

groundwork of principle, does such an idea rest for its warrant? There is no allocation of a portion, of a *quantum* of time weekly for such a purpose commanded in the Old Testament, none in the New, none in the known practice and tradition of the Church. Would it not seem that this plan savors of will-worship, rather than the other? The observance of the Lord's Day by spiritual service rests, in its inner soul and meaning, not on a mere injunction, but on a principle. Does, then, that principle import any dishonor to the general law of love, obedience, and conformity to the Divine commands, which embraces all days alike, without preference or distinction of degree? It does nothing of the kind. The service of God in this world is an unceasing service, without interval or suspense. But, under the conditions of our physical, intellectual, and social life, a very large portion of that service is necessarily performed within the area, which is occupied by this world and its concerns, and within which every Christian grace finds perpetual room for its exercise. But for its exercise under circumstances not allowing the ordinary *ritual*, unless in the rarest cases, that nearness of access to the things of God, that directness of assimilation to the Divine life, which belongs to a day consecrated by spiritual service."

#### A PLEA FOR INTELLIGENT RITUAL.

That there should be some Ritual to secure the decency and order of Divine worship, and also to some extent insure its expression, is a mere truism. In a sense there is much Ritual observed in different professions and societies even of a purely secular nature. The Masonic body, we understand, have a rather elaborate Ritual. Orangemen, though they denounce it, have a good deal of it. It prevails at the Bar, in the Army and in the Navy, and very largely in the arrangements of Parliamentary life. All this disposes of the assertion that Ritual is a silly and childish affair, only suitable for weak and savage minds. There was a description, for example, in the papers a few days ago, of the way in which the late Speaker of the House of Commons made three formal bows, with great dignity and ceremony, towards his own vacant chair when returning to it from waiting on the House of Lords. Here you have the first Commoner in the country, a man of much experience, age, and ability, performing a certain piece of Ritualism which no one asserts is silly or childish, because it is felt to have a meaning, and to express a sentiment of great importance, which is also stamped by age and use, and secures the approval of our collective legislators. But should anyone bow to the Altar in one of our churches certain persons will loudly express their dislike, their fear and horror of such an act, and probably go so far as to label it idolatry. The Speaker of the House of Commons is admired for making three formal salutations to his own vacant chair of office, but no mark of respect must be allowed in connection with the Lord's Table. Ritual has various uses; it is a medium of expressing devotion, and it teaches religious truth through the eye. Take, for example, the simple act of kneeling in prayer; reverent-minded persons regard this as a proper attitude to assume when engaged in the worship of God, and its observance is a lesson to others. In our own churches how many there are who neglect even this elementary piece of Ritual (we do not speak of invalids who may have to abstain from its observance through weakness), but how many strong men and women there are who sit all through the prayers in church! Do such people one may enquire, ever kneel in prayer at home; kneel at family prayer; kneel at private prayer in the solitude of their own

chambers? If they do, why should they not kneel in church, considering the large number of people among us who never kneel in church unless when receiving the Holy Communion. This question is worth answering. And it might occur to such people themselves to say, we do kneel at the Communion Rail, but nowhere else in church. And why so? Why do we kneel then and there, and then and there alone? Is there not Ritualism in this distinction?

We have no hesitation in saying that the proper observance of kneeling in prayer during public worship would have a most edifying effect; kneeling in the real sense, not lolling or leaning forward, while really sitting, but kneeling on our knees. This seems a very simple matter, but we leave it to our readers to judge whether or not something in the way of a remonstrance and reminder that it is not observed is much required amongst us. Ritual, as we understand the question, should be an intelligent expression of Christian faith and feeling. We should know why we kneel, why we bow our heads at the name of Jesus, why we try to observe a reverent and decorous demeanour during Divine service. As the clergyman himself is, from his position, the most prominent person in Church, his demeanour is most in evidence, and he should be specially careful to keep his foot in the house of God. His Ritual has influence either for good or evil upon the congregation. We know some people, lay people, and to be near them during Divine service, to hear their voices and see their attitude, is far more edifying to us than the sermon often is, and we know too many of an opposite type. There is something very impressive and helpful in the simple reverent worship of really pious people, and though it may not occur to them to view it in this light, their labour is not in vain in the Lord, for even a few of such people in a congregation gradually leaven it for good.—*Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette.*

