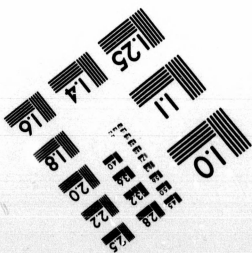
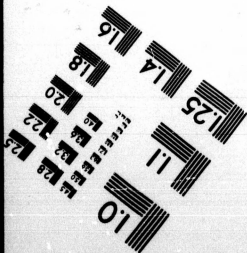
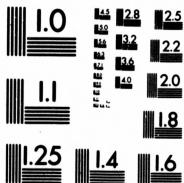


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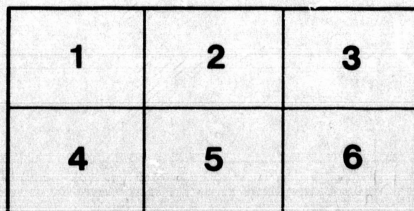
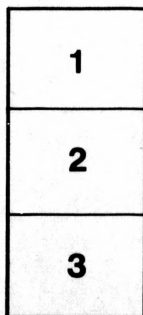
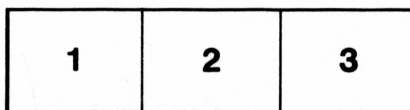
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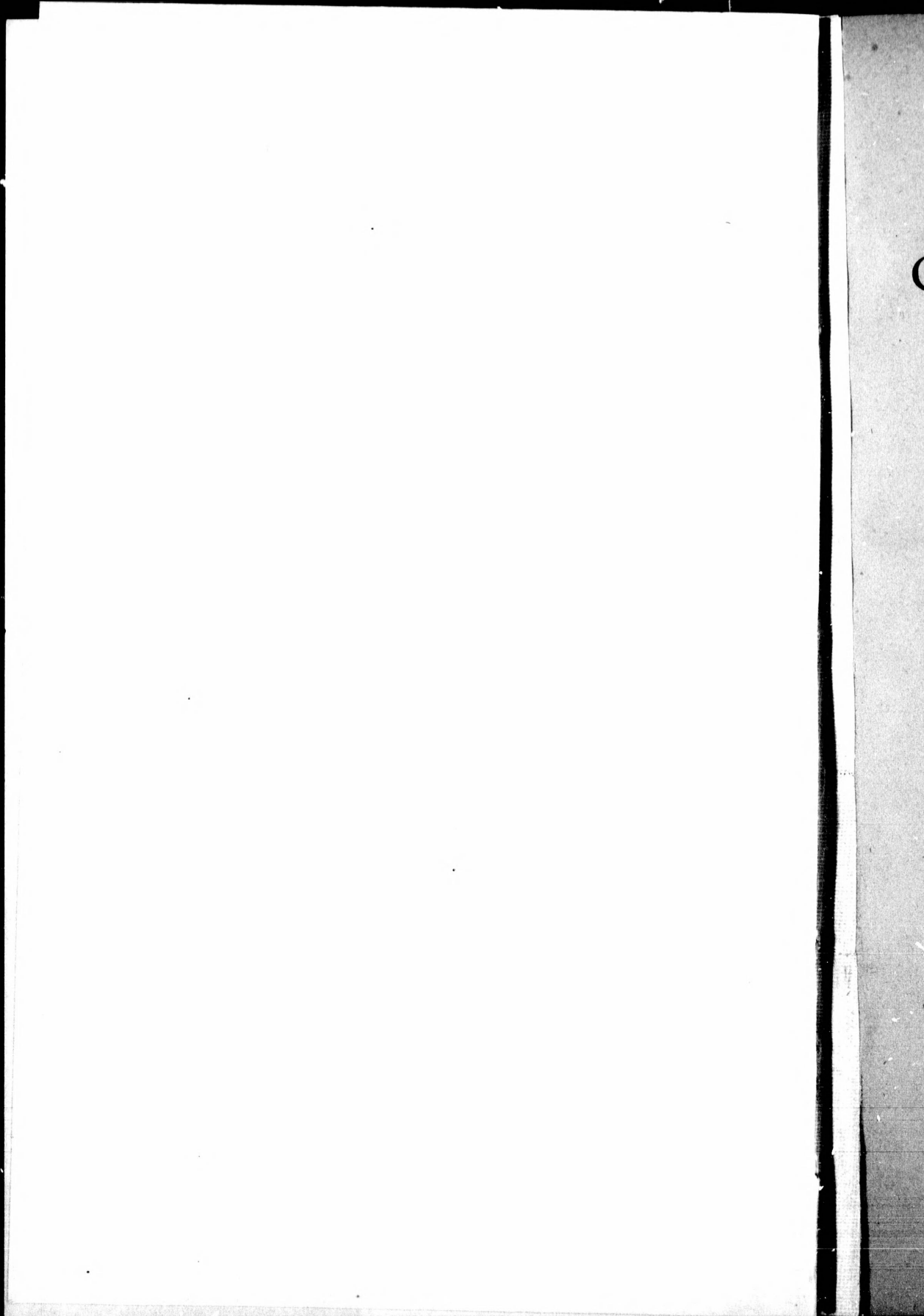
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THE

CHURCH SERVICE;

A SERIES OF SERMONS

DELIVERED BY THE

REV. JAMES CARMICHAEL, M. A.,

IN

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,

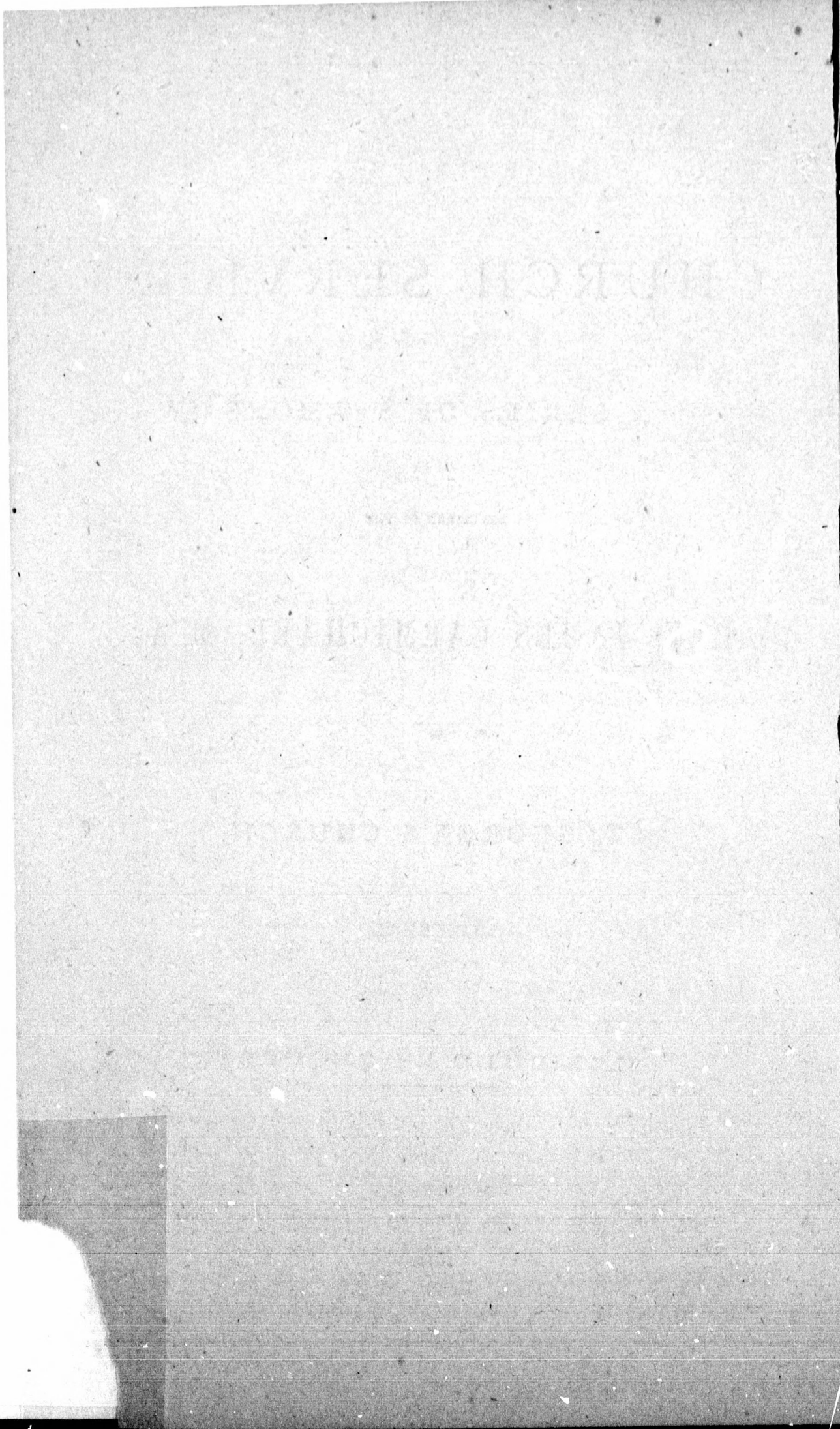
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1872.



