

its liberality, according to the merit of their claims. For upwards of three score years the old book shop has been the rendezvous of bishops and deans, rectors and curates, judges, statesmen and students. If its walls could speak, what interesting tales could be told of the days gone by and of the men whose names are now but a memory of the past. The season is now close at hand when Church and Sunday-school requisites require to be renewed, presents for those we wish to remember are to be bought, libraries to be replenished, volumes and magazines to be bound, and printing to be done, and we ask our readers to remember that nowhere can they do better than with the old firm of Rowsell & Hutchison, Church booksellers and printers, Toronto. In the matter of Sunday-school libraries we know that in many cases there is not sufficient care exercised in the selection, suitability being often sacrificed to cheapness, but in dealing with this firm Church people can rely upon getting books inculcating Church doctrine, and uncontaminated by insidious sectarianism. If they choose to emulate the old firm referred to above and send the money with the order, we have no doubt that the prices will be a revelation to those who pin their faith to the bargain houses.

THE LORD IS AT HAND.

BY THE REV. DR. J. C. SMITH.

One of the monitions of the Advent season is "The Lord is at hand." It only continues the old cry of His Forerunner in the wilderness, "One standeth among you whom ye know not." The Lord had come unperceived on His divine mission. Unrecognized, He was standing in their midst for whom they were waiting as the Divine Deliverer. So He came then, and so will He come in the final day, and so He comes now in His Advents to His Church, and to the nation, and to the personal soul. This cry has a startling sound: "The Lord is at hand"; so near, and so soon to come. We hear it as a message sent to us relating to the coming Christmas season, which we are prepared to commemorate, as if it meant "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." But if instead of hearing it as of a past event, we heard it as a message of Heaven to us personally, we would be startled, and our very thoughts would be stilled, "For who may abide the day of His coming?" St. John in vision saw Him standing in the midst of the Churches, unheralded, unperceived, and heard Him announce His presence by saying to each, "I know thy works." If we heard the Advent call of the Church, "He cometh," and it should be to us, not a conventional call sent by the Church year by year, but a living conviction that on the coming festival of the Nativity there would be a coming of the Master with such a scrutiny, how changed would be our estimate of what so makes up almost our whole life? This season with its solemn message, finds us with our engrossing earthly cares and thoughts of what may be a very busy life. We find it so, or at least we make it so, and if we are faithful in the duties of our station in life, in God's fear, we are doing God's service. We can be His faithful servants, watchful and waiting, outside the walls of a cloister. God asks not the impossible of any man. But He has a place and purpose in every human life, and has a work for the Christian to do outside the little world of a selfish life. And did we feel the certainty, "The Lord is at hand," with His scrutiny, "I know thy works," not so much in the frames of mind

and ecstasy of religious feeling, but "thy works" of faith, and love, and charity, how changed would be our estimate of what now so greatly makes up the sum of our life? One by one the things which now so take up our time, and thoughts, and life, would vanish out of sight, and the things of the "Kingdom of God" would come forward in our solemn estimate of our "work" for our Lord to see. "He cometh," "He is at hand," to see what we are doing as His servants and disciples, and what use we are making of the talents entrusted, and the opportunities of doing good which He opens before us. Ever near—ever "at hand,"—with this as a living conviction, we would not grudge the alms we have given, or the self-sacrifices we have made for the needy, or the time and toil for His kingdom's sake. These Advent watchwords, "He cometh," and "He is at hand," call us to consider the reason of His coming, and for what? "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." He sent, He gave, and He comes, and "is at hand to bring the life of man and the life of God together, which sin had put asunder." He came and still comes that through Him through His heart, "as the way and the life," the Divine life may be poured out into all who will receive Him, and to them He gives power to become the children of God. This is possible for all men who live, for it is, "Whosoever will, let him come." This is the practical doctrine of Advent. We hail the season, and feel it good to observe it. But we may quite overlook the great and personal object of the Advent. It is not only to recall to our minds the solemn events to which we are pointed, but to help us to a deeper sense of the object of His coming in our inner and spiritual life, and to a closer watching and following of Him. The mere repetition of the religious services as they come along will not bring us to a nearer likeness. "He cometh," and will He find any home in the hidden life when He comes? The epistle for the first Sunday refers to every day conduct and life, and to common duties and dangers, august as may be the events to which the season points us. It is the beginning of a new Christian year, and is designed to be the beginning of a new period of spiritual life. And what is the heart's response, or what is its resolve? We pray for "grace to cast away the works of darkness, and to put on us the armour of light." The Advent call now is to awake, as to men who are asleep. All, to remind us of the last and final advent, when the call will be, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." That will be to stand before Him as our Judge, and to receive according to our works.

