

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."—Eph. vi. 24.
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—Jude: 3.

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THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF EVOLUTION.

Evolution has not been demonstrated to be the true theory of creation, but supposing it to be so, the account of the creation in Genesis is quite in agreement with the theory of evolution. In comparing the two together we must bear in mind that Moses did not know the language of modern science, and, therefore, we are not to expect to find the creation described in language such as scientific men now use. But if we make due allowance for the difference of language, and compare the two accounts carefully, evolution will be found to bear great resemblance to the inspired account of the creation. The creation so described in Genesis, is as in evolution, a progress of all things from the lowest and least perfect, to the highest and most completely developed forms. At first all was chaotic, void and darkness, then came light, the separation of waters from the land, and the consolidation of the land: the first products of the earth were herbs, grass and trees, then came fish and fowl, then cattle and creeping things, and lastly, as the climax of all, came man. This certainly gives a very crude account of creation by evolution, but it certainly begins with inorganic matter, and then advances from the lowest organisms to the highest, and if we take the six days in which the creation was accomplished as geological periods, the account in Genesis will be found to be quite in agreement with the teaching of modern science.

There is, however, a material difference between the two accounts as to the cause of this progress and evolution. Science tries to explain it on the principles of nature, without postulating the supernatural, and it sees in the motion of inorganic matter, sufficient cause to originate life. But science has not been very happy in its results in this part of the subject yet, it is yet unable to give a satisfactory answer to the questions, what brought inorganic matter into existence? and what was the cause which set it in motion at first? The Bible account escapes this difficulty. It sees in an Almighty God, existing from eternity, the first cause and life-giving principle of everything. But science acting on the principle that nothing is to be believed but what can be demonstrated, cannot find place for God in evolution, and so it must, we believe, ever remain an incomplete theory, the first cause being undiscovered. The Bible account supplies two other deficiencies in evolution. It is acknowledged by evolutionists that there is a great step between man and the highest animal, and as yet science has failed to discover the missing link which is to connect the two. The Bible, too, recognises the wide gulf between, but it bridges it over in a satisfactory way; the account of man's creation as given in Genesis, runs thus. "the Lord formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul;" in these words the mystery seems to be solved. To a certain extent the creation of man agrees with that of the animals, he, like them, was formed out of the earth, and when so formed, was like them a living animal, then God takes this highest animal and by a direct inspiration, breathes into his nostrils a higher life, an immortal existence, and man became a living soul. Thus man stands above (unmeasurably) the animal creation as the possessor of the divine breath of life, the living, rational, immortal soul.

Again, it has ever been a serious difficulty to evolutionists, why if nature has gone on of her own ac-

cord progressing and developing new species and higher organisms, there is no sign of this development going on now, or of it having taken place within the memory of man. If evolution be only a spontaneous working of nature, then there seems no reason why it should stop short in its progress. Science is unable to solve this difficulty, but from the Bible account, this ceasing of nature from her workings, was to be expected. From it we learn that God worked for six periods in producing all His works of nature, and then when His work was consummated in the creation of man, God rested on the seventh day. This seventh day of rest is the present age of the world's existence: in the preceding six God worked more directly in bringing the world to its present state, but now having set His machinery in order He is resting from His labours.

We need not fear the advance of modern science. True science shall ever be found to be on the side of true religion, the more we know, the clearer and fuller our knowledge of nature grows, the more we shall see that God's Word is true, and that the Almighty is worthy our love and adoration. Yes,

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell,
That mind and soul, according well
May make one music as before."

—T. A. P. H. in *Guardian*.

FAMILIARITY WITH THE PRAYER BOOK.

There is one thing which cannot be too strongly urged upon the clergy and laity of the Church; and that is an acquaintance with the Prayer Book. Next to the Bible, its contents, especially the devotional part, should be so carefully used and so continually employed as a guide in devotion, that if by accident or omission the book be not at hand, on occasions of "common" or united prayer, the responses may be continued, nevertheless. A correspondent suggests that clergymen should commit the offices for burial, visitation of the sick, &c., to memory, not that the book may be kept out of sight; but that the "form of sound words" may be adhered to, when the absence of light or other accident may prevent its convenient use.

The language of the prayers in the book is copious, Scriptural, elevated, and fitted for all occasions. Perfect familiarity with them will supply the devout Christian with "sound words" for every occasion in which he may be called or expected to lead the devotions of others, whether in families, or at times when the providences of God remind men of their dependence upon Him, and of their need of His assistance. The place or the need in which the worshiper stands, will suggest the things for which he should especially pray; and the Prayer Book, if he is familiar with all its contents, will find him words which will express his devout thoughts and desires, without an effort, as it were, with a spontaneous utterance. And such members of the Church as may be present, will unite in the petitions, with the whole-heartedness of "Common Prayer," though no books be used.

Nothing but study can acquaint the reader with the contents of the book. Scattered through it, as "rubrics," or as inferences from phraseology, are directions and guides for the conduct of worship—and a history of the Church more minute than can be collected from any other source. In the directions to ministers and people, are many things which warn us by contrast against the corruptions of a formal worship and delegated devotion; and

against superstitious observances, and idolatrous practices.

Religious literature is largely, very largely, indebted to our Prayer Book: and not only so, but the cause of Protestant Christianity is indebted, under God, for a great proportion of its best works, expository, historical and devotional, to clergymen of the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country. Take away from the religious libraries and from the firesides and families of Christians all the books written in our Church, or compiled from books thus written, and many persons who consider Episcopacy only the threshold of Romanism would be aghast at the hiatus on their book-shelves.

Let us, then, as members of the Church, labor to be members understanding and proficient in her history. Let us learn to do her justice ourselves—not by a matter-of-course assent, but from knowledge and conviction—and we shall be the better able to maintain the cause of truth and order as held by the Church; and better fitted also to improve and enjoy its privileges to their fullest extent. No other Christians have so precious a companion and commentary to accompany the Book of books as we. None have so able a "platform" of faith—none so excellent a manual of discipline. All these uses are united in the Book of Common Prayer—let it be the study of all, young and old, to understand that book.—*Episcopal Register*.

LAY DUTIES.

Upon the laity also there is responsibility for the worldliness that is destroying the Church. The Bishops and pastors are the appointed teachers, the chosen guides and leaders of the people. But ah! when the people refuse to be taught and refuse to be led! when instead they undertake to teach their teachers about these matters; when the world ventures to rebuke the Church; what then? What but to cry to heaven for the Great Teacher that Jesus promised to His Church. If the Church, not in one age, but down through the ages, in times of corruption and in times of purity, by her Councils, by her Bishops, by her pastors, by her saints, with, I do not say entire, but with remarkable unanimity, and unanimously in her liturgies, has defined and designated certain pleasures as pomps and vanities of the world, and in Baptism required them to be renounced as inconsistent with the Christian profession, have we not then, not an infallible certainty, but a safe and binding authority, that it is the very licentiousness of liberty to disregard?

The clergy are under the laws in this matter as well as the laity, laws imposed on them in part by the laity, who have an equal voice in all legislation. And should a clergyman be found indulging in such forbidden pleasures the law of public sentiment—yes, and the Canons of the Church too—would hold him to a rigid account, not alone because official propriety of ministerial decorum has been violated, but because there is felt to be besides a depravation of personal sanctity, on which alone ministerial influence depends. And yet, besides the requirements of decorum, can there be demanded of them a higher level of Christian walk and conversation than the people have any intention of following them in. If the clergy are to live upon a higher spiritual plane, it is only "as examples to the flock."—*Grammar's Virginia Council Sermon*.