

LS
R37

Plain Teaching
Concerning the Church

BY

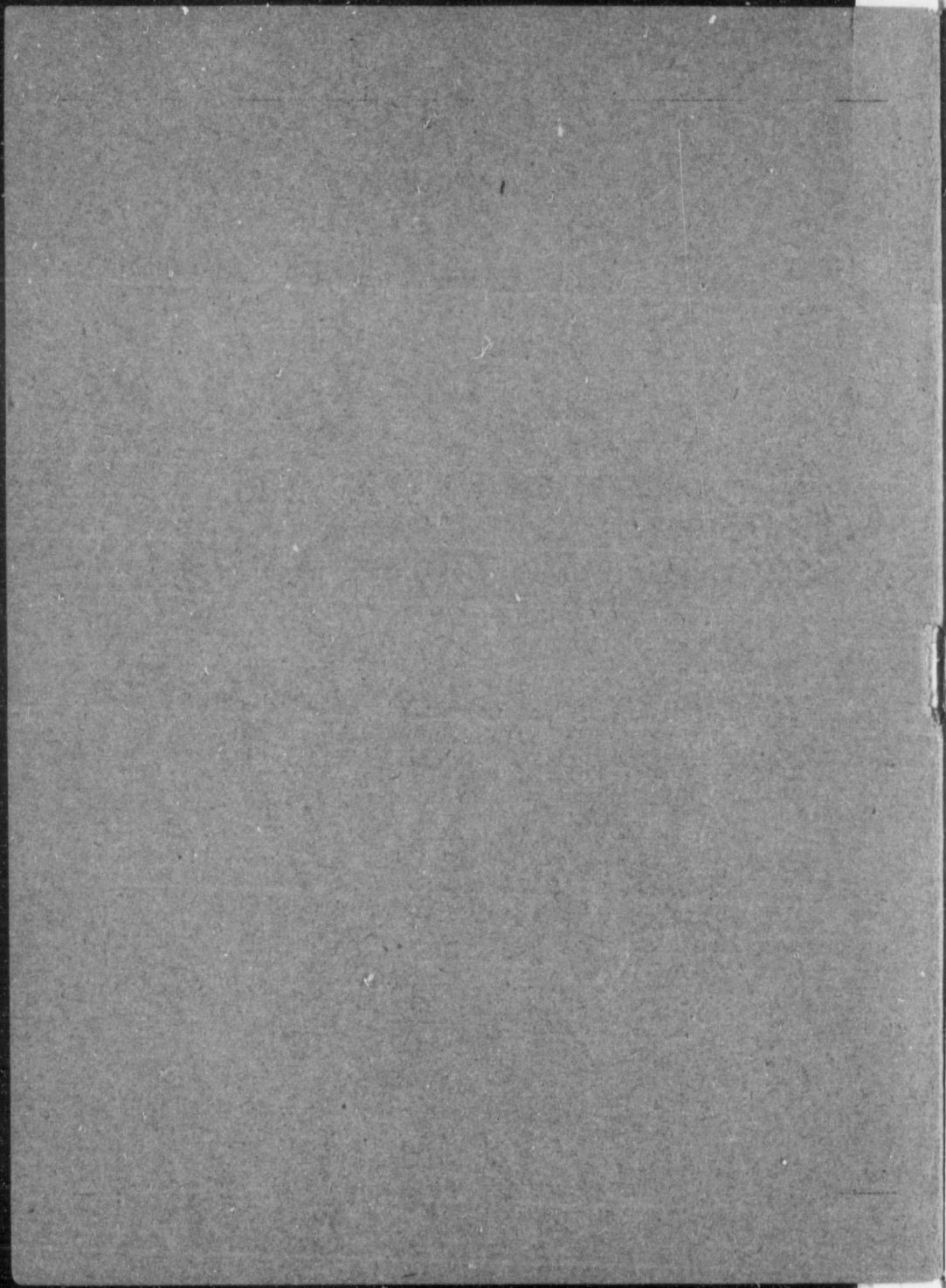
Ven. J. B. Richardson, M.A., D.C.L.,
Archdeacon of London, Ont.

SECOND EDITION.

=====
LONDON, ONTARIO,
1909.

Price, 5c. each

\$3 per hundred copies.



Plain Teaching

Concerning the Church



CONCERNING THE CHURCH.

“I Speak Concerning Christ and the Church.”—
EPH. V. 32.

