

## REVERENCE AND SILENCE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Reverence for holy things and holy places is not a striking feature of the present generation. The Bible is often quoted flippantly, to give point to a story or joke. This is very different from the way in which the Jews and the early Christians treasured and revered the Holy Scriptures, many dying, rather than deliver them up to the profane. So too is our reverence for the temples of God different from theirs. "Ye shall reverence my sanctuary;" "the Lord is in His holy temple let all the earth keep *silence* before Him." The conduct of many would lead to the conclusion that unless service is going on, the Lord is *not* in His holy temple, and therefore no necessity of reverence or keeping *silence*. Of course if we looked upon our Churches as mere assembly rooms, in which lectures, entertainments and other secular gatherings might be held, it would not matter whether we were silent or not, until it was time to listen. But we do not thus look upon our holy places; we regard them as *consecrated*, that is, "separated from all unhallowed, ordinary and common uses," and we believe that in them "God promises His especial Presence."

"My house shall be called a house of prayer," and yet often it is made a place of vain and profitless talk. Two people, it may be waiting for service, will talk and discuss things innocent in themselves perhaps, but not fitting subjects for the House of God. This practice of chatting in Church before the service and collecting in the aisles at the end of prayers, is at least, not a reverent practice, and therefore ought thoroughly to be avoided by priest and people. If necessity arises for speaking let it be done in a "humble voice" and in few words. The Church is God's House, and nothing ordinary or relating to the common concerns of life should be spoken of within its sacred walls; only God and the Divine Praises should be in our hearts and on our lips.

The time of waiting for services should be spent in quiet thought; the worshipper might take a Psalm or one of the Gospels in the Prayer Book and think on it: trying to make a *personal* application of its holy words; or remain kneeling and pray for the Church, the Bishop, the Priest, the conversion of sinners, or any other object dear to the heart. But above all let *silence* be kept before Him at all times (both in and out of service time) in His holy Temple.—*Selected.*

## "ARE YOU SAVED?"

Easter-tide is pre-eminently the season when those who have died to the world and sin rise again with, and to Christ. In their case, Lent has led them, being truly penitent, to the foot of the Cross. There the burden of their sins has been removed and left behind in the sepulchre, with Christ's swathing-bands; while the soul, now again turned to God away from the devil, converted in the only sense of the word, washed in, and sanctified by the precious blood, sets itself to the task of growing in holiness, and working out the will of God, *its sanctification*. The converted man sets himself in earnest to the task of saving his soul, and is now more watch-

ful than ever, lest, after having availed himself of the opportunity of repentance, he should after all become a cast-away. Yet with the knowledge that conversion does not imply final perseverance, many foolishly ask "Are you saved?" To such a question all a man can answer is, that having been made a new creature in Christ Jesus, he has been put in the way of salvation. It is for himself to chose whether or not he shall continue therein. As he cannot be the judge in the matter of his brother's final salvation, which is altogether in God's hands, so he does not presume to usurp God's prerogative, and declare that he himself is saved. He knows in whom he trusts, and believes, that if he is faithful to grace given, and if he endures to the end, God, who cannot lie and has promised that they who thus persevere shall be saved, will keep His word in his regard. Yet he watches and prays, lest he enter into temptation, and seeks what is above, not the things which are on the earth.—*N. Y. Churchman.*

## QUIET CONSCIENCES.

A quiet conscience is most certainly a thing greatly to be desired. With one which is unquiet, there can be no real rest day nor night, nor any true enjoyment of any thing in this life, or in the contemplation of the next. But there are different means resorted to for obtaining this quiet. Some of them are right and some of them are wrong. It is much to be feared that some are lulling them to sleep by the use of moral drugs, and like those who attempt to drown sorrow in intoxicating liquor, are only adding to their sorrows and multiplying the causes of their unrest. No doubt many have been crying "Peace! Peace!" where there is no peace for them, have tried to justify themselves in wrong doing, and by specious arguments to persuade themselves that all is as it should be. But as the narcotic only deadens the sense of pain for the time, and does not cure the disease which causes it, so consciences can not be perfectly, nor permanently, quieted by resorting to such means as these.

The quiet of the Lenten Season affords an opportunity for the voice of the conscience wrongly quieted or roused for the first time to make itself heard. Self-examination reveals the fact that there is still cause for anxiety, that the old sins had not been repented of; that sorrow was not followed by amendment, reconciliation, restitution, nor forgiveness; that while conscience slept sins multiplied. Let not the "peace," too easily obtained, be again sought. Let each one have some assurance that he may justly rest in peace. Let him be certain that he does not deceive himself.

A quiet conscience is made the requisite for the right reception of the Holy Communion, as is declared in the "warning" in the Communion office. This is fully appreciated by all earnest Christians. But the large numbers of communicants who, conscientiously, refrain from receiving attests the fact that many are unable to quiet their own consciences by usual methods. Month after month passes without their communing because they feel that they are still in "malice or envy," or are not reconciled to their neighbors.—*Michigan Churchman.*

## THE "CURE" OF SOULS.

The Church, however makes a wise provision for all who are thus circumstanced, "If there be any of you, who by this means cannot quit his own conscience but requireth further comfort or counsel, let him come to me, or to some other Minister of God's Word, and open his grief, that he may receive such godly counsel and advice, as may tend to the quieting of his conscience, and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness." In spite of this invitation, which we fear is too seldom publicly read, many continue in their systems of deadening the conscience, or in their state of spiritual unrest. But why should any hesitate to go to the one to whose pastoral care they are committed? The cure of souls is his life's work. He is trained to minister to the ills of the soul, as the physician is trained to heal the ills of the body. At his ordination he has been given "POWER and COMMENDMENT to pronounce to people who are penitent the absolution and remission of their sins," and to do this in private as well as in public, for particular cases, as well as general. It is true this privilege has been abused in time past, but that does not prevent the right use of it in the present; and those who have not, but desire to have, a quiet conscience, and those who have obtained a false peace, should not hesitate to go to those who are lawfully appointed to minister to their needs. There ought to be closer spiritual relations than now generally exist between the rector and his people, that they may be benefitted to the greatest extent possible. The physician can not successfully treat the patient suffering from some inward malady, until the symptoms, pains, and circumstances are told him by the sufferer. The same confidence should be placed in the one whose sacred duty and office it is to prescribe for the ills of the soul, as in him who attends to the bodily ailments.

Every conscientious clergyman sorrowfully recognizes that there are souls emaciated and wasting away for lack of spiritual food, for which they have no appetite; and those morally diseased some vital part, though they be deceived by the hectic flush upon their cheeks. *General* ministrations and services fail to reach or benefit these. Such need to go, as *individuals*, to the minister of God's works and making known their griefs, receive special direction, counsel, and help, as may cure them of the diseases, and restore health to the soul.—*Michigan Ch. Man.*

Among the Jews baptism was always associated with the idea of purification. Jewish baptism signified the change from heathenism to Judaism. The baptism of John, that from a sinful life as Jews, to a godly life as disciples of the Messiah. That baptism was of water, but Christian baptism was to be of water and the Holy Ghost. It was to convey remission of sins by the blood of Christ, sanctifying us by the blood of Christ. It is a birth into the household and family of God, the kingdom of Christ; a bestowal of the Holy Spirit, an adoption as sons of God and heirs of eternal life. Its conditions were then, as now, faith or heart-felt belief in Jesus as the Christ, and repentance or amendment of life toward God and man. Nothing can be more expressive than the words with which the Great Teacher enforces it: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God"—*Selected.*