

THE COMMINATION.

This solemn office is appointed to be used on Ash Wednesday, or the First Day of Lent, and as we know that no religious service is so frequently maligned and misunderstood, the endeavor to explain and vindicate it may not be thought inexpedient or unreasonableness. We firmly believe that it is a service founded upon the word of the living God, and that whatever may be alleged against of unreasonable and unbelieving men, it must be true and loving and profitable; for whatever be the changes in the temper of society, or in the condition of the Church, we never can be absolved from declaring God's abhorrence of sin, or from denouncing God's sore judgment upon sinners; and this is "the Commination," and it is used that we may understand the terrors of the Lord and be persuaded; and that we may learn the love of Christ, and be constrained by it. And for this no service could have been framed more solemn in its nature, or more charitable in its design; nothing more striking to the impenitent—nothing more encouraging to the contrite soul.

It has been unwisely thought that the Church, instead of setting before us a blessing and a curse, has undertaken the fiery denunciation of wrath, and that she requires the prayers of all the members, that this wrath may fall upon their brethren. It is true that the priest is required to say what God has said, and that the people are bidden to affirm the truth and certainty of His word. "*And all the people shall answer and say Amen.*" But what is meant by *Amen* as we find it here? Not, so let it be, as in the ordinary Prayers; but, *Verily, so it is*, as we use in the Creed; not to express our wish, but to declare our assent—"verily, verily," it is true:

This is the Commination or the Declaration of God's anger against sin, and we have only to consider its words with attention to understand that there is no curse denounced by the priest, and no prayer for the confirmation of a curse by the people: for let us observe, it is not said, "*Cursed be he,*" or let him be cursed, but "*Cursed is he,*" or he is under a curse; and all the people shall answer *Amen*, so it is, so it is declared by God; the "*God whose judgments are true and righteous altogether.*" And is this an Anathema? Is it not rather a warning, that the sinner may shun the curse, and share the blessing instead. This is the sole object of the office, in which we are told as plainly as words can speak: *that we may flee from such vices, for which we affirm with our own mouths the curse of God to be due.*

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THE MONTH IN PROGRESS.

Since Epiphany we have been comparatively in repose. Having tasted the sweets of many glorious Festivals in succession, we are called to linger awhile in the pathway of holy delight; and by ruminating as it were on what we have so abundantly partaken of from Christmas to Epiphany, make it profitable for the soul's sustenance and become prepared for enjoyment of further supplies of grace. Man, while sojourning in the flesh, cannot endure or sustain a constant ecstasy; but the Christian year has been by the Church's authorities in past ages most wisely arranged and those who take pious heed to Fast and Festival, praying always according to the Prayer Book's wise direction, cannot fail to grow in grace, and in the knowledge that maketh glad the heart. The Holy Eucharist is as a staff to the weary Pilgrim; while engaging in