

Plain Words about the Communion Service.

out with delight that his understanding should still be perfect, and that his weak body should give such a ready token of the joy of his soul."

His body was conveyed to England, lay in state many days, and was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, the funeral being attended by thousands of all ranks of the people, who gave every possible expression of their regret. There was a general mourning observed throughout the land, the first of the kind that had been ever known in this country. "It was accounted a sin," we are told, "for any gentleman, for many months after, to appear at Court or city in any light or gaudy apparel."

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BY WILLIAM BAIRD, M.A., VICAR OF DYMOCK, CHAPLAIN TO EARL BEAUCHAMP.



THE Communion Service has been compared to some great cathedral.* Just as there every part acts directly or indirectly as an approach towards the choir, so in this service we shall find that prayer and exhortation, reading of scripture, and singing of holy hymns, all tend in one direction, viz., to prepare us for the act of communion itself. It is very important thus to regard the service as a whole, and to see how one part is necessarily intertwined with another, so that we feel we could not afford to spare any of it, because the removal of a part must injure the whole structure. A somewhat detailed examination of the entire service will, it is hoped, interest our readers, and repay their careful study of it.

The Communion Office opens with the Lord's Prayer. There is something very beautiful in this. It is as if the Church, in approaching to the highest act of communion and worship, dare not begin with man's words, but finds nothing equal to the needs of the worshipper, save the words of the Son of God Himself. Twice is this prayer used in the service,—to sanctify its beginning, and to express the chastened joy of the communicant at its close. When it is used at the beginning of the service, the ascription of praise, commonly called the Doxology, is omitted. There, as in the Litany, our attitude is one of penitence, and we are to be led on step by step to praise. At one time both our Morning and Evening Services commenced with the Lord's Prayer. 'The Church of Christ,' says Bishop Sparrow,† 'did use to begin and end her services with the Lord's Prayer, this being the foundation on which all our prayers should be built.' The rubric does not seem to contemplate the people joining in the Lord's Prayer in this portion of the service. It would rather seem here to be said by the priest, in the name of those about to join in the sacred service, just as we find in the following collect a petition that the hearts of minister and people may be cleansed and purified.

* See "Lectures on the Communion Office" by the Dean of Norwich (Rivingtons).

† Bishop Sparrow's 'Rationale of the Book of Common Prayer,' ed. 1684. It seems that some ancient writers, among whom are S. Jerome and S. Augustine, affirm that our Lord Himself instructed the apostles that the Lord's Prayer should form a portion of the Communion Office.