SERMON.

No. 1.

“What mean ye by this service?”

Exodus xii, 26.

I DESIRE for a few Sunday evenings to bring before you some thoughts on the Book of Common, (or united) Prayer, with special reference to our Sunday services. In doing so, however, I would like two points to be clearly understood; first, that I do not enter on this work controversially, but congregationally; and secondly, that I do not intend to enter at any length into the historic aspect either of the book itself or of the services under consideration, for although that standpoint is highly interesting, I consider it better suited for the lecturer's desk than the preacher's pulpit. You, as a congregation, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, use these services. All the public worship that you render to God flow through the channels that they mark out for you. Through the services of this volume your children are baptized and prepared for the Holy Communion. Your best loved are joined in marriage. Your dead are buried. There is hardly any sacred step in life that the influence of this book is not woven into; it commences its work at your cradle, it closes it at your grave. Now I want to

show you in these sermons, that as a guide the Prayer-Book is a faithful and scriptural one ; that as a help to Christian experience it meets every possible case ; that its blemishes are few, its beauties many ; that it is always, where rightly used, conducive to the highest feelings of devotion, and that it has done more to keep before the Church a scriptural view of Christian life, than any other volume ever written or compiled by uninspired man.

It is called "The Book of *Common Prayer*." That word "common" means "united," the book of *united prayer* ; hence its peculiar form of responsive devotion. It is not a volume for the clergy alone, or the people alone, but the clergy and people united. The structure of the volume is founded on the text "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that ye shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in Heaven." The book demands unity and agreement, and as far as it is concerned, furnishes it ; every voice should sound in the congregation, as distinctly as that of the minister at the desk. The Book, for instance, furnishes a certain petition which, if your voice endorses, or responds to, then minister and people agree touching the one desired thing.

I need scarcely say that I think that this form of united worship, is the scriptural form. Our Saviour lays it down as the basis of influential prayer. It was a form that He was always accustomed to as a Jew, both in the temple and synagogue, and it was certainly the habit in the Apostolic and early church. And surely it is natural. What more natural than that a large Christian congregation, or a small earnest one, should require some personal outlet for personal

feeling? Indeed where the congregational respond is not allowed in a religious service, it often demands and obtains its natural position; for what is the loud Amen, often uttered by members of other Christian bodies during the delivery of an earnest extempore prayer, but the congregational respond asserting its right to be heard, and its position in public worship? I do feel thankful to God that we have the outlet, and that it is as much a part of Divine worship as that which proceeds from the minister. I do feel thankful that the Church of England has, in this respect, broken down every wall between minister and people; that no curtain divides the Priest at the altar from the "Priest of God in the congregation."

Opening sentences. This service of united prayer opens, not with the words of man, but of God. God speaks through his Holy Word to every class in the congregation. We begin with certain sentences from the Bible. There is one text for the *desponding*, another for the *formalist*, others for the *self-deceived*, others for the *unconverted*, and others for the *penitent*. Midst words of warning, direction, and comfort, coming from God, thus do we make ready to worship Him. The verses figure forth and prepare us for the nature of our service. Young and old, rich and poor, come into his courts as humble, repentant sinners. We are told that if we come saying that "we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," but then "God will not yet enter into judgment with us;" His sacrifices are "a broken spirit," and "to Him belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." Like the still small voice which the Prophet heard on the mount, so these tones of God are meant to put us

in our place, to show us our weakness, and to calm and hush hearts disturbed through worldly cares, through sadness, or sickness, or any earthly power. They are meant to brood over our unrest, as once the spirit of God brooded over the face of the troubled waters.

Exhortation. And now, for the first time, the minister speaks in his official capacity; he tells the congregation how they are to worship God. You meet, he says, to confess sins, to render thanks, to praise God, to hear His Holy Word, and to ask necessary blessings for soul and body. In these words he gives notice of the consecutive order of the united prayer about to be made. He states distinctly the five great branches of worship which minister and people agree together to render to God.

Plymouth objection. Of late years an objection has been made to this exhortation because a mixed congregation of saints and sinners are addressed as "dearly beloved brethren;" saints and sinners, we are told, are not brothers, they should not be classed together. Now this objection cannot be confined to the exhortation; if it is a scriptural objection it holds good against our whole Book of *united Prayer*. But I do not believe it to be scriptural, and I earnestly believe that the principle in our Book of united Prayer is scriptural. Christ called his own converted people "his sheep," but he did not confine that touching title, you remember, to converted children. He had "other sheep," who were "not yet of his fold," but they were his sheep, nevertheless. If "God manifest in the Flesh" could call both saints and sinners "His sheep" I do not think that we act unscripturally in calling

saints and sinners our *brethren*, especially when we remember that pit out of which we have been digged, and the stock from whence we sprang.

General Confession. The exhortation asks us to kneel and say, after the minister, the prayer of general confession. It is called a general confession, first, as opposed to auricular or private priestly confession; and secondly, because it refers to sins or failings in which most men share. It is one of the most perfect and natural outpourings of the human soul perhaps ever penned, and in no part of our *united* prayer should the great congregational voice sound so distinct and clear as here. Each soul present should say "now I am about to confess my sins to God—my own sins. I want Him to be clear and distinct in his pardoning mercy; let me be clear and distinct in my confession." The rubric, or direction for use, at the commencement of the prayer, calls it "a general confession to be said of the whole congregation, after the minister, all kneeling." I do wish you would all mark that rubric with a broad pencil mark in your Prayer-Book and follow its teaching. Too often the whole spirit of the prayer is forgotten, and a stranger to our services might naturally think that it was the duty of the minister, alone, to confess the sins of the people over their silent heads, as in olden days the high priest confessed the sins of the people over the head of the silent and apathetic scape goat.

Plymouth objection I know of but one modern objection to this confession: No Christian man, we are told, should ever confess sin; he is forgiven once and for ever, and he forgets his sonship and casts contempt on his position when he uses such a prayer as the

general confession of the Church of England. Now objections of this nature, if scriptural, strike a death blow, not only at the confession, not only at our book of *united* prayer, but at the great foundation principle on which all orthodox Protestant bodies build up their respective systems of public worship. The objection, however, has been condemned and exposed by Christ himself eighteen hundred years ago. Then, as now, there were outwardly devout people who entered into God's temple and commenced divine service, not by confessing sin, but by sinning, as each of them said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are." Christ condemned that principle by one of the most telling parables that ever fell from his holy lips, and he did more, he endorsed the opposite principle, the principle of the man who came into his house in almost abject humility and beat upon his breast saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." No confession of sin! then Christ was wrong in doctrine and principle. Well may we pray in the spirit of our litany "From all such heresy evil teaching, and destructive doctrine—good Lord deliver us."

The Absolution. Confession having been made by the whole congregation, the promise of pardon and forgiveness is then publicly declared by the minister, in the form of a prayer. God is reminded of his gracious promises; the congregation is comforted by the thought that God's ministers are commanded to declare to the penitent, through the gospel, the absolution and remission of their sins. God—not the minister—but God, is represented as ready to pardon and absolve "all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his Holy Gospel." In short the absolution

conveys the idea of the minister saying to the congregation words like these: "Now you have confessed your sins, you have publicly acknowledged your guilt. You have asked for pardon. I now declare to you that God has pardoned all who are truly penitent in this congregation."