In times of many opinions upon, and departure from The Faith such as these, when dissension and discord and division are prevalent among Christians, and when men are separated into numerous hostile religious parties, each calling itself by a church name; it may be well, if possible, to arrive at a clear understanding; well to learn from the Word of God and from plain historical teaching,—what, without controversy, is truth “concerning the church.”

To afford such information or teaching as may in simple form contribute to that end is the object of this Pamphlet.

There is perhaps no subject in our religion which is so variously understood and interpreted to-day as the subject of the “Church.” The term “Church” is and ever has been employed in manifold senses. It is a term which we hear in constant use now, and with a meaning differing according to the quarter from whence it comes. The English politician, for example, talks of “the Church,” and he

means that form of religion known as the National Church in England. The Roman Catholic talks of "the Church," and he means the great Ecclesiastical System throughout Christendom of which the Pope of Rome is the Visible Head. The several Christian Bodies, duly constituted, of many names and different creeds talk of their respective congregations, of their Members, or Communicants, as "the Church." Some call the building in which public worship is held, "the Church." Others mean the Clergy, and when one is ordained say, "he has gone into the Church."

In the New Testament, the word translated in the English "Church" means literally, the people "called out," and seems to have five distinct applications : 1: It is applied, though only once, to the assembly or multitude of the Children of Israel, which was called out of Egypt to journey as a separate people to the Land of Canaan (Acts vii. 38). 2: It is applied to a small number of professing Christians in a family or household (Rom. xvi. 5). 3: It is applied to the Baptized Company of a particular place or district (Acts viii. 1). 4: It is applied to the whole body throughout the world both bad and good which bears the name of Christ, (1 Cor. xii. 28). 5: It is applied to all the elect people of God (Heb. xii. 23).

In this little treatise, for the sake of convenience and brevity, and in view of the definite purpose in hand, though in no exclusive sense, the name *Church* will express the faith, position, and claims of that Scriptural, ancient, and world wide Communion of Christians—a distinct and pure branch of the divinely instituted Body—which to-day is known in England as “the Church of England,” in Scotland as “the Scottish Episcopal Church,” In Ireland as “the Church of Ireland,” in the United States of America as “the Protestant Episcopal Church,” in the Japanese Empire as “the Holy Catholic Church of Japan,” and under diversities of titles according to the Nations and among the peoples where it is located.

To know and understand the present position and claims of this Church it is necessary for us to know its past. We must see what it was and has been before we can grasp what it has become, and now is. The Church of which I speak is the same historically as it was before the Reformation, only its teaching, its doctrine, its method of worship have undergone a thorough alteration. How much it has been altered, and why, what her primitive state was, and her present attitude, are matters which call for careful investigation. We must trace the destinies of the Church through the long course of fifteen or sixteen hundred years.

We must review the various phases assumed by the Church, and study the significance of the stages reviewed. Broadly speaking the Church has passed in the course of its evolution through three great phases. There was the period of formation, the period of de-formation, and the period of re-formation. Each of these periods must be reviewed with impartiality and care, and the various stages of their development and the differences between them observed and understood. The Church's origin and historical standing, her polity and principles, her mode of worship, and her attitude toward the organized Christian denominations of the present day, are matters that ought to be thoroughly known and appreciated by all professing Christians, and especially her own Members, in order that she may embrace all as the Kingdom of God upon earth, as the fold of the Good Shepherd, as the "Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH.

Ever since the days of Abraham there has been such a Body on the earth as *the Church of God*. God originated it, He governs and protects it. It is His instrumentality for the regeneration, the moral reformation and salvation of a fallen world. In its origin and authority the Church is in no sense *Human*, it is in every sense *Divine*, and so

we must look for its features in the only Book where God has written out His Will touching the salvation of mankind. That is the Bible. Here, if anywhere, we must find the charter of the Church. Here the boundaries of this great Kingdom are defined. Here the titles and functions of its officers and their duties are declared.

The Old Testament Church had the Scriptures, the Service of God, and the Priesthood. By these it was everywhere and by all known as the Israel of God.

In Jesus Christ the Levitical Priesthood found its complement. In Him that Priesthood was abolished and for ever ended, and with it the Service and Sacrifices of the Temple at Jerusalem.

But from Christ, the Great High Priest, went forth the Gospel of the Grace of God, and from Him the Commission to men chosen of Himself to preach it, and to administer its Ordinances.

The Covenant was changed, and yet its Divine principles continued as from the beginning. The Old Church under the Law was pulled down in order that a new one might be built "upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the Chief Corner-stone." The Old and New Testaments are essentially one, only the *New* is a development and enlargement in Spiritual qualities and powers of the *Old*.

