

phrase, "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." This is that which gives it its weight and authority. It is obedience to this principle, which is so dear to every Saxon heart, that gives weight and authority to the Book of Common Prayer. This Book belongs to no party, or age, or nation. Like the Common Law it is composite in character. It is "as mixed as a language." "The Orient and Occident have enriched it with their finest and strongest utterances, have worked it over and over, have stricken from it what was against the consistency of its import and beauty. It has been a growth, an exhalation, an apocalyptic cloud arisen with the prayers of the saints from climes of the Hebrew, the Greek, the Roman, the Goth, to spread in time over half the world." This wonderful Book is

"The heir of all the ages in the foremost files of Time."

If this be the true historic basis upon which the Book of Common Prayer rests, it stands sharply defined over against the Roman Catholic and the collective Protestant world. For these two systems, extreme as they are, center for their being in a common principle. It is a principle that does not heed the voice of the Common Law, or respect historic continuity. In somewhat of a qualified sense, it can be called the civil law principle, which maintained that law is made by sovereigns and councils, and that it can be changed by the will of a person or the majority vote of a synod. The peculiar dogmas and distinctive rites of the Roman Church and of Protestantism take their origin from either the edicts of a Pope or the legislative act of a Council. The distinctive features of the Roman Church to-day, which brings it out of harmony with primitive doctrine and custom, and the divers strange doctrines and notions of Protestantism, have been legislated into being, either to satisfy the theological exigencies of an age, or to please the will of a man or of the party in the majority.

For example: Transubstantiation was made a dogma of the Faith by a Council in 1216; the infallibility of the Pope by the edict of 1870; the Westminster Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, and the various Confessions of Faith, are all the results of legislative enactments, and express the opinions of schools, and parties, with no direct recognition of the continuity of Church doctrine and Bible truth. The question was not asked of the doctrine or rite under discussion, if "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." Judge-made law is of a questionable character. Man-made theology stands on the same level. Blackstone says: "The doctrine of the law is this: that precedents and rules must be followed, unless flatly absurd and unjust; for though their reason be not obvious at first view, yet we owe such a deference to former times as not to suppose that they acted wholly without consideration." A long continued and historically established precedent is absolute law. Such precedents constitute the Common Law, and they take their high authority, partly, because they express the will and custom of the people from age to age, and partly because they indicate that which was fit to survive in the national growth. This principle of precedent, which twines itself about the events of the past, is very dear to the democratic Saxon heart. It is justly considered to have gained, and nurtured to a high development, constitutional liberty and individual rights. "Precedent," says Lowell, "is only another name for embodied experience, and counts for even more in the guidance of communities of men than in that of the individual life." In the domain of the Faith once delivered, the Book of Common Prayer is the embodied experience of the past and the witness that voices the precedents of "the ages all along." Its doctrines and rites are absolute law, because they are historically established precedents. This should

be maintained with emphasis. For could the principle, that rules in every court of Justice, be recognised and honored in the sphere of the Faith in Christ, it would become possible to formulate a system which could be received by all Christian people as their common heritage. Here centers the hope for Christian unity. It is for this recognition—the recognition of the essential principle of the Common Law—that the Book of Common Prayer contends. And if there be any virtue in this principle as it pertains to the Faith of Christ, the Book demands from the Anglican people most careful consideration and a just appreciation of its merits and lessons.

When the break is made with the experience of the past and the testimony of precedent is ruled out of court, by an autocratic judge, the bars are let down for the entrance of partial and quaint statements about the Truth, which pride and prejudice will establish as the very fundamentals of life,—essentials to salvation. This is historically true. The edicts of Popes and resolutions of Conventions have manufactured opinions and theories about the Truth in fundamental doctrines of life; and in many cases, have placed them as the corner-stones of a new party or sects, and so divided once more the Body of Christ. The Truth is contounded with theories about the Truth. The liberty in Christ is limited by human enactments, which order the speculative opinions, which cluster about the facts of the Faith like so many flowers or fungi, to be considered as essential parts of the Truth for salvation. They are the causes of every heresy and schism. For heresy and schism have no regard for the Common Law of Christ's Truth or the testimony of precedent. Catholic precedent is the absolute antidote for every heresy and schism. The greatest of all heresies found its contradiction to Catholic precedent; for the Creed of Nicea was not adopted by a majority vote, but is the historic testimony of three centuries to the Truth. The Book of Common Prayer conserves Catholic precedent. It, therefore makes a radical distinction between doctrine and sacraments that are essential to life in Christ, and those which are matters of opinion and speculation. This witness could never manufacture some opinion about the Truth into an article of the Faith, and press it home upon the conscience of man as a question of life or death. Every page of the Book is a protest against man-made theology; against the substitution of theories about the Truth for the facts of the Faith; against the assumption that any party or pope can "be wiser than 18 consentaneous centuries of Christendom."

