

pages. The historians of Church doctrine all concur that this was the universal belief of the Church of the first three centuries. Yea, not till A.D. 430 did a contrary opinion find any expression within the Church. It is true that a theory of predestination was held by the Gnostic heretics before this. But within the Church it was never heard of till taught by Augustine. Rejoice in the free theology which enables you to sing—

“O that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace!
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.”

3. Another similarity that exists between our Church and the early Church is in its simplicity of worship. The other night you heard the eloquent reference made to Justin Martyr. Turn to his writings in the year A. D. 140 or 150, and his description of the worship of the Church at that time readily answers to ours. There was neither pomp nor ceremony; neither minister standing robed in different garments from the rest of the people, nor elaborate ritual, but the utmost simplicity. The greatest glory of the Church then was the presence of God who ever meets with His people, when they draw near to worship Him in the Spirit and in truth. The teaching of history is that in proportion as an elaborate and pompous ritual has found its home in the Church, so has the true spirit of devotion, which is too ethereal to be enshrined in garments and ceremonies, forsaken the mass of her worshippers. Though innovations upon this simplicity were very rapid after the age of Constantine, yet we find that in the fifth century ministers performed all the holy offices in their ordinary garb. Those are, in outward detail at least, more the successors of the Apostles who accomplish their mission in the common dress of the time in which they live, as the