The rubric orders that this absolution should be pronounced by the priest alone, in a standing posture, the people kneeling in silence; it is pronounced by the priest because it is the grand leading announcement of the gospel, which gospel was, in apostolic days, primarily entrusted to the first and second orders of the ministry. It is said, standing, because it is an announcement or proclamation of God's grace, and the people kneel and hear it in silence out of reverence to that God who speaks to them through his minister. I hope that if ever our Book of *united* Prayer is revised, that this word "priest" will be rendered according to its strict etymology and meaning; it really means a presbyter or elder. It has nothing of a sacerdotal or sacrificial character attached to it. The use of the word is very apt to lead people astray, to give them a wrong idea of the intention of our whole service, to strengthen prejudice, or increase enmity; it is a stumbling block in the way of many who otherwise admire our services, and the sooner the correct word is substituted for it, the better for our Church.

The rubric at the end of the absolution, states
Amen. "the people shall answer here, and at the end of
"all other prayers—Amen." I look on this as a most
important rubric; first, because the continued "amen"
endorses each prayer, and when carried throughout

the service, and closing it, keeps up *united* worship; and secondly, because it adds zeal and warmth to the devotions. There is always a tendency to forget our "amens" as the service draws near its close; let it not be so with us. The original root word signifies, "to prop;" do you prop up and support your minister's appeals at the throne of grace with the loud, congregational, hearty—"Amen?"

So far our service of united prayer is one of Christ-like humility. In silence, we hear God's holy words of warning and comfort; in silence we listen to the solemn exhortation of His minister in which our manifold sins and wickedness are brought home to us, and the throne of heavenly grace is set before us as our only refuge. Then clear and distinct the voice of brother joins with brother, and in language of genuine humility and conscious weakness, we acknowledge the sins that have drawn us from our God. Then when the voices of the penitent are hushed and stilled, as the last tones of humble contrition grow fainter and die out, then, Jesus speaks through his minister the glad tidings of the gospel, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." And then we, released, set free from our captivity by his words, seal the glad message with the loud—*Amen*. So builds the Church, the heavenly temple of living stones, stooping low in humility; she digs deep down through the sands of man's conceit, till at last she reaches—the Rock; the only true foundation, the Rock of Ages—JESUS CHRIST.

SERMON.

No. 2.

“What mean ye by this service?”

EXODUS xii, 26.

WE commence to-night our thoughts on our Book of United Prayer, at the first offering of our Lord's Prayer.

Outline of
last sermon.

We have heard texts from God's Holy Word, preparing us as a congregation for united worship; we have joined our voices in humble words of confession; we have heard God's minister pronounce the glad tidings and terms of gospel absolution to all those who can appropriate it to themselves; we have sealed that absolution with our loud united “Amen,” and now with sins confessed, and pardon given, minister and people blend their voices together, calling God by that name most pleasing to children, “Our Father which art in Heaven.” Our Father—our Father even in our wanderings and rebellion; but surely never more our Father than when like penitent prodigals we confess our faults and say, “Father, I have sinned.”

The Lord's
Prayer.

The fact that this prayer is our blessed Lord's, the fact that He gave it either as a form always to be used, or as a model by which we are to fashion our devotions, the fact that all Christian

bodies, with the exception of the Plymouth Brethren, use it willingly and thankfully, accounts clearly for its repetition in our devotions; in every service it holds its place as the king of all prayers, because the prayer of the King of all kings.

Plymouth objection. One modern objection to the Lord's prayer should here be noticed. We are told that this prayer, although given by Christ, was never meant for Christian people; that it was and is solely Jewish property; that it is sadly out of place in any Christian worship; that in short no Christian should use it, either publicly or privately.

I would answer this objection in two ways: First, I would ask the objector whether all Christ's teaching was meant solely for Jews? and if not all, by what Scriptural rule are we to make the distinction between the teaching which Christ meant for the Jew, and the teaching he meant for the Gentile. Is the whole sermon on the Mount (in which this prayer was first given) solely Jewish property? or if not, by what Divine or Scriptural rule can we distribute to Jew and Gentile their distinctive shares in that sermon? For instance, is it only the Jew that is to enter his closet and shut his door when he prays? Is it only the Jew that is not to lay up treasure on earth? When these questions are answered, the question as to the Christian use of the Lord's Prayer is open for argument, but certainly not before.

Again, I appeal to the practice of the Primitive Church. The Lord's Prayer was used in every office of the Primitive Church, and in the private devotions of the early Christians. It was called the Christian's daily prayer; and so far from being out of place in Christian

worship, catechumens, or unbaptized, were not allowed to use it because it was the "sole property of the faithful." Even the Pelagian heretics, who, like the Plymouth Brethren, objected to the petition, "forgive us our trespasses," because they believed they had no sins to forgive, even they used it; although of course they explained the petition in such a way as to exclude all saints and include all sinners. In fact if there was one topic above another on which the early church was agreed, it was on the subject of the Lord's Prayer; it was used everywhere, and in every service, as the brightest jewel in the crown of Christian worship.

After we have, as disciples, obeyed our Lord's command, that when we pray we are to say this prayer, after we have, as children, addressed God as our Father, then we are in a position to praise God for all His mercy and love given to us through Jesus Christ. But praise of God, to be real, must ever spring from the guiding spirit of God, and therefore before note is touched, or human voice let loose in sacred melody, the prayer goes up to God, "O Lord, open thou our lips." And then should come the great congregational voice strengthening the prayer, "And our mouths shall show forth thy praise." "O God," cries the minister, "make speed to save us." "O Lord," cries the congregation, "make haste to help us." And then, all standing, priest and people should burst forth in that grandest of all old Christian hymns, in which glory is given "to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." Given by us now, as it ever was given, as it ever will be given. "Praise to the ever blessed Trinity, world without end."

A grander call to praise could not be made. You

see your praise is baptized in prayer. O I wish you would realize it, and use these prayers with a congregational fervor worthy of the words that your Church places on your lips.

^{Gloria}
^{Patri.} The *Gloria Patri* stamps the doctrinal nature of our united worship. None but Trinitarians could use such an ascription, for the Son and Spirit are placed on an equality with the Father, and we state that such has ever been the Godhead, and such it will ever be. In olden times, when the battle waxed hot between Arians and Trinitarians, in days when great Church councils formed creeds, when the gaunt weird-like Arius confronted the small-bodied but giant souled Athanasius, when men argued about the most sacred mysteries of the Godhead, in streets and market places, in public thoroughfares and private houses; in such times the mode of rendering of the *Gloria* stamped the congregation as either orthodox or heterodox. The Arians used a *Gloria*, but worded it thus, "Glory be to the Father, *by* the Son, and *by* the Holy Ghost," thereby implying that the Son and Holy Ghost were inferior to the Father, whereas the Trinitarians used an old Catholic form, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;" giving to Christ and the Spirit, equality with the Father, and thereby asserting Trinitarianism. Our *Gloria*, then, repeated sometimes so thoughtlessly, sometimes barely repeated at all, is one of the grandest landmarks of primitive theology and Christianity. Once these words were uttered by men ready to die for the truth contained in them, and they have come down to us as pure gold, passed through the crucible of opposition, but gold, pure gold, fit to form a crown for the King of kings.

Venite. And now every voice should join in the gladsome, happy *Venite*. The title of this cheerful chaunt, and that of the *Te Deum* and the old *Gloria*, brings before us another historic landmark. These titles you notice are in Latin, relics of our days of darkness and ignorance, relics of days when the majority of the people worshipped God in a language that they understood not, when England bent before a foreign master who ruled the nation's soul. Why not banish them out of the book then? Why not call the *Venite*, the 95th Psalm, and the *Te Deum*; the hymn of praise, and the *Jubilate Deo*, the hymn of joy? For the simple reason that thousands now would be confused by the change, as thousands would have been in the days of the reformation. These Latin names had peculiar memories connected with them. They were the landmarks of a service little understood; ignorant people recognized them by these names when they would not have done so by others, and consequently they were inserted with their old titles into our Book of United Prayer. Just as sometimes you see carved on expensive tomb stones, simple yet fondly treasured pet names of little children. Why carve Nelly, and Harry, instead of Ellen and Henry? because we never called them anything else, and any other name would be out of place and strange; and so out of place and strange, would have been any titles that would have done away with the old, well-known ones,—*Venite, Te Deum, Jubilate.*

The Psalms. The *Venite* prepares us for a service of praise filled with the holiest memories—the daily psalms. Sometimes chaunted, or oftener repeated, verse about, by minister or people, either practice brings us back to the holiest features of the public

and private worship of the past. To weary, footsore worshippers, flocking from Dan and Beersheba to the holy feast, and praising God as they journey, through these very psalms; to richly vested Priests and clear-voiced Levites, leading the devotions of thousands of awe-struck worshippers, through these very psalms, to Jesus himself, now singing the sacred psalm at the Paschal feast; now crying to His Father in language of psalmody, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" and now, comforted by these psalms, as He breathes out His life in their words of holiness, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Little wonder that the Christian church should have appropriated the psalms as she has done, like drops of healing medicine, like gems of precious value, she has treasured these priceless words, giving them to her children day by day, month after month, as God's best medicine for the soul, medicine tried and tested by sick and weary in days of sorrow in the past; medicine waiting and always ready to heal the griefs of the present, and a storehouse of the mercy for the griefs and sorrows and trials yet to come.