2. THE EARLY CHURCH IN BRITAIN.

The Church as described in the Acts of the Apostles rapidly spread during the Apostolic Age in Asia, Africa and Europe. God has seen fit to leave the *direct* origin of the Church in England in uncertainty. This, however, we do know. The Church was planted in that land not later than the end of the second or the beginning of the third century. It perhaps had its earlier origin even by St. Paul himself (as stated by some early, learned writers) or by some soldier or merchant convert of St. Paul. It is possible that some of the Syrian Christians, who were scattered abroad on the death of Stephen, penetrated even to Britain, preaching the Word. Or it is probable that Bran the father of Caractacus, the famous British King, who had been either a Druidic priest or bard, became a convert to Christianity during an exile, and first brought to his native land the pure gospel of Christ. Many and curious are the traditions of old, one thing only being certain, that the British Church never claimed St. Peter as its founder, nor owned the Pope of Rome as its Head.

There was in Great Britain a Christian Institution, or Church, at least three centuries before the advent of Augustine with forty Monks, sent from Rome in A. D. 597, by Pope Gregory the

Great. This ancient Celtic Church had the Word and Sacraments, and a formal organization. It had Bishops, Priests and Deacons, a Liturgy, and Articles of Faith. A proof of this is, that in A. D. 314, at a Council of the Christian Church Universal, convened by the Emperor Constantine the Great, at Arles in Gaul, to consider the Donatist schism, there were present three Metropolitan Bishops of the British Church.

This early Church was in a very real sense an independent Church. Though it could not in those days be strictly called National, it certainly was independent of Roman jurisdiction. It was not identical with Rome, nor subject to it.

In its formation and usages the British Church was Oriento-Apostolical, rather than Roman. Its organization is Gallican, to be traced to the Church of Lyons, a Church of direct Eastern origin.

The Church, then, by whomsoever it was founded in Britain, had no source in Rome.

3. THE CHURCH ROMANIZED.

It was not till the close of the sixth century that Romish Christianity was brought to Britain. The shades of the night of the middle ages were falling upon Christendom, when Gregory the Great turned his attention to Britain, with a view to converting its people to the Roman Catholic

faith. The mission to England of his delegate, Augustine, was so far successful that within a hundred years of his arrival at Canterbury the Church in Britain at length, and by degrees, though always bravely resisting, was forced to yield very much to Italian ways and views becoming for the most part subject to the domination of the See of Rome. The Pope's supremacy came to be conceded throughout Western Christendom, and the British Church for the most part made submission, though continually protesting.

For nearly a thousand years the darkness which came over the promised land of Christendom prevailed, and gross darkness covered both Priests and people. Ignorance, false doctrine, and superstition had every where gained sway. The Church of Christ, as of old the congregation of Israel had been from time to time, was in a state of apostasy.

With regard to the Church in the British Isles, it is a matter of history that during the whole of the medieval period there was ever much resistance against the Bishop of Rome as a foreign potentate. There were valiant men in our Communion who from age to age made a bold stand against not only the usurpations but the innovations of popery.

We may instance a few ways in which the Pope's power was opposed. In A. D. 961, Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, did not hesitate to set at defiance the Papal Mandate, when he deemed it unjust or improper. In the two following centuries the doctrine of Transubstantiation was openly impugned, and excommunication by the Pope set at defiance. Robert Grosseteste or Greathead, Bishop of Lincoln from 1234 to 1258, visited Rome and protested against its corruptions before Pope and Cardinals. As late as the twelfth century the Church in Ireland refused to accede fully to the supremacy of the Papal See. All through the weary ages of bondage there was a ceaseless cry throughout Britain, and an ardent longing for freedom from an uncatholic subjection to the Bishop of Rome and his uncatholic customs.

At length in the sixteenth century during the reign of Henry VIII the time in God's good Providence came when the Apostolic Church in the British Realm should arise, and, throwing off a burdensome foreign yoke and all ecclesiastical impositions to primitive Christianity, again take her rightful place as a pure branch of the one original Church of Christ. In doing this she rid herself from the accumulations of error, corrupt

doctrine, and superstitious practices with which for centuries she had been overlaid.

4. THE CHURCH RE-FORMED.

In the great Reformation of the Church in Britain, A. D., 1527—1559, there was no new Church created.

The Church by the Divine Spirit *reformed herself*, and in so doing severed herself from the Roman Communion. She did not therefore lose her identity, much less her apostolic existence and character. As has been well said:—"The errors of the Church were not the Church herself, and in quitting them she did not quit herself any more than a man changes his face when he washes it, or loses his identity when he recovers from a disease. The British Church after the Reformation was as much the British Church of the first centuries as Naaman the Syrian was the same Naaman as before, after he had washed away his leprosy in the Jordan."

