

to observe the day with special reference to the resurrection of Christ.

It is, in our judgment, one of the auspicious signs of the times, that the Christian church is coming more and more to make Easter the occasion not only for floral displays in the church, but for services having special reference to the subject of the resurrection of Christ, and of the immortality of the soul. * * * When Paul stood on Mars Hill, that representative company heard him gladly and with consenting interest, until he asserted that Christ had been raised from the dead, when they immediately began to sneer and dissent. But everywhere the Apostle to the Gentiles presented this truth as of the first importance connected with the redemptive work of Christ. No infidel or skeptic pretends to deny that such an one as Jesus Christ was born and lived, and taught; but that he rose from the grave and conquered death has been disputed quite often. It seems, therefore, both proper and wise that the ministers and Christian teachers should seize upon such an occasion as this to present simple Bible truths concerning this matter which is of the first importance. —*The Advance; Congregational.*

EASTER THOUGHTS.

If the Gospel narrative had closed with the awful scene on Calvary, Christianity would have been impossible. That ready surrender of Himself, when He might have escaped, could only be regarded as the height of folly. The absence of any effort on the part of Jesus, to disprove the false accusations against Him, would be culpable negligence, and as contributory to His death, suicidal, unless, as He claimed, He lay down His life that He might, at will, take it again. All His claims to deity, all His declarations, that in Him was life, every promise to raise from the dead those who trusted in Him, were proved to be false by this sudden and terrible termination of His life; unless this apparent defeat of Good Friday had been turned into glorious victory on Easter day. Surely men would cherish His memory as that of a just man, but they would look upon that sacrifice of Himself as nothing short of folly, and as exhibiting the failure of His mission. No matter what might have been the issues in the spirit world, of that mysterious conflict, on which angels looked with anxious souls, as a scheme for the salvation of man, the mission of Christ thus ended would have been a failure. Unless the darkness of Good Friday had been dispelled by the bright dawning of Easter; unless the power of death had been vanquished by the omnipotence of life; unless the life laid down had been taken again, the history of Europe would have been far other than it has been. The mighty power of Christ, which has lifted the race to its present high estate, would have been unknown, but for the fact which Easter commemorates. The yearnings of men's hearts, the hopes of another life, would all have been unanswered and extinguished, "life would be a puzzle, death a terror and eternity a blank" but for the truth of the Resurrection. —*The Church.*

CEREMONIAL.

Where ceremonial is excessive, it is a hindrance to devotion. Where it is without obvious meaning, it is mere formalism. Where it is a purposed revival of mediævalism, it is wanting in common sense. Where it is the invention of individual sentiment or taste, it is fadism. Where it is without warrant of Scripture or Church usage, it is disloyal. Where it is not kept subordinate and subservient to our

inward Communion with God, it is destructive of worship. Where it has spiritual authority, it is a following of God's commands and a following of the pattern of the heavenly worship, as shown for the direction of the Christian Church, by our Ascended Lord, to St. John. Where it is one with long continued and universal usage, it marks the continuity of our Communion with the Church founded by Christ at Pentecost and directed throughout the ages by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Where it is in accord with the custom and practice of the Church of Christ before the development of the papacy, it is not Romanism, but our own rightful Christian heritage. Where it is within the authorized permission of our own Anglican Communion, it declares our liberty of spirit and our loving mother's provisions for all her children. Where it is the outcome of self-sacrificing devotion and a Christ-controlled life, it is a help to our Communion with God and an acceptable offering to Him. —*Diocese of Fond du Lac.*

A GLANCE AT THE APRIL COLLECTS.

(From the American Church S. S. Magazine.)