#### SURPLICED CHOIRS.

*The Southern Churchman (Evangelical.)*

Surpliced choirs, we believe, are no transitory fad or fashion, but have come to stay, at least for some time. They are new to us here in Virginia, but they are not new to the Episcopal Church. They have been in the English and Irish cathedrals before what is miscalled the "Catholic" (better pseudo-Catholic) revival. We speak, of course, of the vested choir of boys. Choirs composed of women and men vested is a new thing in the annals of the Church. One can see how such choirs came into existence. It is easier to train a choir where the soprano and alto parts are sung by women, than to train a choir where these parts are taken by boys. Small boys, unless trained at great expense, as they are in the cathedral schools in England and Ireland, rarely read music, and those who do are unable to take part in the more difficult services and anthems. Then, to make boys behave themselves, while it is by no means impossible, taxes too much the patience and tempers of many choirmasters. The easiest way—and we are generally ready to take the easiest way of doing a thing—is to leave the boys out of the question, and have a surpliced mixed choir. But it is not the best way. It is, indeed, true, that in a country like ours, where the church has no cathedral system, for one case where a choir of boys and men only is a success, there are many where, from a musical standpoint, it is a failure. The best thing the rector can do is to have his choir composed of men, women and boys. He can vest the ladies if he likes; if not, he can put them in the front pews or some other place, not in the chancel. But if they are put in the chancel they ought to be vested, for seemliness and

uniformity. The processional and recessional should be sung only by the boys and men. The fresh, slightly reedy voices of the children suit admirably the music of these hymns. The semi-grotesqueness of women in a church procession, apart from its contrariety to ecclesiastical usage, is thus done away with. In the more difficult music the boys had better be silent; but in all the hymns and canticles they can take a part, and their young sopranos will add volume and freshness to the general chorus. A rector, too, can use his boy choir as a seed-field for his future tenors and basses. He can do better than this. He can gently rule his children by loving discipline, and attach them to the Church into which they have been baptized, that, when they come to years of discretion, they will so love its teaching and its services that they will become faithful and earnest communicants.

A word about processional and recessional hymns. They can, like everything else, be overdone, and we can have too much of them. It is not necessary to have them at all services, and certainly, when the Communion is celebrated after Morning Prayer, a recessional would be utterly out of place, if the choir leaves before the Exhortation. The processional ought to begin at the door of the church, and not in the vestry. In the first place, one of the beauties of the processional is the burst of song with which the worship begins. This is utterly lost if the processional is treated like the recessional. In the second place, the congregation does not hear the hymn until the choir enters the church. This in many cases leads to bathos. Thus the choir enters the church in the middle of a verse, or singing a verse that depends for its sense on what has gone before. The result of such mangling of the words is, in many cases, nonsense. The case of the recessional is different. It begins in the church, and the congregation can follow it to the end, as they sing from their hymn books. Here again, however, it is easier to begin in the vestry and sing into the church than to begin promptly and quickly at the church door. It is a pity, however that this mistaken method of singing processionals should prevail in a great number of churches with surpliced choirs, and we hope they will soon see the better way. The surpliced choir has come. It is not a pseudo Catholic addition. Good old Evangelical cathedral chapters had it years ago in Ireland, have it now. We despise pseudo-Catholicism and the Rome-apers but we do not want to give them credit for what does not belong to them, nor put away a good thing because they claim it.

#### WHITSUN-DAY.

(2nd June, 1895.)

Whitsun-day occurs the fiftieth day after Easter, and is the Sunday on which the Church celebrates the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, and through them upon the Church, to abide with it forever. It was commemorated in the primitive Church with festival services. The whole period of fifty days was kept with a festal tone, which was crowned with the Whitsun celebration.

It was the completion of the work our Lord came to do. Therefore this day has always been observed with holy solemnity. The Acts of the Apostles were read during this season in the primitive Church, as they are at the present day, and the collects in our service for the day is the ancient one, being traced back to Gregor's Sacramentary. The prayer book of Edward VI. compiled A.D. 1549, was appointed to be used for the first time on Whitsun-day of that year. From that time forth, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the English speaking people have had one of the noblest liturgies any part of the Church Catholic ever possessed.—*St. Andrews Rubric.*