

THE EARLY WORSHIP OF OUR CHURCH.

THE services of the church are at present in a transition state : we are fast leaving the ways of our fathers, and making many innovations. Many loyal churchmen are grieved, and would like to keep things as they were in their youth, but it is a vain wish ; the Church has rebelled against that barrenness, and must have something more than a sermon and preliminaries. On the other hand, many churchmen equally loyal to our doctrines and traditions are grieved over the turning away, not only from the bare services, but from the spirit of the early church, both in church architecture and in church services. We recognize that no return to the old way can be looked for ; people won't stand it ; there are so many counter attractions that people simply will not come to church, and we can scarcely blame them, and many sincerely loyal, and seeking to be true to our church principles and traditions, would like to know just how far they can go, and what they could introduce, and still remain true in all things. No help seems to be had from church courts, and, therefore, the thoughts of many are turned back to the older way, to discover what was the use and wont of the Church in her first days as a Reformed church. When we turn to that time, we see that the barrenness that has characterized the services of the Church for so long is itself an innovation brought in by sectaries and schismatics, who got their inspiration in English Brownism. It may, therefore, be interesting to some to look back at the early church and her services. The period with which we shall deal is the period from the Reformation to the Westminster Assembly : undoubtedly the period when the Church was purest Reformed, least tainted with independent or sectarian influences, and most healthy and aggressive, and in fullest sympathy with other branches of the Catholic Church Reformed.

The church buildings down to 1560 were built with chancels, in which the Holy Supper was celebrated. Each church was ordered to be provided with a bell, a pulpit, a basin for baptism, and a table (tables) for the communion. There were no permanent pews in the churches. Some of the wealthy and trade guilds had seats which stood in the church, but the poorer people