In no part of our service does weak or lifeless responding exercise its evil influence more sadly than here. Surely it is only natural that those already prejudiced against our Liturgy should have those prejudices strengthened, as they hear in many of our churches, these grand songs of inspiration drag out their appointed course, like a living man chained to a dead and lifeless body. And surely there is nothing more likely to kill out these prejudices, and to give those outside of us an interest in our Evangelical services, than, amongst other acts of warm worship, to

listen to these psalms, upborne on the voices of hundreds, and closed with the grand old *Gloria*, reasserting our belief in the tri-une nature of the mysterious Godhead. Yes, God has given us the sentiment, the inspired words, the form of praise itself. Our Church, conscious of a congregation's rights, has given to minister and people their distinctive and united parts in this service of praise. Where it falls dead, and cold, and lifeless on a stranger's ear, believe me the fault is in us; and our worship repels, and our church is dishonored, because our voices are hushed, and strangers think our hearts are dead.

The This service of praise, taken from God's word, Lessons. prepares the way for the teaching of the holy Scriptures. The rubric orders that the chapters or lessons shall be read distinctly, in an audible voice, and that the reader shall place himself in such a position as that he shall be heard of all present. The meaning of this is plain: the lessons are not to be sung or intoned, or repeated in a low, mysterious voice, but read out plainly and distinctly, as God's written word, the foundation of all our religious belief, our acts of worship, or songs of praise. The rubric is essentially Protestant, giving God's word its proper place, and restoring that primitive order of teaching which the Reformers tell us the Church of Rome had broken, altered and neglected, for stories and legends, and other uninspired subjects.

As to the order of the lessons, it is as perfect as anything of man's ordering can well be. Its grand object is to bring the whole word of God before His worshippers. Each Sunday has its special chapters, and every day in the year has its course chapter. Thus,

where daily service is held, or the selected chapters read privately, or at family prayer, the greater part of the Old Testament is read once in the year, and the New Testament, with some slight exceptions, three times. We have no greater mark of the Protestantism of our service than in this arrangement. The Bible, and the whole Bible, is the foundation of our worship; the open Bible and open congregational service taking the place of those private monkish services which, previous to the Reformation, formed so prominent a part of the daily offices of the Church of Rome.

General objections to Lessons. Two objections are made to our order of lessons. First, our reading the Apocrypha is objected to.

I will not strive to answer this objection. I think the insertion of the Apocrypha, at all into our lessons, is one of the very few blots on our Prayer-Book. The recognition of the Apocrypha as part of the Inspired Scriptures by the Church of Rome, and our reading it on week days, although denying its inspiration, very naturally leads people astray. And then, I think, what we learn from the Apocrypha, as an uninspired volume, hardly repays the Church for the risk she runs in retaining it among the stated lessons. I do hope the day will come when this volume will be given its proper place amongst those other volumes of sacred literature relative to example of life and instruction of manner which we keep on our book-shelves for private study, but never think of introducing into God's service.

Yet, although I cannot defend the use of the Apocrypha, still I do not like the Church to be assailed unjustly on account of it; I would, therefore, remind you that the Church, according to our sixth Article, does not receive it as Inspired, and consequently does not

require me to read it as Scripture, but as a volume meant to set an example of life and manners to those to whom I read it. And secondly, that when it is read it is always accompanied by a chapter of Inspired Scripture, the Church intending, at all events, to make the distinction that, not unnaturally, many do not see.

The second objection I can answer with a hearty good will. It tells us that ministers should not be forced to read fixed lessons, that it interferes with a man's rights and binds the word of God. Now, as far as interfering with rights are concerned, I would simply say, that as no man is forced by law into our ministry, no man's rights are assailed; we take on ourselves willingly the order of the Church of England, believing it to be, of all systems, most conducive to the right rendering of public worship. We need not do so if we do not like. As to binding the word of God through our fixed lessons, I unhesitatingly assert that no Protestant body brings such a mass of Scripture before its members as the Church of England in her Sunday and daily services. We fix our lessons in order to let loose all Scripture; we systematize, in order that the truth, the whole truth, may come before our people; and nothing can bring the whole truth before our people better than fixed lessons. Without them we may make the Bible as small as our personal theology. Are we Calvinistic? then our people may get from us a great deal of Scripture out of the Epistle to the Romans and nothing out of St. James. Are we Arminian? then St. James is elevated to the detriment of St. Paul. Are we fond of futuristic prophecy? Isaiah and Revelation is read and re-read. But fixed lessons destroy at a blow my personal likings

and dislikings, and make me a reader of God's whole word. I appear as the minister of a Christian church, which, through this very system, puts into practice the grand truth, that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants. May that truth always remain the foundation doctrine of our Church, midst the shock which prophecy tells us will yet fall on God's churches; may we retain our integrity, clinging to God's word in the future, as we have done in the past, as the only voice which cannot change, or err, or lead astray those faithful few who listen to its sacred tones, as proceeding out of the mouth of the living God.

SERMON,

No. 3.

“What mean ye by this service?”

Exodus xii., 26.

THE Great Apostle tells us, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.” Recognizing this divine rule, the flow of scripture in our service is stopped for a few moments—a break is made in the morning service, between the first and second lesson, and we sing either the *Te Deum* or *Benedicite* and the *Benedictus* or *Jubilate*, after the lessons; and at evening service we divide the lessons by singing either the *Magnificat* or *Cantate Domini*, and at the close of the lessons either the *Nunc Dimittis* or the *Deus Misereatur*. Six of these hymns are extracts from the Bible. They remind us how God has in the past fulfilled the great scriptural promise made to His people Israel, and as we sing them we teach and admonish one another to look for a fulfilment of those scriptural promises which He has made to the members of the Christian church. The *Benedicite* is an old Jewish paraphrase on the 148th Psalm, calling on all created things to bless the Lord. It has been sung in the Christian church from the earliest ages, and is one of those connecting links with

the Jewish church which no true-hearted Christian would willingly surrender.

The *Te Deum*. The *Te Deum* has been the mouthpiece through which successive generations for at least thirteen hundred years have poured forth their praises to God. No hymn has ever grasped at higher thoughts, clothed them in more majestic language, and through its words and music lifted up vast congregations of Christian people into diviner fields of human worship. No true Christian can use it without feeling that he expresses his most fervent adoration of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in language so grand and devotional as to be incapable of improvement. No song of uninspired praise either has such earthly memories clustering round it. Sung for ages in the Church it has passed from light into darkness, and out into light again. Triumphant armies have chaunted its verses in holy churches where they have hung up their victorious banners. Nations recovering from plague, pestilence or famine, have praised God for His mercy through its sacred words. Kings and princes, with bended knee and uncovered heads, have laid their royalty at the feet of Deity as the magnificent anthem rolled heavenward "We praise thee, O God; we acknowledge thee to be the Lord." The author is unknown; some gentle, retiring Christian maybe, who, hiding himself behind the Cross, was willing to be forgotten, if through his words, his Saviour could be remembered; some faithful son of Grace, striking with timid hand a note of unknown power, whose sound has gone out through all the earth, and its teaching to the end of the world.

Object of
Creeds.

After one of these hymns of praise we are called on to sing or say the Apostles' Creed.

