

*THANKSGIVING DAY IN
CALIFORNIA.*

In some of the towns and villages of California it is the custom for most if not all the religious denominations to hold the religious services of thanksgiving day in one of the places of worship, taking them in turn year by year, the sermon for the occasion being delivered by each of the ministers agreeing to the plan, taking it in turn, each year.

Happening to arrive in a town in which no clergyman of the Anglican Church was stationed, and having had quite as much reason for thanksgiving as any of its inhabitants, I went—for the observance of the day—to the Church of the Congregationalists. There was a large congregation composed of people of that denomination, as well as Baptists, Methodists and Campbellites.

The service began by singing the Doxology, thus giving—as it were—the key-note to the general thanksgiving. Next came the reading of the 91st and 104th Psalms, antiphonally by the pastor of the Congregational Church and the whole congregation, just as they are read in the Anglo Catholic service. Next, the reading of a chapter from the Old Testament by the minister, who followed this reading by a short extemporary prayer. Next a hymn of praise. Then followed the sermon, delivered by the Campbellite minister,—the service closing with another

hymn of thanksgiving and the benediction.

It is very observable that when the Church preaches the doctrines and imitates the ritual—as far as possible—of Dissent, many of her people on intermarriage with Dissenters or on almost any pretext, forsake her fold for “pastures new.” But it is a sign of faithfulness on the part of the Anglo Catholic Church when we find Nonconformists laying aside the prejudices of former days and imitating her modes of worship, as well as her church architecture and decoration. This is very observable throughout the United States, especially in California. A large proportion of the American clergy were originally dissenters. But with so many examples of the down-grade of sectarianism around them, and studying the doctrines of primitive Catholicism, they join the Anglo-Catholic Church on conviction of its claims and safeguards. Amongst people accustomed to monarchical institutions and narrow local boundaries there is too often a narrowness of view, and an unwillingness to accept improvements. But the American people are not afraid of novelties, so long as they convey improvements, and especially when they find them to be old Catholic truths, long neglected and despised as Romish. They are learning to distinguish between the ancient truths of Catholicism and the modern accretions of Romanism.