ORDER AND LIBERTY IN THE SERVICES OF THE CHURCH.

BY J. C. MORGAN, M.A., BARRIE.

Professor Clark has laid down with sufficient clearness the ground on which all Churchmen must stand on this question, and his re-arrangement of the subject gives exactly, I believe, that which the committee intended, viz., "Liberty in the order of the services of the Church." I fully agree with him, also, in his statement that the Church does, in her wisdom, permit ample liberty; nay, I will go a step further and say that she hints at and even encourages phases of liberty of which we rarely avail ourselves. The general principle being thus agreed upon, I shall content myself with discussing a few practical applications of this liberty of which it seems to me we most stand in need, and in doing so I shall avoid on

the one hand topics already taken up, and on the other, any which are usually controversial in their character. Myself a layman, with a layman's natural prejudices, but also the son of a clergyman with whom I was constantly associated for twenty years as Sunday-school superintendent, organist, choir-master and general assistant in all parish work, I have been accustomed to hear all questions discussed by priest as well as by layman, and to look at them myself from the double standpoint of pulpit and pew. In addition to this I have, since promising to discuss this subject, endeavoured to obtain the views of laymen of all shades of opinion, and the result of my enquiries has been to confirm me in the belief that the suggestions which I shall make represent the feelings of the laity generally, and are for the most part approved (though they may not be followed) by the clergy. To make my position still clearer, let me say that I am not in absolute sympathy with any one of the three great schools of thought within the Church. Most of us are familiar with the unjustly satirical definition "high and crazy, low and lazy, broad and hazy," and the less common but delightfully epigrammatic "attitudinarian, latitudinarian, platitudinarian;" where I asked my attitude, at least with reference to my subject for to-night, I should call myself "utilitarian." This fully explains my position and—legality being granted—I shall discuss each topic almost solely from the standpoint of its practical usefulness. And, recollecting "can anything good come out of Nazareth?" I shall be—indeed I think we all should be—indifferent as to the origin of an idea or practice, if it be recognized, nay, so long as it is not forbidden (even by implication) by the Anglican branch of the Catholic Church. A shibboleth should have no place in broad and practical questions such as those which form the subjects for this conference. First, then, let me enter an earnest plea for more varied and brighter services. The Book of Common Prayer wisely intended that the various services should be separate, and if this be kept in view, a great variety is possible. That the usual practice is very different will not be denied. Our services then should be varied, bright and attractive, accompanied by plenty of decoration, flowers, etc., and with nearly as much music as it is possible to introduce. As to the style of the music, opinions will, of course differ, but I am Methodist enough (the old-fashioned Methodist, not the modern product with its highly paid quartette choir) to feel that the congregation, as a whole, should be able to take their part in all the music which forms an integral part of the service.

The intone service rendered by a large and well trained choir, with a clergyman who has musical taste and the requisite voice, is, to me, delightful and elevating. As one generally hears it, with an ordinary choir and the average clergyman (to whom the sacred rite of ordination has, of course, not given the musical voice, taste and education enjoyed by but few men) the result is not always agreeable, and is not seldom painful, and even destructive of devotion to the possessor of a naturally good musical ear, even though untrained. Again, the reciting note is too high for most voices, and whilst the wisdom of its original adoption cannot be questioned, you have only to listen to the reciting of the Creed or the Lord's Prayer, unsupported by an organ, to be often painfully aware that the voices have dropped anywhere from half a tone to a tone and a half. The same argument re-stated in another form, viz., "Whatever is sung should be sung not only by the vast