This creed, together with the Nicene and Athanasian, (for I will notice them all here,) call for extended remarks. First, as to the object of such compositions. They were originally intended to present to the candidate for baptism an epitomized form of Christian belief, and to act as marks or badges by which Christians might be distinguished from heretics and unbelievers. We trace an embryo creed in the words of the Ethiopian eunuch, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The earlier creeds were very short, simple and numerous, and, though alike in doctrine, differed in wording, according to the custom of each church and country. As time advanced, however; as the Church became less congregational and more catholic, as Satan entered the garden of primitive christianity, sowing heresys and error with lavish hand, these creeds became consolidated and controversial. This, of course, was natural. Error had to be opposed, not by single churches alone, but by what had become the Church; the babble of many tongues was not the weapon by which heresy should be met, but by the clear, unbroken voice of the whole Church, or of a vast portion of the Church, as speaking through one mouth. Hence it came to pass that the troubled sea of early Christian controversy flung out on the sands of belief, far above the ordinary water-mark, those hidden treasures which men have called the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

The Apostles' Creed The Apostles' Creed is the earliest prominent creed. It was called "The Apostles'" because embodying their teaching. The matter, and to a great extent the form of it, is given in the works of a Christian writer as early as the year A. D. 177. It is plain, however, that it varied in wording in different churches,

though substantially the same in doctrine, and that its present form was in general use about the year 325.

Little need be said in explanation of this creed. The head is bowed at the name of Jesus to testify our belief in His Deity. It is ignorance to speak of this as a Romish custom; it is an old and honored custom, dating back to Primitive days. If Arians had not tried to prove that Jesus was not equal with the Father, I suppose the custom would not have been adopted; but it has been, and is used as a mark of orthodoxy. The Trinitarian bows his head—the Arian keeps it erect on his shoulders. The expression, "He descended into hell," means that Christ's soul, after death, went into the place of departed spirits. This clause was inserted to oppose the Apollinarian heresy, which taught that Jesus had not a human soul. The clause, "Crucified, dead, and buried," was directed against the Phantomists, who denied that Christ had a real body. The expression, "I believe in the Catholic Church," does not refer to any one part of the church, but to the church as a whole. The word "catholic" means "universal." Thus air is catholic, light is catholic, life is catholic, death is catholic. We do believe in a Catholic Church, and never more than in the present day, when in every clime and country Jesus Christ has his children and representatives.

The Nicene
Creed.

The Nicene Creed is like some massive arch built up by conquerors to commemorate a glorious victory. We Trinitarians, in all protestant bodies, who believe and trust in Jesus Christ as God, owe more to this creed than we are in the habit of acknowledging. Read Stanley's history of the Eastern Church, and Robertson's history, and learn what strange scenes it brings us back to!—To 300 years after Christ; to the

country of Bithynia, washed by the waters of the Black Sea; to the Eastern city of Nicae, now a wretched Turkish village, surrounded by a wilderness of thicket, and filled with broken pillars; to streets crowded with Bishops and Presbyters, arguing on the divinity of Christ; to the wildest state of excitement permeating all classes of society on the same subject; to travel-worn Bishops and Presbyters from Rome and Spain, from Africa, from Asia Minor, from Persia, from Sycthia in the extreme north, gathering together to decide on the divinity of Christ; to the great Roman Emperor Constantine, with diadem of pearl on his head, with scarlet robe blazing with precious stones, blushing like a boy, as he stands the observed of all observers, in the presence of these fathers of the church, assembled to meet him on the question of the divinity of Christ. All that was holy and sacred, and much that was unholy and dangerous, met side by side that day. Surely there was a holy zeal that burnt brightly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Surely the same old Apostolic fervor that led Andrew to follow Christ, led these old Bishops; some with empty eye-sockets, others hamstrung, others with torn bodies, and all in someway mangled by persecutions; to meet their younger brethren, and stand side by side on the old platform of their common Christianity. Surely there was Divine guidance in the humanity of a council composed of 300 Bishops, sending forth a creed which condemned the awful doctrine taught by Arius, that Christ was a created being, which creed was received by the whole Church Catholic, both east and west, reiterating to the world the fundamental belief that "Jesus Christ was of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God."

But I say much that was unholy and dangerous met there too. At times the arguments were unholy, because wild, excited, and unchristian. Arius and his followers were heretics; but heretics with consciences — a fact the council sometimes seemed to forget. The pearl diadem, the scarlet robe, in fact the Emperor—all were sadly out of place. It was the dark shadow of the State stealing down from the Throne over the Church; it was a mournful evidence of the Church forgetting her distinctive dignity, and preparing the way for the saddest pages of her future history. Yet, take the council all in all, take it with its faults and failings common to all councils of men, weigh its grand theological results, remember the tremendous impetus it gave to liberty of discussion and the right of private judgment, realize that to it we owe the Church's bold assertion of the Divinity of Jesus, as surely as we owe the Reformation to Luther; realize, I say, these results, and I am convinced you will agree with me, that one of the brightest pages in our Christian history, is the page that gives us this story, and that chronicles this creed.

A very few words on the form of the creed itself as we repeat it. The expression, "Very God of Very God," means True God of (or from) True God; so with Light of Light—Light *from* Light. The latter portion of the creed relative to the Holy Ghost, was added fifty-six years after the Council of Nice, in opposition to the Macedonian heresy, which spoke of the Holy Ghost as a "ministering spirit."

The Athanasian Creed. The Athanasian Creed, became a standard of church doctrine early in the 5th century. It was called after Athanasius, Arius's great opponent at the Nicene council, because expressive of the views

which he contended for during his life. It is much longer than either the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds; but then the field of controversy that it had to cover was much larger. It met every phase and form of heresy regarding the Person of God, fixing the faith of the Church on minute, yet important points.

No creed, perhaps, has so woven itself into the teaching of all Christian bodies as this. There are few regular members of other Christian denominations who are not just as well trained in the teaching embodied in the Athanasian Creed as we are. We repeat the creed in our service at stated seasons; they are taught it through sermons, and that far oftener than we repeat it. Year after year they are taught the actual necessity of believing that they worship one God, in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; that the three persons of the Godhead are uncreated, incomprehensible, eternal, and almighty; that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one. Further, sermon after sermon tells them that Jesus Christ is both God and man;—that He is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood. That in the Trinity none is before or after the other; none is greater or less than another; and that he that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. This astounding unanimity of teaching between those who repeat, and refuse to repeat, the mere words of the creed, prove distinctly the Scriptural nature of the creed itself, and testify to the extraordinary influence which the doctrines set forth in it, exercise over all orthodox Protestant bodies. The fiery Athanasius once set himself against what some told him was the voice of the

world. That voice has sunk into a whisper, whilst the doctrines battled for by the Nicene theologian have created a platform on which Anglican and Nonconformist can stand side by side as brothers.

The Actual Creed. In repeating this creed a distinction should, of course, be made between the actual doctrine which is stated in it and those clauses or verses which are merely explanatory, and directed against distinctive forms of heresy. What we are told we must believe is the Catholic faith, as received by the Church at the time the creed was formed. This faith, recognized by the Catholic world, consisted of the 3rd, 28th and following clauses of what we call the Athanasian Creed. Here is the Catholic faith:—"We must worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. We must furthermore believe in the Incarnation of Christ, in his death, resurrection and ascension; in his second coming, and in eternal rewards and punishments to be given at the final judgment." All the rest of the creed consists of natural deductions drawn from this rule of faith, but, as Wheatley wisely says, stand towards the actual creed in the position that a sermon does to its text. The text is necessary to a right belief; the sermon on the text, of course, open to exception.

General Objections. But must we believe this creed even as you have repeated it? Certainly, if you desire to hold the Catholic faith and to avoid the awful risk of setting your opinion against the voice of the Church universal. But is it not wrong to assert that we cannot be saved unless we hold this faith? No, not from the standpoint of our church. As a church (right or wrong) we hold that according to the teaching of scripture it is necessary to salvation that we should believe that Jesus

Christ is God, equal with the Father, and the Holy Spirit equal with both. But is not a broad statement of such a belief unchristian? No, certainly not unchristian-like; Christ himself gave us the spirit of the words, and, in plainer terms, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." And His apostle, Peter, wrote in the same spirit when he said, "There shall be false teachers amongst you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresys, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Ah! brethren, let us hope that our creed, after all, excludes but very few; that deep down, under hard theological words, in the hearts of men, Jesus really reigns as God, and the Holy Spirit is even more personal to them than we or they suppose. Let us cling to the Christian hope, that it is only in the storm of life and of angry debate; that Jesus appears to such as a spirit on the troubled waters, but that the time will come when He shall say, "It is I, be not afraid," and that willingly He will be received into the death-touched heart. Let us hope so, let us pray for the day to dawn when we all shall be one, as the Father is one with Jesus and Jesus with the Father.

