriety, and retaining only what was suitable and generally approved. About the twelfth century, further consolidations were made. Out of the many little Prayer-books was formed a more general one, called the Breviary; making up a service something like our Morning Prayer. Also certain established prayers, selections from the Gospels and Epistles, and certain antiphonal chants for the communion service, were collected into another book, called the Missal. And still another was compiled of the rites of Baptism, Matrimony, Burial, Visitation of the Sick, etc., called the Ritual.

From books like these, to be found in every part of the Christian world, came on down to us the materials composing our Book of Common Prayer. Thus, that book was a growth, and not a composition. It is the product of several compilations, many revisions and most careful criticisms. It has come to us out of the experiences of the Church for many and long centuries of discussions of the learned, and the martyrdoms of the faithful.

We claim that our Prayer-book retains all the essential principles of worship of both the Old and the New Dispensation. We go back for three thousand five hundred years to Mount Sinai; and, from amidst its lightnings and thunderings, take the unrepealed, holy, just, and good Law of God; and, by repeating these Ten Commandments to the people every Sunday, we stand, with Israel in the Desert, awed by these legislative messages of God. As Moses said,

"Hear, O Israel!" so we may say, "Hear, O Christians!"

We follow the line of God's manifestations to man a thousand years more to Mount Zion, and appoint that minister and people shall use responsibly the glorious Psalms of David. In addition to this, common with other bodies of Christians, we read in public service from the historical and prophetic books of the Old and from the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament.

(To be continued.)

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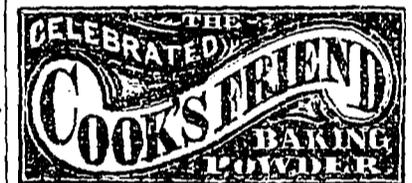
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