

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

What a battle life is on the side of our *moral* natures! Here are great passions, appetites, impulses to be subdued: lusts, evil desires to be held in check. Very giants are they. No man has yet come to a thorough knowledge of himself who is not aware of it, and not on his guard against the very foes that lurk in his own breast.

What a terrific question! Shall he master them and walk erect, as a man honored, worthy, noble? or shall they master him? His heart the home of every vile lust; his soul with grandest powers endowed, itself debased, defiled; his energies wasted, enfeebled; his body bloated, disfigured; his step unsteady; the man, the victim and slave of passion and vice.

O, God, what a warfare is this! How terrible it is! And yet how grand it is! How it appeals to the noblest attributes of our being, even while the lowest lusts of that common nature are stirred and moved upon. O man, will you fail and fall in this terrific struggle? Will you show yourself a poor weakling, when you ought to be a hero in the strife? In this conflict of plebeian and patrician forces in the human soul, passion against reason, appetite against will, impulse against conscience, you would not that the plebeian should dominate and rule you to your ruin—what then? Only this wise and necessary precaution: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." Victory only perches on the banners of stout-hearted manhood! To start noble, it must be by a persistent fight with sinful self, Satan, and a wicked world.

And still more sublime the conflict when it rises to the sphere of the *spiritual*. Religion, taking the word in its component parts—*re back* and *legare*, to bind,—simply means the binding back the human spirit to God; and so giving it a right direction, and, it may be, a glorious outcome. But in the face of the powers of evil in the world and in the soul itself, this is no easy matter. What resistive forces the soul must encounter in carrying out this new and high-born purpose? How is the way to holy duty and the holy life disputed by that malign spirit which erst wrought man's moral overthrow, and introduced sin into the world, with all its evil machinations. How is the sublime course on which the soul would enter disputed by all the malign influences of the sinful world in which we stand, and now, too, by the low and sinful propensities which rankle and revel in the human breast. Saintliness means no easy walk over this disputed course. Says a great Apostle: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." God forbid that any should think of this as a mere dress parade of virtue. So far from it, it is a battle in the wilderness, terrific, prolonged, uncertain, wearing, where only "the grit of man and the grace of God" enable them to fight it out on that line, though it take all life long.

But sore, protracted and severe though the conflict be, it has for its end the eternal good of every man engaged in it, and his only safe course is the free and hearty committal of his life against evil and to holiness. Confirmation means just such a conscious, voluntary 'renunciation of the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh,' with full purpose of heart, with the help and grace of God to achieve thereby a glorious victory. Surely the one thing in this life most worth having is worth fighting for.

A goodly number among us are, by their own acts, and this solemn rite handed down from the Apostles, about to signalize this as their holy purpose. To them it must be, as to many

of you in the years gone by it must have been, a solemn occasion, a sublime moment; none more so. Will you not pray for them that they may be faithful unto death, and so win and wear the Crown of Life?

Life is on every side a warfare, more especially Christian life. The more the necessity for a harness in the old sense of the word. "Weapons of warfare, offense and defense;" and it all shows how much wakeful truth there is in this ancient caution: "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself, as he that putteth it off." One of the world's grandest characters uses this glowing language: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." But, ah! it was at the end of a glorious struggle, the close of a sublime life. It was the language of triumph in full view of the axe and the scaffold. No fear of death sealed his lips or took away his tribute to the blessed Christ, who made him thus to triumph in the actual nearness of a tragic death.

You, dear candidates for Confirmation, are just entering on the struggle. God grant that it may be in full earnest. The weary conflict with Sin and Satan and Self and World is all before you. Not in your own strength is the great battle to be fought. Only seek grace and help from God, thinking not to accomplish, as some think to do, a glorious victory, in any neglect of religious duties or Christian privileges. Be faithful to thy vows, and so the Eternal God will be faithful to His promises. Only be thou a hero in this strife! Let there be no abatement of zeal, purpose, devotion; and at the battle's end the victor's crown and glory thou shalt wear.—*Rev. S. H. Giesey.*

MOTIVES.