In the meantime let us value and preserve our creeds. They come to us like three living representatives of the dim, distant past; they loom out through all aspects of our modern theology, like Egypt's massive pyramids towering above the tiny tents pitched at their sandy base; they look down with the eyes of an unshaken faith upon our strifes and divisions, and hold out to us a common ground on which we can meet to heal them. Yes, whenever the faith of the Church will be united;

whenever Ephraim will cease to envy Judah, and Judah to vex Ephraim, it is back to these creeds we must come. Back to the voice of God's ancient church which elevates Jesus to the throne of Deity, with sect and party, and Virgin-Mother at his feet; back to the past, that we may take heart for the future, and, striking hands in Christian fellowship, march on to Christian victory.

S E R M O N,

No. 4.

"What mean ye by this service."

EXODUS xii, 26.

AFTER the recital of the Apostles Creed, the congregation kneel in prayer. We are called to prayer by the minister in the well known words "the Lord be with you,"—you, as a congregation in your prayer. "And with thy spirit," as our minister, is the response of the congregation. An exquisite touch of Christian sympathy and fellowship, bringing us back in thought to the golden harvest field, bright in the burning light of an Eastern sun, the harvest hands and gleaners hard at work; the quiet Ruth waiting for leave to glean; the kindly Boaz entering the field with the godly greeting—"the Lord be with you;" and the sunburnt reapers standing erect, sickle in hand, giving the glad respond,— "and may the Lord bless thee." So we kneel down in prayer, in the spirit of Boaz as he blessed his reapers; in the spirit of the reapers, as they blessed him. Then follow short cries for mercy to God in the threefold nature of the Trinity, then once again our Lord's own prayer is repeated, and then we repeat the versicles which contain a summary of all the collects about to follow.

*Collects and
Christian year.*

These collects, or prayers, are commenced with a special collect for the day which is generally used through the whole week, and is connected with the gospel and epistle for the day.

*General
objection.*

This mode of praying has been objected to, by those not belonging to the Church of England. It has been asked, whether "the Collects and Scripture assigned to each Sunday are more applicable to that Sunday than any other?" Also whether the observance of Saints days, and the allocations of distinct collects and Gospels for such days does not savor of Roman Catholicism.

I can understand these objections appearing reasonable to those who have never mastered the object of our system of services for the year. Because we have an object, and a very important one, in allocating to each Sunday its distinctive service. Of course if that object is overlooked, our arrangement does appear arbitrary. The object of our system may be explained in one word, "Jesus", the desire of the Church being the bringing of the life of Jesus, and the teaching of Jesus, before his assembled worshippers. Now, there are two ways in which this could be done: to leave it to the choice and arrangement of the minister, or to arrange the life and teaching of Jesus in order, and spread it systematically over the year. We have adopted the latter system, not merely because such has been the habit of the Church from the earliest ages, but because it ensures the work being done, and prevents ministers using Scripture, in public, to support personal opinions. The extreme Anglican teetotaler, for instance, has to read out in a clear voice the 2nd of John. The clergyman inclined to enforce the doctrine of clerical

celibacy, has to remind his people about Peter's wife's mother, and the fact that marriage is honorable in all. The clergyman of a rich, wealthy, and captiously dignified congregation, may be foolishly timid in the pulpit, but he has to read the epistle to St. James, which is, perhaps, the most suitable sermon he could give his congregation. We have, therefore, adopted the system because it is primitive, impartial, and best suited to carry out the object we have in view.

We divide the year into two portions. From Advent to Trinity Sunday the Church brings before her members the history of our Lord's life. On Trinity Sunday we enter upon the consideration of the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, the doctrine of the Trinity itself; and from Trinity to Advent, we learn from the doctrine and example of our blessed Lord and his Apostles. Thus, the teaching of each Sunday has its defined object and limits, which we trust will be taken as an answer to the first objection.

Saints' Days. The objection to the observance of saints' days is, in like manner, generally made by those who mistake the object the Church had in view in ordering them. "Your observance of saints' days," they say, "is superstitious, unprotestant, Romish," &c. Now, there might be some reason for such objections, if we canonized almost unknown men and rendered them a kind of worship; but it is folly to suppose that there could be anything superstitious or Romish, in preaching of characters delineated by inspiration and left on record for our example or warning; and this was the object of the Church in retaining saints' days when cleansing herself from Romish error. The field of Christian theology is very wide, and the aspect that it

presents to us is naturally a doctrinal one; but religion, after all, is an influence which develops itself in a man's life and deeds and words; doctrine is only useful when developed into action, and thus the study of Christian character forms a most important part of Christian preaching. Now, the Church realized this so forcibly, that she set apart days to study the characters of those men who rallied round our blessed Saviour, and reflected His doctrine in their devoted lives; she felt that there was much to learn from St. Peter, St. Andrew and St. Thomas, and others, and so she gave us these days, that, if observed in a proper spirit, cannot fail to be of use to the Church at large. We worship no saint; the accusation is as unjust as it is preposterous; but we use the lives of these saints for warning, rebuke and admonition. In fact, we do with all the saints what our Scotch Presbyterian friends do with their national saint, St. Andrew, and English Non-conformists with their national saint, St. George: we meet on the recognized saint's day, in God's house; we worship God and listen to a short lecture or sermon on the life of the saint, and go home the better, I hope, for it. The only difference I see is that we do not go to church in procession, we do not wear badges, we do not go as members of societies,—whose praise is joyfully rendered for their works of charity and love,—but because our Church has appointed the day as a day of worship for her people.

General objection to Collects. The form of our collects, or prayers, is sometimes objected to. Why cut them up and divide them as you do? why not join them together into one or two long prayers? we are asked. I reply, first, because our collects are plainly moulded after the

fashion given us by our Lord, and secondly, because that form has ever been used in the Christian church, and I doubt, very much, if it can be improved on. In other Protestant bodies where extempore prayer is used, I have often heard that what is called the "long prayer" is objected to by some very earnest members, not because it is not earnest, or eloquent, or faithful, but simply because it is *long*. You may be quite sure that the length of the Lord's Prayer was not without a meaning.

State Prayers. The collects for morning and evening prayer are almost identical, with the exception of the beautiful collects for morning and night, and the prayer for "all sorts and conditions of men," which is always used in the evening, on account of its general character. The prayers for the Queen, Royal Family, Governor General, Bishops and Clergy, are used regularly, in accordance with the Scriptural command, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications and prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority."

Objection to State Prayers. The objection, that sometimes our Church is forced to pray for bad monarchs and princes, is hardly Scriptural, for surely if they are bad they need our prayers, and if they are good people, like our beloved Queen, they naturally draw out our prayers, that they may maintain their goodness in their high position. As to introducing titles into prayer, a practice that some people dislike, I can only say, that to my mind it is natural and becoming, and that all danger of misconception is provided for in the prayers themselves. We pray to God for our children, as we speak of them to our fellow creatures; it is only natural to do the same

with kings and princes. If we are loyal men our beloved Queen will always be to us "our most gracious sovereign lady, Queen Victoria." Don't let us go out of our way to invent a praying name for her; let us call her in prayer what we would call her when speaking of her in her high position. But the prayers themselves provide against the evil of office worship. If, in the middle of the prayer, we ask God's blessing on our sovereign lady, the Queen, at the beginning we acknowledge that God is King of kings, and Lord of lords, the only ruler of princes, and throughout all the state prayers, we ask for our rulers what alone can make queen or peasant holy, "the influence of God's holy spirit." Our Prayer Book, thank God, has done not a little to increase and support loyalty through these very prayers, and I trust the day will never come when, nationally, we will have to alter them, or, individually, refuse to use them.

