

TITHING.

There is a difference of opinion between clergy and laity upon the duty of tithing, as there is upon every other duty. The simple truth is, that there is an amazing amount of indifference upon the subject among clergy; and therefore no positive teaching to give to the laity. We have had a good many talks, and looked over not a few libraries, and for all the various literature upon the subject it is seldom seen where it ought to be. We venture the assertion that no Bishop, Priest or Layman can studiously read "Gold and the Gospel," being the "Ulster Prize Essays," Leslie's "The Divine Right of Tithes," Granger's "Divine Plan of Church Finance," and Arthur's small but conclusive pamphlet, "Systematic Giving," without being convinced that the tithe is as binding to-day as it ever was. Like many other things in Christianity, it has been long neglected, and its practical restoration must come slowly, in the face of much opposition. But come it will, as men in all Christian bodies are striving to make it come. Considering the unquestioned righteousness of the cause, and the certainty of Divine blessings following upon its restoration, its advocates can afford to pass through the fires of criticism and opposition. For as a verse in the proposed new Hymnals says, (we italicize the point it makes for tithing:)

Yes, the sorrow and the suffering,
Which on every hand we see,
Channels are for tithes and offerings
Due by solemn right to Thee;
Right of which we may not rob Thee,
Debt we may not choose but pay,
Lest that face of love and pity,
Turn from us another day.

—Parish Helper.

SIX FACTS ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM.

T I S M.

1. It is a fact that infant baptism was the acknowledged doctrine and common practice of the Christian Church in the next age after the Apostles.

2. It is a fact that infant baptism was the received doctrine and usage of Christians before the books of the New Testament had been received among the various churches and the question of their inspiration settled.

3. It is a fact that Christian contemporaries of the Apostles and the primitive Fathers generally, taught that "all ages, young and old, were corrupt through the infection of original sin, and, therefore, baptism (in a ritual sense) necessary to all."

4. It is a fact that infant baptism had the consented testimony of all antiquity to its validity; that it was believed "everywhere, always, by all," in the Primitive Church, so far as anything to the contrary has been found on record.

5. It is a fact that the most noted of the early Christian fathers taught that baptism had superseded circumcision; that it held the same place under the new dispensation which circumcision did under the old, and hence they called baptism "Christian circumcision."

6. It is a fact that the first Christian (Jews) did for some time keep both the old Sabbath and the Lord's Day, and practiced both baptism and circumcision, and that circumcision and the Jewish Sabbath gradually ceased to be observed in the Church, leaving only baptism and the Lord's Day remaining. Therefore, as an initiatory rite, baptism has superseded circumcision, and as a day of rest the Lord's day has superseded the old Sabbath.—Hodges.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

THE LITANY

joined on to the Morning Prayer, and mixed in with it, as it commonly now is, we are apt to forget its true character—its real distinctness from all other services.

That character is an ever-increasing sense of sin and misery which cannot be fully realized without a fresh examination of our hearts, and recollection of our sins. And this deep sense of sin leads to another characteristic of the service—a cry for mercy and deliverance—a cry far more deep and earnest than any contained in the daily services. This distinct characteristic of the Litany was much more easily borne in mind when it was used as a separate service (by itself) offered up at a different hour of the day, from all the other services. This was the intention of those who, at the time of the Reformation, arranged our Book of Common Prayer. In those days the Morning Prayer was read on Sundays and on week-days, at a very early hour of the morning, and that ended—the custom was for the people to go home, and at a later hour come again for Litany. Thus they had time, both before and after entering the church, to make a fitting preparation for this solemn service. In the course of time permission was given to join the Litany to the Morning Prayer, thus making one unbroken service. But when the Litany is read with the morning Prayer, there should be a short pause at that part of the service in which it is used, in order to give the people the opportunity of employing the few moments this break may give in bringing their minds into such a frame as will gain a favourable hearing for their cries for mercy.

