

OUR PRAYER BOOK.

The following is an extract from a Unitarian paper on the Book of Common Prayer.

"No wonder the Episcopalian loves the service in his prayer book. For those to whom its leading thoughts are true, to take part in it must be like taking part in rendering a noble oratorio. The simple stately phrases move on like solemn music. Observe their orderly procession—first the head bows in quiet confession and then uplifts a bright and shining face; then follows reverent listening as to oracles, Bible oracles, broken by the peals of praise; then the firm tread of the 'Creed;' and last the bowed head again in the long, low responsive murmurs of the collects and litany. Each part a beautiful detail, each richly varied from the next, yet all conspiring to unity. The service is a noble work of art.

"And it is what public worship should be, a common service. The book is truly called the 'Book of Common Prayer.' The people make together that 'General Confession' with which it opens; the people praise in choral psalms and glorias; the people read the psalms for the day in alternation with the priest; the people voice in unison their Credo; the people respond, petition by petition in the litany, and take each of the Ten Commandments to themselves, and by *Amens* appropriate the prayers and collects which the priest recites; and here and there the people rise, and here and there they kneel together. The priest, though having much to read, never for a long space reads alone, so closely do the people follow him. Many ages and experiences and modes can enter into this service, and each find that which is its own; the little child in its first church-going will recognize the 'Our Father' he has learnt at home, and to the old in years it must be full of clustering associations. And the use of the same book by all Episcopalians widens the communion through all the lands. At the hour of worship all who bear this name are treading the same wordpaths of thought and praise. Let Sunday come, and whenever he can find his church, the traveler is a native and the stranger feels at home.

"The service, too, is old and links the generations in communion. It is a century old as used in America, three centuries old or more in its English form, while by many a phrase and formula it is related to Latin mass-books of the Mother Church. The *Glorias* came resounding down from that early Christian church that even mothered Rome's.—*Exchange*.

"PRIESTS IN SHOOTING JACKETS."

Lord James Butler, some years ago, in the General Synod, referred in severe and scathing tones to "Priests in shooting jackets." Whether his words were intended as a prophecy or not, they appear, we regret to say, to be coming true. Fashion is a wonderful thing, and rules even clerical circles. A few decent old Evangelicals linger on who still wear tall silk hats, eschew clerical collars and M. B. waistcoats, and retain the ordinary frock coat. In one respect they have gone with the tide—viz., that they did not display the expanse of shirt front known among the faithful as "the breast-plate of righteousness." These men except for their white ties, are not distinctively clerical in their appearance, but they are decently and decorously dressed, like respectable medical practitioners. Yet what are we to say about "the Priests in shooting-jackets?" These men are not, as a rule, Evangelicals; they are High

Churchmen; they wear the all-round collar, the soft and tasselled or rosetted hat; but they wear also the shooting jacket. They are not all young men either. A man, of course, may wear a short coat in his study or in his garden; but it is rather much to see this garment worn on public occasions, such as visitations and large annual gatherings of the clergy. Some men, too, who favour it do not even wear the shooting jacket in black, but we have seen it in light grey. Where are we to stop? We beseech you, brethren, to suffer a word of exhortation. Keep your cigarettes and shooting jackets for private use; they are all very well in their own place, but that place is not the public streets and roads and assemblies for Church purposes. The plague has begun, so it is time to say this word. Remember the advice of Polonius to Laertes—

"The apparel oft proclaims the man."

We cannot get to the root of this fashion in shooting jackets. Are they a profane imitation of the short surplice? We trow not. Are they an affection of the squire's attire? We hope not. We despise the parson who sinks his own sacred character, thinking that he is more of a gentleman by dressing as a layman. We cannot make it out; it may, perhaps, be a question of economy or convenience, but if it be, let it be indulged in private. A clergyman is a man much observed and criticised, often unkindly criticised; but if he is to be criticised for his vestments, whether in or out of church, let it be on the ground that he is especially careful to look always what he is. Demeanour, dress, and decorum during divine service go a very long way. We know men who are so calm, so reverent, so simple during divine service, that we feel at once impressed by them for good. And we know men who are the very opposite, who tumble into church anyhow at the last moment, with tossed hair, flushed face and shortened breath. You almost see their arms struggling into their surplices; and they end as they begin. We don't wish men to affect what they don't feel, for an affected piety is utterly nauseous; but there is such a thing as a simple, reverent dignity, which becomes a clergyman both in an out of the church; and on behalf of this we protest against "Priests in shooting jackets." We speak as to wise men.—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*.

IMMORTALITY.

There is certainly probable force in the historical fact that most civilized men of all ages and countries have believed in the immortality of their souls, without the Bible. Even the American Indians have always believed in the Great Spirit, and expected a future existence in the happy hunting grounds. The ancient pagans universally believed in gods and a future state, except where they were corrupted by power and crime like the later Romans and the Athenians, toward the verge of national putrescence. Their mythologies express the real forms of their original popular beliefs. Their philosophers, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, held the immortality of the soul free from the fabulous coloring of the myths, but upon more solid and rational grounds. The fact that the ancient Egyptians certainly expected the future existence, not only of the soul but of the body, is manifest from their extraordinary care in embalming and preserving all the corpses of their dead.

The ancient and the modern Chinese believe firmly in the future existence of the dead, otherwise their ancestor worship, which is nearly the whole of their practical religion, would be an absurdity. The Indian races are firm believers in immortality, except as the pantheism of the Buddhist doctrine modifies their hope of an individual personal conscious-

ness beyond death. The Scythians, Goths and Scandinavians were firm believers in a future existence. The whole Mohammedan world holds immortality and a certain form of future rewards and punishments, just as distinctly and as firmly as the Christians. We are also entitled to use the fact that immortality has always been the corner-stone of the Bible religion, among both Hebrews and Christians of all ages, as the factor in this historical argument. For this religion has either a divine origin, or it has not. To those who hold the former origin the question of immortality is settled; those who deny its divine origin must, of course, teach that Christianity, like the other religions of mankind, is the outgrowth of some natural principles of reason and feeling belonging to human nature.—*Rev. R. L. Dabney*.

LIFE IS REAL.

From the cradle to the grave life is one long constant reality. It cannot be trifled with as a child plays with a toy, and throws aside when it no longer affords its possessor pleasure. It cannot be treated as a joke, or accepted as a mere fact. It bears upon its face the stamp of greatness and the seal of divinity. Chances and changes may affect its material growth and lessen its opportunities, but neither can destroy its reality. If it is wasted, even over so little, it means just that much actual loss to its possessor. As it hurries along its allotted course there are no opportunities given for returning to gather up the lost moments, no time for retracing a single step, no hope of regaining the chances which were once offered but now lie buried in the past.

If life is then so stern a reality should it not be spent in making every minute count for good. In taking advantage of every opportunity offered for its improvement, and in making some other life happier and better, so that at its close the beaten track it has pursued may not be strewn with the graves of lost possibilities, but marked all along its course by the mile stones of good deeds, kind words, loving thoughts and bright hope.—*Parish Messenger Spokane*.

ONE and unchanged, God is revealed in all varieties of loveliness, all fragments and elements of knowledge, all traits of worthy character. Thus the Christian touches all things with a loving reverence, for within them God is hidden. And because wherever He is, He is to be adored, therefore to the believer in God all joy in what is beautiful, all satisfaction in ascertained truth, as all delight in human fellowship, is forever passing back into worship of Him whose essence it is that touches with glory all desirable things, that is, in their fundamental nature and true application, all things that are. "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."—*CANON GORE*.

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