

harvest. Well will it be for us if the harvest be one we will be proud to garner. If some one in that dear home can look back in after years, and, as he tenderly utters our name, say, "Her words and example prepared me for a life of usefulness; to her I owe my present happiness," we may well say: "I have not lived in vain."

—*National Presbyterian.*

FOR PARISH AND HOME.

OUR PRAYER BOOK—IT IS EVANGELICAL.

IV.

In my last paper, I showed that our Prayer Book is thoroughly scriptural. Such a statement, if proved, is sufficient to show that it is evangelical. For to be evangelical it must be in accordance with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Evangelical: from evangel, which means the good tidings, the Gospel; and when we say that the Prayer Book is evangelical, we mean that it adheres closely to the letter of the Gospel or religious truth taught in the New Testament.

The Prayer Book is evangelical because it is loyal throughout to the Word of God. This is the first position in evangelical religion: the complete supremacy of Scripture as the rule of faith and practice. No church places more honor upon God's written Word than the Church of England. Fifteen portions of Scripture is the ordinary provision made by our church for the spiritual needs of her children in her services, while at times as many as eighteen portions are read. And in Article and Collect, Scripture is exalted to the first place as our guide and help.

The Prayer Book is evangelical because it recognizes throughout the truth of Scripture, which reveals human sinfulness and human need. The absolute universality of sin is a fact, which both Scripture and experience prove beyond the question of a doubt. Its dark shadow has cast a gloom and has rested upon every life but one—the sinless One, the Man from heaven. Christ declared that the human heart is the abode of wickedness, and addressed all who heard Him, without distinction, as sinners. The Prayer Book is one long confession of human frailty, and sin, and need; one great cry for forgiveness, for pardon and peace; one long earnest plea for mercy, for grace, for comfort. Our prayers declare our true state as sinners in need of mercy; as sinners who have sought and found a Saviour's love and cleansing power, but who need His sanctifying grace; of pardoned sinners who need forgiveness for the

day, for the hour, for the passing moment. "He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet"—as believing sinners who need continually the light, and guidance and help and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

The Prayer Book is evangelical because it makes the office and work of Jesus Christ of supreme importance. It is in Jesus Christ that the revelation of God's truth and grace is seen. In His voluntary incarnation, His life and sinless obedience, His death for the life of the world, His resurrection and ascension, we have a Saviour who brought complete salvation for sinners, so that all who believe obtain eternal life. The Prayer Book points constantly to Jesus Christ as the only Saviour from sin, the great manifestation of divine love, the living and ascended Lord, the true high priest of His people. It declares throughout that salvation is to be found only in Jesus Christ, who frees us from the guilt, the punishment, and the consequences of sin. It leads to Him as the way of life, the door of hope, the giver of peace.

The Prayer Book is also evangelical in its teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit. Without the guidance of that Holy Spirit, we confess again and again we are unable to please God. We are taught to look for His guidance, comfort, help, and strength. We look to Him as the Author of faith, the Regenerator in the spiritual life, the Teacher and Witness of the things of Christ, the Strengtheners of believers in their Christian course. We confess the need of the work of grace, of a new heart and a right spirit, of inward repentance, of true faith, of a steadfast hope, of a sincere hatred of sin, the very work which God the Holy Spirit is alone able to accomplish.

It is impossible in a short paper to cover more than one or two particulars in our study of the Prayer Book as in keeping with the principles of evangelical truth. It may be said that the General Confession and the Absolution are types of the prayers in the book. Let us see by an examination of them what position the church takes, what system she teaches. The General Confession is so called because it stands for the truth of the need of the confession of our sins unto God. It takes the soul at once into the immediate presence of God, at whose throne of grace we appeal, through the mighty intercession of Jesus Christ. It teaches that every soul has the right to offer his prayers to the All-Father, that there is the complete freedom of access to God in prayer on the part of all, and it declares the need of

bringing the burden of our sin to Him who alone can give pardon and peace. In this it is in accord with the evangelical teaching of the New Testament, which everywhere declares that God alone can forgive sin, that there is a throne of grace at which we can appear, that "there is but one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," that God is ready to forgive all who, with true penitent hearts and living faith, seek His mercy and His grace.

The Absolution, or remission of sins, is sometimes rather harshly criticized, but it is faultless in my eyes. It is the most perfect Gospel sermon I have ever heard; and while it remains in the Church of England, it will be an unceasing witness against all efforts to cloud the old, old story of Jesus and His love. It falls upon the ear with the holy calm of sweet music that has the power to charm, and soothe, and bless. No melody can be sweeter than this great declaration of the love of God—His readiness to pardon and receive all who come to Him with penitent hearts and true faith in the Saviour, Jesus Christ. It is the Gospel, pure and simple—pure, because it is according to God's Word; simple, because it declares in few words and in unmistakable language the great evangel of the love and mercy of God. The minister does not in any sense absolve; he declares the conditions upon which God gives pardon and peace. He gives the assurance that if we truly repent and unfeigningly believe God's Holy Gospel, we are pardoned. As Bishop Lightfoot has so clearly pointed out: "As empowered to declare the conditions of God's grace, he is also empowered to proclaim the consequences of their acceptance." The invitation to prayer that follows the declaration as part of the absolution shows in what sense the declaration is made. In it the minister beseeches all to seek God's grace, and the blessing of true repentance and His Holy Spirit.

It is because the Prayer Book is evangelical in sentiment and tone, contains the true doctrine of Christ, and is imbued with the spirit and letter of the Holy Spirit, that it should be valued as an aid to true spiritual life, a manual of devotion and a help in prayer and praise. It teaches those doctrines which are the basal truths of our holy religion. It never wavers in its witness to Jesus Christ as the one and only Saviour. It appeals to the Bible, is loyal to the Bible, and uses the truths of the Bible as the basis of all spiritual worship; and, next to the Bible, it should hold the first place in the churchman's heart.

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