The morning and evening services close with the exquisite prayer, more than fourteen hundred years old, written by the golden-mouthed St. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople. It is a beautiful summing up of the service; reminding God of His promise to be with His people in their devotions, asking Him to give us in this life an abiding knowledge of the truth of the gospel we have been listening to, and in the world to come, life everlasting. The prayer is a marked evidence of the Church's belief in the divinity of our Saviour. It is addressed to Christ as God, and hence the omission of the usual plea at the end of the prayer, "for the sake of Jesus Christ." We appeal direct to Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the son of Mary and Joseph, as Almighty God.

The Litany, generally used at the close of the third collect in the morning service, was orig-

inally, and is naturally, a distinct service in itself. For years, however, it has been interwoven with the ordinary service, and there are very many earnest church people who would miss it sadly if severed from its well-known surroundings. In this, and many other Colonial dioceses, it is allowed to be used as a distinct service; yet, as a rule, it retains its time-honored position as part of our morning prayer.

Litanies, or forms of general supplication, were in use in the church early in the third century, and were always moulded in the same form as ours, short prayers made by the minister and responded to by the people in a set form of supplicating words. Our Litany is remarkable not only for its devotional simplicity, but also for its comprehensiveness, there being hardly a position in life that a nation, a family, or an individual could be placed in, that is not noticed in its appeals to God. Indeed there are some common troubles of life mentioned in it that are seldom even thought of in churches where this form is not used.

General objections. The objections made to the Litany generally arise, I think, from thoughtlessness. It is objected to on account of its form. We are told it has vain repetitions in its continued responding. I think this a thoughtless objection. If the Litany be full of vain repetitions, so are the 107th and 136th Psalms. In the 136th Psalm, the same antiphonal respond is made twenty-six times, and in the 107th, the same words are used four times. Indeed a like objection might be made against a prayer uttered by Jesus, when in lonely solitude he said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" for we read, "He left His disciples sleeping, and went away again, and prayed the third

time, saying the same words,"—and He was our example.

The same thoughtlessness may be traced in other objections; for instance "deadly sin," means sin which leads to death,—licentiousness, drunkenness. We do not refer to the Romish distinction between deadly and venial sins at all. Again, we do not pray against "sudden death" because we are unprepared to die, but because sudden death is a form of dying that all men would wish, if possible, not to pass through; most men would wish to die with their wife and children and friends about them. Again, we do not ask God "to deliver us in the hour of death" because we all trust in a death-bed repentance, but because it is our final struggle with Satan, and we want all the grace that God can give us to carry us through it to his glory. We are thankful to enter into heaven, "barely saved," but we would sooner do so triumphantly. Again, we do not ask to "dread God," as a slave would dread a tyrannical master, but as a loving child would dread to displease an affectionate parent, because of the love subsisting between them.

To enjoy fully the spirit of this noble service, we require to be one of a whole congregation taking part in its constant and penitential responding. The Litany badly responded to by the congregation makes it a long, monotonous, and wearisome service; whereas loud, hearty, uniform responding, makes it one of the noblest and grandest channels of devotion that earnest Christian men could avail themselves of. Little wonder is it that those outside of us should not see its beauty, when we fail to render it, as the Church intended it should be rendered by her children.

S E R M O N,

No. 5.

“What mean ye by this service?”

EXODUS xii., 26.

IN calling your attention this evening to our service for the administration of the Lord's Supper, I am anxious to avoid, as far as I possibly can, all matters of party controversy. We need not court the din of many angry voices, when we possess the clear distinct voice of our Reformed Church herself. We constitute an Apostolic Church, reformed from mediæval abuses; our Prayer-Book is the offspring of the Reformation; our services, one and all, stand or fall with reformation principles. If you bear these facts in mind, especially with regard to the service under consideration, you will see at once that the strife and controversy rages outside of our service; as far as it is concerned it is intensely Protestant. The heart of all our worship is a Protestant heart, protesting in every sentence against those errors which gave rise to the Reformation, and obscured the light of the Gospel of the grace of God.

The service is a distinct service, when the Sacrament is administered, the whole service is used; when not administered, it closes after the reading of the offertory sentences. It provides for a regular weekly administration, although it does not command it. Any church

may close its Sunday service with the Holy Communion, in accordance with Apostolic practice; a practice that many people appear to forget.

The terms of Communion. The terms of Communion may be gleaned from the opening rubrics, the exhortation announcing the Communion, and the exhortation previous to the administration. Open and notorious evil livers and people at variance with each other, can be refused Communion after due warning by the clergyman, and amendment of life procures re-admission. The rejection of a communicant rests solely with the clergyman who is ordered, however, to notify his Bishop of such rejection within fourteen days. This rule appears to me to be a wise and judicious one, and I have known it to be applied in Canada, with good results, both to the Church body and the parties under discipline. The rules of admission are plain and distinct: All are welcome who, in the words of the invitation, truly and earnestly repent them of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours, and intend to lead a new life following the Commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways. If such, "draw near with faith" in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are welcome to Communion in the Church of England.

Plymouth objection. The objection that none should commune but Christians fully assured of their salvation, may be answered in three ways. 1st, Jesus did not administer the Communion to fully assured Christians, but to weak Christians. Peter was a very weak Christian; the rest of the disciples were decidedly weak, and yet Jesus instituted the Sacrament primarily for them. 2nd, Experience teaches us very plainly that all Christians are not fully assured of their salvation, like John Wesley,

long after their conversion to God, they may feel that they are servants but not sons, they may enjoy some of the fruits of the Spirit, but not all. And 3rd, The Sacrament itself is a channel of grace used by God to strengthen weak souls and refresh weary spirits. If the weakest draws near in simple faith, trusting solely in Jesus as his Saviour, he will not go away unblessed.

The service opens with our Lord's prayer and with a short collect asking God to cleanse our hearts, and fit us for the Holy service we are about to render Him. Then the priest rehearses distinctly all the Ten Commandments, and the people on bended knee pray to God for grace to keep them. As the natural preparation for the Communion consists of self-examination, these ten laws of God are invaluable to us as guides, leading us to know what sin is, and keeping us at the foot of the cross as our only place of safety. The law always fulfilling its destiny of "bringing us to Christ."

Plymouth objection against Ten Commandments.

We are here met by another objection: The Law, we are told, is not the rule of the believers' life, Christians have nothing to say to the Law. Now in one sense Christians have nothing to say to the Law. They have nothing to say to it by way of justification, law-keeping could never save them. But in another sense they have a great deal to say to the Law. The Law is naturally the rule of the Christian's life. He strives to keep it from love instead of fear, but law-keeping is as natural to him as a child of God, as law-breaking was natural to him as an unconverted sinner. And all this he feels and does scripturally. Like St. Paul "he delights in the Law of God after the inward man." He cannot but feel that "the Law is Holy, and the Commandment Holy, just and good."

That the Gospel "was not meant to make void the law, but to establish it." The reading of the Law then, in our Communion office, can never jar on the feelings of the humble minded child of God. In it he hears his rule of life, through it he is wakened up to see his faults and failings, and by it he is led again and again to "the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin."

After the reading of the Law, prayer is offered for our Queen. This is not a vain repetition, for this service is a distinct one, and in every service we naturally pray for our Sovereign. Then is read the Collect, Gospel and Epistle for the day, and the Nicene Creed, which is repeated by the congregation, after the minister.

The Gospel
Gloria. In most churches of our communion the congregation, previous to the reading of the Gospel, herald it with the gladsome words "Glory be to thee, O God." This practice is not ordered by the rubric, but it was an old and beautiful one, that lingered yet on the lips of the worshippers when first they used our reformed Prayer Book, and that has been passed on to their children's children. It is an addition to the tribute paid to Jesus by standing when the Gospel is read. We stand, as a mark of respect because the Gospel always contains a record of the sayings or doings of our Saviour. We do not stand at the Epistle for it is the Epistle of St. Peter, or St. Paul, or St. James. The Epistle is God's word given us by inspired men; the Gospel, is God's word, spoken by God.

Sermon. After the creed, notice of the Communion and other church notices are given., The mere notice that the Communion will be administered on a certain day is given here; after the sermon an extended notice is read, either to those about to commune, or those

careless about communing. Then follows the sermon, which may be either read, or delivered extempore. The use of a special prayer before the sermon is not ordered, but it appears so natural that it is little wonder that the custom should be so general. Nothing is said either as to the dress of the preacher, and in the present state of ecclesiastical Law, the subject remains a very open one. He errs not who wears the gown, nor he who wears the simple surplice.

