

anything which private devotion can confer. Here therefore is another and a very strong reason, why the Christian should go regularly to God's house; a reason, I grant, which the laxity of modern times has in many parishes weakened to a most grievous extent,—I shame upon us that it should be so! I grant that when the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which was the weekly feast of the Christians of the Early Church, is celebrated three times in a year and sometimes not that, it may seem fantastical to set the partaking of this blessed food in the forefront of the reasons which should bring Christ's people together; but I speak of what ought to be, and what I have reason to believe is being realized continually in more and more of the parish churches throughout the land; and supposing a frequent celebration of the Holy Communion,—I do not say how frequent, but if we should be primitive and apostolical it should be every Lord's day,—supposing a frequent celebration however, I may well count this amongst the peculiar blessings, which Christians must come to seek in the public worship of the church.

In few words then, the house of God besides being a house of preaching is also a house of *Common Prayer*, and especially a house of *Common Sacraments*. These are two definite characters which belong to the Church, and which ought to lead men thither to worship God. I have not laid much stress upon the argument which George Herbert uses in the verse which I quoted above, in which he says,

Leave thy six and seven,
Pray with the most: for where most pray is
Heaven:

I think however that this is a very good argument; what is intended is to bring to mind the contagion which belongs to devotional as to all other strong feelings; it is easier to keep up the attention when surrounded by earnest worshippers; the solemn Amen from a whole congregation, which seems almost to force an Amen from the heart of any one of the congregation who might have felt indifferent;—the soothing character of Church music, especially when it is animated with life as expressing the feelings of the whole body of worshippers;—the effect of the example of those whom we reverence and whom we see worshipping with ourselves;—even the very atmos-

pher of the place, the place where our fathers have worshipped, in which every thing connects us with the memory of those who have departed in the faith of Christ, and in which there is much to warn us of the time of our own decease;—the place in which we or our children have been baptized, in which we first joined in the Holy Communion; all these things and a hundred others give to the public worship of the Church an advantage over any kind of private devotion, which a person must be very cold-hearted not to feel and acknowledge. I have however not rested much upon such arguments, because their strength depends to a certain extent upon taste and feeling, whereas I have desired to shew that the necessity of public worship depends upon nothing of the kind, inasmuch as the Church of Christ necessarily requires Common Prayer and Common Sacraments in virtue of those principles upon which the Church is founded.

Many conclusions immediately result from the view of public worship which I have here given. The following are a few of them.

Persons who are somewhat deaf and have a difficulty in hearing the sermon must not on that account absent themselves from the parish church, and imagine that it is unnecessary to go. Common Prayer and Common Sacraments remain, even though the advantage of hearing the sermon be lost.

Persons who take the right view of public worship will not run about from one church to another, seeking the stimulus of a new preacher. "Itching ears" are not uncommon, and they interfere much with the formation of the true Christian character.

Persons who take this same right view will also feel disposed, after leaving church, not so much to criticise the sermon, as to inquire how far they have themselves worshipped God in spirit and in truth.

These are but specimens; any one, who looks upon divine service from the point of view above described, will have no difficulty in drawing many other conclusions concerning his duty as regards the parish church; and the reader will not sympathize with the writer in the greater part of what follows, unless he fully believes this point of view to be the true one.—*Dean Goodwin.*