In these end-of-century days there is no end of fads, theories and "new ideas" in making use of religion to smooth the friction of life. The old ballast of doctrine and stable truths is thrown overboard, the center board taken out, full sails unfurled decked with brilliant streamers, and enchanting music fills up and beguiles the flying hours. That is the sort of religion that is getting hold of people, in which the single impelling motive is entertainment, the satisfaction of the insistent desire for immediate happiness. Even the old motives of taking to religion for the sake of appearances and social position or securing business patronage, are not deemed available as formerly. The one thought is, will religion help to fill up dull hours and furnish the means to have a "good time" socially? Will it provide music to my taste, and intellectual stimulus and entertainment, and at the same time let me off easy when my self-indulgence carries me beyond the border land of innocent and rational enjoyment? Faith, duty, service and responsibility are becoming lost words and lost things. Even the ministers of Christ are drifting into the stream and acting as if the Gospel had lost its power, and Israel could only be gathered by means of bazaars and parties and entertainments, and that which appeals to the single sentiment of getting together and enjoying things. Not that the tremendous power of the social element is to be ignored in bringing men and women into the kingdom of Christ, but it should not be allowed to smother the real purpose and end of religion. Certain it is that the crying need of to-day is the steady enforcement of the truth that while religion furnishes the truest entertainment, at the same time it demands service, loyalty, consecration. It gives the purest enjoyment possible to man, but it expects toil, hardness, self-denial, patience, endurance. If the motive in the pursuit of religion be the gratification of self alone, the person does not get Christ's religion, it is some-

thing else. If personal pleasure is cast out of the motive, happiness comes of itself, and the best and highest qualities of the soul shine with a lustre reflected from Him who came to be the true Light, "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."—*The Church News, St. Louis.*

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER AND COMMON LAW.

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There is a very strong and striking analogy between the Book of Common Prayer and the Common Law. They both are the resultant and the development of the same principle. They are twin-brothers. They resemble each other in feature and attire. It is impossible to be associated with either one for any length of time without being led into the companionship of the other. Churchmen naturally become defenders of the Common Law; and students of the Common Law become Churchmen. It is an historic fact that lawyers, who are experts in the Common Law, read themselves into the system and the theology of the Book of Common Prayer. The Church has always been strong among the lawyers. And she has won many to her fold through the Common Law. For a student of the Common Law, with moral instincts and religious feeling, will be led by an inevitable conviction, to the system of Theology and Churchly order that is enshrined in the Book of Common Prayer.

The Book of Common Prayer is not a creation of legislation. It is a growth. It is not an arbitrary compilation. It came into being, not by the fiat of a king or a convention, but, like a language, in obedience to moral forces which were the heritages of past generations, and which express the common religious life of the people. It is oftentimes assumed that the Book is the product of the Reformation. And, in a sense, this is true. The Book is the crowning achievement of that formative period. But it is a growth nevertheless. The Reformation period is simply a stage in its development. It does not mark its historic beginning, for a new Book was not made then. "The English Book of Common Prayer was formed, not by the composition of new materials, but with the several elements of the earlier services." "The Body and Essentials" of the Book are an ancient heritage. The Reformation is the date when the trunk of the tree appears, but the roots run down into the soil of the ages. The blossom is there set as the crown of a previous nature and growth. For almost every part of the Divine Liturgy and the daily offices, in their last analysis, can be traced back step by step, to the earliest ages of the Church. Every essential feature of the Book exists in its predecessors. It is "the Custom Book" that embodies the common uses of the divers custom books of the Anglican Church. Neither is there a breaking with the doctrines and the use of the Church Catholic; for the Divine Liturgy, the ancient norm of the daily offices, the creeds, and the primitive rites and ceremonies of the Church, are sacredly preserved in the Book in their historic continuity. The essential principle of the common law appears in every office of the Book and stands out on every page. To it its very being clings. The creeds and uses and rites "so collected," as Blackstone would state the case, "are of higher antiquity than memory or history can reach, nothing being more difficult than to ascertain the precise beginning and the first spring of an ancient and long established custom. Whence it is that in our law the goodness of a custom depends upon its having been used time out of mind; or, in the solemnity of our legal