The offertory. The sermon being ended the offerings of the congregation are given to God, for the use of the poor and other Church objects, the priest reading from Scripture, texts on charity, whilst the offerings are made. When all have given to God, then the united offering is humbly placed by the priest on the holy table. This mode of offering is Scriptural, primitive, and beautiful, and is undoubtedly one of the best channells for congregational beneficence.

The Prayer for the Church Militant. The offertory is followed by the prayer for the Church as now existing and battling on earth. It is a splendid close to a service, or services; in which we have poured forth our prayers for individual wants. We pray for unity in the great body, for all christian rulers, for God's ministry, for the congregation present, for all in sorrow and sickness, and we thank God for his mercy towards all who have departed this life in real faith. We cast the arms of prayer round mankind, and close our service in a spirit of universal love.

Administration Service. We have now come to the administration of the Holy Communion itself. The rubric, opening address, and indeed the whole service, plainly implies that none but communicants should be present. The expression "the people" applies to communicants,

for it is "the people" who at the close of the service thank God for "having allowed them duly to receive the sacred mysteries." The congregation should consist then of the officiating clergymen, and the people conveniently placed, to receive the Holy Supper.

Exhortation. The opening exhortation is very beautiful. Those present are again exhorted to examine their spiritual state before they commune. Time is yet given to the thoughtless or wilfully sinful to withdraw, and not bring on themselves the judgments that may fall on wilfully worthless participators; because not only has this feast its blessings, but its dangers; God may send on us as he did in the days of the Apostle, bodily suffering and even death, for wilfully worthless communing; therefore the worthless are warned, and the timid encouraged, and all the faithful present are called on to thank God for the benefits of the Saviour's bloodshedding, and the blessings of the Sacrament.

Eating Damnation. Some have trembled at the awful words in this exhortation, that the worthless communicant eats and drinks his own damnation. If ever the Prayer Book is revised, this word I have no doubt will be differently rendered; it really means "condemnation." The wilful sinner who adds to his sin the awful one of communing unworthily, condemns himself, and becomes specially liable to the condemnation of God.

And now when the warnings and invitations are given, the priest re-states the terms of Communion. All can judge themselves. Do I repent of my sins? Am I in love and charity with my neighbours? Do I intend to lead a new life? These are the tests, which each communicant should apply to his own heart before bending on his knees and making his confession.

Confession and Absolution. The confession is personal to each communicant, every voice should sound as the acknowledgment of unworthiness ascends to God to whom the confession is made. Then the absolution is declared. It is a simple prayer reminding God of his promises and asking Him to pardon the penitent and confirm them in holiness.

Very beautiful is the next step in the service. Lest any should doubt God's mercy to the penitent, all are asked to listen to the comfortable words of the Scriptures themselves, words that tell us of Christ calling the weary to himself; of the Father's love to the perishing; of the Saviour's mission of mercy; of our Divine Lord as the sinner's advocate. Can we listen to these and refuse to be comforted? Nay, rather will we lift up our hearts to God, and, in one of the most primitive of Christian hymns, will we join our voices with Angels and Archangels bringing glory to the blessed Trinity. And then humbled by our lofty flight of thought into the realms of the Divine, we kneel down in silence, only to be broken by the voice of the priest, as he tells God anew of our unworthiness, and that we do not presume to come to his Holy Table trusting in our own righteousness.

Prayer and Act of Consecration. The prayer of consecration is as beautifully simple as the act of consecration itself. It is a fervid appeal to God, reminding Him of the perfection of the one oblation of Christ on the cross, and asking him to make his creatures, of bread and wine, the means of bringing us into close communion with him. In consecrating, the priest first stands in front of the table to arrange the bread and wine; after which he places himself in such a position as that he can break

the bread in the sight of the people ; he then proceeds with the fervid prayer of consecration, performing the act whilst praying, by pronouncing the Divine words of institution, by breaking the bread, and laying his hand on the bread, and the vessels containing the wine. He then receives the communion himself, and then proceeds to administer it to the people kneeling before him.

Mode of Administration.

The rubric, relative to the administration, plainly implies a personal address to each communicant. This rule, however, is not easy to carry out in churches where, although the administrations are almost weekly, the communicants are always many. A certain latitude I fancy should be allowed to meet cases where communicants can be reckoned by hundreds. As to the mode of reception, the rubric is equally plain. The sacrament should be received kneeling. The communicant should take the bread in his or her hand, and reverence of course makes a rubric of her own. That the table should be approached and left quietly. That the elements should be received with an uncovered or ungloved hand. And that on returning to his accustomed seat the communicant should kneel in earnest private prayer.

Gloria in Excelsis.

The service closes with the Lord's prayer ; with a collect offering our souls and bodies to God's service, and praying for grace to keep us in the fellowship of Christ's Church. Then following the example of our blessed Lord who, when supper was ended, sang a sacred hymn, we rise, and either say or sing the Gloria in Excelsis, re-echoing the voices of the dead in Christ, who for at least a thousand years, have chaunted this noble hymn to their Saviour's praise, within their Saviour's church. The congregation is

then dismissed with the blessing, which unites the language of the law and the gospel together, as the undivided heritage of God's church and children.

Changes made
at Reformation.

I would now wish to notice a few of the changes made in the order of sacramental administration at the Reformation. As it stands, it is a purely Protestant service, every vestige of Roman Catholicism being cut off. First remark the wording of the service. The Elements before and after the act of consecration are called "bread and wine." They are laid, not on an Altar, but on the holy table, or table. The act of reception is spoken of as a spiritual act. Communicants in trouble are told to go to God's Ministry, that by the ministry of "the Word," not of the man, they may receive absolution. The following, with many other forms and ceremonies, were omitted at the Reformation. The confessions made by the priest and choir to God, the Virgin and the Saints. The kissing of the altar. The oblation and elevation of the chalice in honor of God, the Virgin and Saints. Oblation and consecration of the host and chalice, with crossings and elevation. Prayers for the dead. Prayers to the Virgin and Saints. The priest bowing before receiving, and making the sign of the cross before his mouth. The adoring of the elements. The ablution after the administration. And all forms of incensing and crossing. These and many other ceremonies were rejected. One prominent addition was made, which in itself altered the whole service, namely the administration of the sacrament to the people in both kinds.

Protestant
Character
of Service.

Our service as it stands then is free from all these and kindred forms. When people talk and argue about crossings and ablutions, elevations and

incensing, they speak of Roman Catholic forms and ceremonies, rejected by the Church of England at the Reformation. Such ceremonies are not Anglican in any sense. We can have them pure and simple and honestly in the Church of Rome; but never *honestly* in the reformed service of the Church of England.

And now I feel in a position to answer the question, asked in the text: "What mean ye by this service?" We mean the exaltation of Jesus Christ in all his offices as God manifest in the flesh, appealing to the hearts of his worshipping people. In prayer and hymn, in chapter and epistle, in creed and psalm, we only seek our Saviour's glory and the salvation of your souls. We mean the preservation of all that is apostolic, primitive and holy, and the rejection of all that is superstitious, mediæval and Romish. We mean the preservation of a free and open Bible, containing all things necessary to salvation, and the pure presentation of sacraments instituted by Christ himself. And we mean an unchanging protest against Romish and Arian doctrine; against spiritual despotism on the one hand, and latitudinarianism on the other. These are the things we have ever meant by our united service, and never more earnestly than now, when our beloved Church, fully awake to her majestic work, is fast learning to resign the purple and fine linen of the past, and clothed in the camel's hair of the hardy Baptist, stands bravely midst the weirdest scenes of wilderness and poverty stricken life, "preparing the way of the Lord and making his paths straight." No Church is more in earnest, no Church bears more becomingly the wretched poverty and persevering toil of missionary life. No Church has a grander history,

General
meaning of
Church
Services.

or I believe a nobler destiny. In none other need we ask to work for God. In none other need we care to die. By none other need we wish to be committed to the earth. And to none other need we go to seek for that pure and holy gospel which moulds and fits us for the resurrection of the just. Church of the Living God! if we but follow where thou wouldst lead us, our lives would be the noblest that men could live, and our reward,—JESUS CHRIST THE SAVIOUR.