A Litany is an earnest prayer offered up to God to turn away His wrath and the punishments which sin justly deserves. During the first 500 years after Christ many forms of Litanies for the removal of evils were used. But the most perfect of all was that arranged by Gregory, the Great, a Bishop of Rome, who lived before any of the false additions to the true Christian faith had begun to be taught in the Church of Rome (590). Gregory's Litany was the pattern for all others in the Christian Church, and the one we now use is most like it of any that have been taken from it. Sunday seems a strange day to be appointed for a service of humble, sorrowing supplication, but we must remember that shame and sorrow ever go before joy. Sunday is a day, too, on which there is a larger gathering of worshippers.

Wednesday and Friday are yet more suitably chosen, they having been days of prayer and humiliation in the Church—Wednesday in remembrance of the infamous agreement made on that day by Judas to betray our blessed Lord; Friday in still more sad remembrance of the sufferings on that day endured for us. In former times Litanies were sung by the people as they walked in procession through the country, to implore the removal of some especial calamity. But in this, as in other customs of old days, evil was found to be so mingled with good that what began in piety ended in impiety.

The Litany is divided into four parts:—

1. The Invocations, or calls to God.
2. The Deprecations, for the removal of sin and punishment.
3. The Intercessions, or petitions for others.
4. The Supplications, or earnest prayers for the whole Church.

The Deprecations begin with "Remember not, Lord, our offences."

The Intercessions begin with "We sinners do beseech Thee."

The Supplications begin with "Son of God, we beseech Thee."

Thus we call upon the Trinity, and then having, through the "Son of God," made our way

"to the throne of grace," we begin our supplications to the Father in the prayer taught us by His Son.

Our last petitions in that prayer are for the special mercies we are seeking in this Litany—"Forgiveness of our sins and deliverance from sin and wickedness and from everlasting death," which is the just punishment of sin.

In the ten alternate supplications we again seek admission to the Throne of Grace through Christ the Son, and in the last prayer twice over is the duty set before us of doing all we can to magnify the honour of God's name and His Glory.

With this thought we wind up the Litany, offering our prayers "through the same Jesus Christ our Lord," the One Mediator between God and man.

The Litany was the first part of the Prayer Book that was printed in English, 1544.—Aid to the Book of Common Prayer.—by R.A. Rogers, in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*.

DUTIES AND DELIGHTS.

In living the Christian life, in the common course of events, we find that there are some things which we are expected to do as a matter of course, some that we are to do as a matter of duty, and some as a matter of delight.

As a matter of course, we are to live in obedience to law, Divine and human. We are to commit no crime. We are to be upright in our conduct, and honourable in our dealings. We are to keep the second table of the law, and to love our neighbour as we do ourselves. We are to do unto others as we wish them to do to us. And we are to keep the Lord's day, attend on sacred ordinances, maintain daily worship in our household, and sustain meetings for prayer by the constancy and cheer of our presence.

As a matter of duty, we are to give our utmost toward the maintenance of the services of the Church, the spread of Christian truth, and the elevation of mankind. We are to take our part in the teaching of Sunday-schools, the visitation of the sick, the relief of the poor, the deliverance of the wronged, and the reformation of the depraved. These things and such as these are classed as duties, because there may be something disagreeable in one way or another, in them; something repulsive, something trying, something that demands sacrifice and denial; in a word, something in the nature of a cross. Now, that which brings with it a cross, real or imaginary, is not done as a matter of course, nor is it marked with any special delight; and it can be done, ordinarily, only as a duty—a something we do because it is right to do it, and we must, rather than because we have any great or direct enjoyment in it.

As a matter of delight, we are to have communion with God, in prayer, in meditation, in song, in worship, by means of His works, His providences, His Word, His Spirit. We are to have delight in God's being, in God's kingdom, in God's people, in God's truth, as in nature and art, beauty and sublimity. And most of all, in such a world as this, we are to have delight in Christian growth and attainment, in the conversion and sanctification of souls, in the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, and in the triumphs of Divine grace.

We see at once that our labour should be, on the one hand, to get rid as fast as possible, of sins, faults, follies, and infirmities; and on the other hand, to lift our matter of course things as fast as possible, into the sacredness of duties, and our things done as duties into the blessedness of all our delights; and to persevere in this until we have carried them all into that exalted region of holy attainment where all things spring of good will, and sins have passed away.—*Church Messenger*.