It is perfectly consistent for the Roman Church, or any Protestant Body, to adopt as doctrine any speculative opinion that either the Pope may wish, or a majority in a Synod may determine. And it is perfectly consistent for them to deny, by a papal bull or a majority vote, a dogma of the Catholic Faith. But the Anglican Church cannot so do. The historic development of the Faith and its illustration, that are centered in the Book of Common Prayer, force her to take the high ground that she has not the power either to change or to abrogate the common law and custom of Christ's Truth. It is not within her province to either make a new doctrine, or to manufacture a rite, or to deny any received. The doctrines and rites of the Church, which are embodied in the Book of Common Prayer, and the heritage of the age which are to be received by each succeeding age as a sacred trust for its children. The only question about doctrine, or any integral ceremony, that can ever arise in the Anglican Church, is how to state and illustrate more clearly a truth or a rite which in the popular mind is radically misunderstood or disregarded. This was one of the purposes of the last revision, as it has been of every one. The late revisers declared at the start of the work, that

they had no authority to re-adjust the doctrines and the rites of the Book. They endeavoured to illustrate them more clearly as the circumstances of the day required, and to bring them more completely in harmony with the statement and the practice of the Holy Catholic Church. The Book of Common Prayer determines that the doctrines and rites of the Church must be constant. The body should be like the Head, "The same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

Surely, it is in the minds and hearts of all to thank God for the inestimable privilege of a share in the perfecting, possession, and preservation of that which so 'procures reverence in the worship of God,' and 'promulgates the truths of the the Gospel to mankind in the clearest, plainest, most affecting and majestic manner,' to the glory of God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

HIGHER EDUCATION.

Our education does not cease with our early years. "Don't think," said an Oxford professor to one just graduating, "that because you have taken a first class degree, you know everything; you have just begun." So it is in the higher education of character. And here again we may quote Liddon. "The third and last condition of the development of the soul is the discipline of the will. The will is the summit of the character, just as the heart is at its center, just as the understanding is at its base. This will is the royal faculty which controls affection on the one side and the intellect on the other. Hence you see the extraordinary importance in a religious and moral point of view of the excellence of the will. We can see this to a great degree in temporal affairs. * * * Who is the boy, as a rule, that carries off the prizes at school? The boy who says, I will do it." Who is the man who struggles through all kinds of difficulties and ultimately attains a position of affluence and respectability, but the man who says with all the concentrated resolution of nature, "I will?" And so it is in the development of character. He attains who gives up time to Jesus Christ every day, who increases in strength and frequency of prayer; who makes it a duty to do work of usefulness, who resists evil manfully. Undoubtedly the Christian trusts, not in his own strength, but in the grace of God; and recollecting that he has that grace within him, says, "I will." And how is the will strengthened, perfected, empowered? I answer unhesitatingly by *obedience*. There are many who suppose that real strength of will is secured by giving it free play. Not a bit of it. You weaken it in that way. Obedience to a legitimate law is a source of moral strength and power. It is not submission to a superior power. It is not weakness bowing to strength. It is submission to an authority whose claims are admitted. It is thus an act of strength not of weakness. * * Depend upon it if you look closely into the influences which bear upon your characters, you will find that the great excellencies of the will are secured by *obeying*. If you obey not Jesus Christ, you obey either the dictates of caprice or imagination or passion. By obedience to Him your intellectual as well as your bodily nature is freed from the slavery of materialism. In His mercy He does not leave the formation of the will to ourselves. He takes us in His own hand. He disciplines us. He lies about our path. A time of advancement comes when the soul can say, it is good for me to have been in trouble; when it has mastered the hardest lesson and is ripened for further formation and can say in all things "Not my will but Thine be done." For in heaven as here "Obedience is the law of human development."—*Diocese of Fond du Lac*.