

We get in these courses of Old and New Testament readings the pith of the Holy Scripture.

These lessons are read without note or comment, and so besides being a means of instruction, the solemn reading of God's Word in the House of God is in some sense an act of worship. This is why they are followed by the Canticles, or songs of praise. By immediately rising and praising God at the conclusion of each lesson, we proclaim our gratitude to Him for His unspeakable gift, and set forth His praise. Thus the reading of God's Word becomes an act of adoration.

Before the Reformation from three to nine lessons were read at Mattins, and a canticle or anthem was said between each of them. But the Reformers, without reducing the quantity of Scripture read, reduced the number of the portions. They rightly considered that the continual interruption of the reading of God's Word with anthems did not tend to edification.

Objections have been made to our practice of reading the Bible without comment. It has been asked, "why don't the clergy explain the Bible as they read it." The reply to this objection may be gathered from what has been already said. The reading of God's Word in this part of the service is an act of worship. The Church goes on the

principle of "a place for everything," and does not mix up worship and instruction.

After having duly worshipped God which is our first duty, we then receive instruction out of God's Word. A very useful plan may here be suggested to the clergy, of explaining briefly, just before the sermon, any special points that may have presented themselves in the lesson for the day. I don't mean the giving of a commentary on the lesson, but the dealing with, in very few words, of some particularly knotty point, or the elucidation of some phrase or expression which unexplained might lead to some misapprehension on the part of some members of the congregation. This of course would not always, or indeed often be necessary.

I must confess to a strong dislike, not unmingled with contempt, for that much quoted proverb, "Charity begins at home." It has been and is so often used, to palliate so much that is absolutely unchristian. It is a mean sneaking kind of proverb. Charity does not begin, it ends at "home." We save ourselves, and find our happiness, in saving and seeking the happiness of others. This proverb isn't even half true, and it is directly or indirectly responsible for innumerable shirkings of our manifest duty to others. It is the loophole through which thousands have crawled out of their plain and honest obligations.