

lengthy and abstruse, but to be short, plain, and simple in what I write, I shall set down what I wish to say upon this subject in the two following paragraphs.

First. God's house, though in one sense a house of Preaching, is more emphatically a house of Prayer; and the book which is our guide in God's house is called the "Book of Common Prayer." Reader, did you ever consider what was meant by that title of the book which we more familiarly call the "Prayer-book?" The true name, "The Book of Common Prayer," is worthy of being noticed, because it really contains in itself the very pith and marrow of the question now under consideration; prayer in the Church is *common* prayer, prayer from the body of Christ's people, prayer for *common* blessings, thanksgiving for a *common* redemption. The public service of the Church, be it observed, is not like the private prayers of all the members of the congregation added together; I mean, that we are not to regard a Christian congregation as so many persons who have agreed to say their prayers together occasionally in the same place and at the same time; there is a meaning in public worship distinct from this. Christ our Lord is the head, not of a number of disjointed limbs, but of a body compacted together, and the congregation of the faithful in Church is the body of Christians met together (so to speak) in their corporate capacity. Take an illustration. the aldermen and councillors of a corporate town may happen to be all assembled together in one room, but the assembly is not on that account a meeting of the Town Council, and a chance meeting of this sort would be altogether different in its nature from a regularly appointed meeting of the body as a body. Now Christians form a body, knit together by close bonds, all being members one of another, and all owning one head even the Lord Jesus Christ; how is this union exhibited? what is its outward mark? where is it that Christians are to be found specially as Christians? I reply that in the *common* worship of God in Church, and there only, they testify to themselves and to others their common life and their common redemption. No man has a private interest in the Saviour; Christ did not die to save a few individual souls, but to found a king-

dom, to establish a Church, to become the head of a redeemed body; and therefore however holy a man may be however well instructed he may be however diligent in private prayer he may be, he can not occupy his proper position as a member of Christ's redeemed Church, if he "forsakes the assembling together" of Christ's people.

Secondly. God's house is not only a house of Prayer, but it is also a house of Sacraments. I have put the argument in the previous paragraph by itself, without any allusion to the fact of Christians meeting in their public assemblies to celebrate the Lord's Supper, because I think that without any such allusion the argument is good and satisfactory; I feel sure that the more we consider the real nature of the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ and the manner in which it is spoken of in Scripture, the more we shall see the absurdity and impossibility of what I may call private Christianity, and the absolute necessity of public worship (apart from all consideration of public preaching) in a body constituted as is the Christian Church. But the argument is much enforced, when we take into account the fact, of the communion of the body and blood of Christ being a part of the public worship of Christians. This, it must ever be remembered, is one of the chief features of Christian worship; it is the very thing which beyond all others brought the early Christians together on the first day of the week; for we read that they came together on that day "to break bread," that is, to celebrate the Lord's Supper; and to be wilfully absent from the Holy Communion would in primitive times have been considered almost equivalent to giving up the Christian profession. Now communion, as the word implies, is no private thing; it is the joining in one for a certain purpose of the whole body; and though a man may pray by himself he cannot celebrate the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; this is a social act, a work for a congregation,—not necessarily a large one, two or three may suffice if no more can be found, and Christ will be present with those two or three,—but a congregational act it is, and one which stamps upon public service a power of conferring grace and blessing beyond