This present month of April brings to us all the Five Sundays after Easter. This popular name in England for the First is Low Sunday, a name probably given from the contrast between the joys of Easter, and the first return to ordinary Sunday services. Such a title would hardly be in keeping with the general customs of the American Church; for with us, the joys of Easter seem to extend over the entire week, and upon this Sunday, as the Octave of Easter, a great part of their Easter music is repeated in our churches. This celebration of an Easter week seems also to be implied in the Collect appointed for this Sunday in the Sarum Missal, which reads as follows: "Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we who have completed the solemnization of the Paschal festival, may, through thy bountiful goodness, hold fast the spirit of it in our life and conversation," etc. This Sunday was called "White Sunday" by the primitive Church, because on this day, those "neophytes" who had received Baptism on Easter-Even, laid aside and deposited in the churches, the white garments received at the time of their baptism, and worn during the eight subsequent days. Such persons were admonished that they should keep the promises of their new life, and the first words of an old introit ("Quasi modo geniti infantes," etc.—"As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word") also gave to the day, the name of "Quasi modo Sunday." The Greek Church calls the day "New Sunday" in allusion to the renewal of the neophytes. Our present Collect seems to harmonize with all the associations of this Sunday, although it was not written until 1549, and then for the second Communion on Easter-day. In 1552, when this service was struck out, the Collect was also struck out, and was inserted here in the Prayer Book of 1661, to take the place of the Easter Collect which, up to that time, had been used in the Octave. Its subject is "Purity," and it is based on the first of the Easter anthems. It consists of (1) "A declaration of the object of Christ's death and resurrection, namely, our justification;" (2) "A prayer that our risen life may be one of purity." All the five parts of a completed Collect are here made very distinct. (1) The "Almighty Father" as the person addressed. (2) The foundation truth upon which the prayer is to arise—"Who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification." (3) The petition itself—"Grant us to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness," and thus (4) The Aspiration, "that we

may always serve thee in pureness of living and truth;" (5) "through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Collect for the Second Sunday is also a Collect of the Reformation, and appears first in the Prayer Book of 1549. Its subject is "Christ our Sacrifice and Example." It is based on the Epistle, and consists of (1) "A declaration of the object of the Incarnation, namely, that Christ might be to us (a) a sacrifice for sin; (b) and example of godly life;" (2) "A prayer that we may (a) thankfully receive the benefits conferred in this great gift; (b) follow His example." As "endeavor" is used as a reflexive verb in old English, no emphasis should be laid on the pronoun "ourselves." This same expression, "endeavor ourselves," is used in other parts of the Prayer Book. We "ourselves" can do nothing without the co-operating grace of God. The meaning of the word "endeavour" must not be overlooked. It is to make a thing our devoir (the French for duty).

These first two Collects are of the Reformation period; but the remaining three carry us back to one of the old Manuals, as they are all from the Sacramentary of Gelasius. The subject of that for the Third Sunday is "Consistency." We have (1) "A declaration of the object of God's revealed Word; namely to restore those in error to the way of righteousness;" (2) "A prayer for the newly baptized that they may may avoid those things that are contrary to their profession."

The subject of the Collects for the Fourth Sunday is "The Christian Anchorage." It consists of (1) "A declaration that God alone can order aright our wills and affections;" (2) "A prayer that we may love what He commands, and desire what He promises." In the original, the Collect begins as follows; "O God, who makest the minds of the faithful to be of one will." It was so translated in the Prayer Book of 1549; and as the Gospel speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit, by whom alone the unity of the Church can be restored and maintained, it is to be regretted that this reminder of Christian unity has dropped out of the Collect.

The subject of the Collect for the Fifth Sunday is "Inspiration," and consists of (1) "An acknowledgment that from God alone all good things come;" (2) "A prayer for Divine inspiration (a) to think what is good; (b) to perform the same." This Sunday is also called "Rogation Sunday," from the three Rogation Days occurring in the week which it introduces.

We have but one Holy Day during the present month—that dedicated to St. Mark on April 25th. The Collect first appears in the Prayer Book of 1549, and is based upon the Epistle. Its subject is "Stability," and consists of (1) "A commemoration of the service rendered to the Church by St. Mark, as an Evangelist;" (2) "A prayer that we may be established in the truth of the Gospel." The lesson of St. Mark's life is that, by God's grace, the weakest may be made strong; for although he seems to have deserted his Lord upon the first approach of danger, he afterwards proved a most brave and steadfast disciple, and has the honor of having been the bosom companion of the two Apostles most active in the establishment of the Christian Church. He stood by St. Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome (Col. 4: 10), and was summoned to join him again during his second imprisonment (2 Tim. 4: 11). As a "Son" to St. Peter while at Babylon, he had the privilege of communicating a "Father's" reminiscences of his Blessed Lord's ministry to the world, and thus the "Gospel according to St. Mark" becomes more powerful as being also the "Gospel according to St. Peter."

THE Rev. C. Gore, of *Luv Mundi* fame, says: "Improve the Church; give up nothing to dissent; but be friendly and sympathetic toward dissenters."