The rule of the Reformation followed in England was this: To reject whatever of doctrine was unscriptural, and whatever of usages were contrary to the practice of the Church in the primitive days. The Church simply cast off what in the mediæval or dark ages had been superadded to the faith.

The main difference between the Reformation

on the Continent and the Reformation in England was this : The change wrought by the Church in England became a *restoration*, whilst that on the Continent became a *revolution*. The Reformers in England did not reject everything of the Church as it was before the Papacy, and under the Papacy. They retained the Ministry in the three orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, the rite of Confirmation, a Liturgical Service, Clerical Vestments and other minor matters, none of which were the fruits of Romanism. It is true Rome had abused the office of a Bishop and Priest by magnifying its position and power, but that was no good reason for rejecting a form of government instituted in the times of the Apostles. Rome had abused the Sacraments by degrading them to the place of mechanical means of life and grace, but that would not justify an abolishment of those Divine appointments of Christ Himself. Rome had altered and unduly exalted Confirmation, yet the early Apostolic Church had ordained the Rite and it ought surely to be retained. There were many things which the Reformed Church retained and still holds in common with the Roman Catholic system, for the good reason that these things were not of Romish origin, but a part of first century Christianity.

On the contrary the Reformers of Germany and

Switzerland not content with simply throwing off what was corrupt innovation, in their excessive zeal rejected very much that was purely Apostolic and even of Christ, on the sole ground of its association with the Roman use.

5. THE CHURCH'S POSITION SINCE REFORMATION.

The multitude of sects and denominations which sprang up at the Reformation period and since that time have carried their revolutionary spirit to great extremes, and into almost every distinctive practice and doctrine of early Christianity.

There were the *Presbyterians* and 200 years later the *Wesleyan Methodists*, who rejected the Episcopacy. There were the *Congregationalists* and *Baptists*, who refused all Ministry that professed a Clerical commission, and accepted only such as each separate and independent congregation made for itself. There were more recently the *Plymouth Brethren*, who rejected an outwardly ordained Ministry, and there was the *Society of Friends* or *Quakers*, who rejected absolutely both the Ministry and the Sacraments.

Now the Church must be and is a visible organization, a distinctly constituted body of men. It exists upon earth to-day, and has attached to it certain possessions and infallible signs. What are these possessions and signs? The pure Word of

God, the three primitive Creeds, the Apostolic Ministry, and the Divine Sacraments.

There are those professedly Christians, but distinct from the great Evangelical Bodies of the present day, who claim a part and lot in the Church and yet do not recognize these essential marks of the Church. Some repudiate Bible inspiration. Others discredit and disallow a regularly ordained Ministry, set apart outwardly for sacred functions. Others reject the Sacraments, they hold to a Covenant, but seem to repudiate the appointed seals of it. There are others who deny the Lord's Day—the first day of the week, and have revived the Jewish Sabbath: others there are who pretend to have a revelation superior to Holy Scripture,—the followers of Mohammed, Swedenborg, Annie Lee, Joe Smith and Mrs. Eddy, with revelations as contrary to each other as they all are to the plain teaching of the Divine Word. There is the latest dangerous deceit, a "giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils," which has turned the minds of men, until they are made to believe that from the world of spirits and the realms of the departed there come messages and communications to the minds and hearts of those living upon the earth, if the votaries are but willing to pay a "Medium" for them. Surely such sectaries and dissentients and errorists

concerning the Faith can present no claim to a place within the "Congregation of faithful men."

Now whilst the Church of which I am speaking does not assume to define the position of those who do not hold her standards, much less sit in judgment upon any Communion of Christians, she nevertheless acknowledges "One Catholic and Apostolic Church." She prays for "the Holy Church Universal," she "holds the Catholic Faith," and this very Faith places many "who profess and call themselves Christians" outside its Unity.

As concerning certain constitutional features, this Church plainly and without controversy makes declaration. She asserts, for example, that "the Visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Concerning the Ministry her testimony is simply this: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors that from the Apostles' times there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests and Deacons." And concerning the Sacraments: They are "outward and visible signs of inward and Spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ

Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof."

The Church is and ever has been *Catholic*, for she maintains in all its fullness "the faith once delivered to the Saints," without adding thereto one dogma, or subtracting therefrom one mystery. The Church is and always has been *Protestant*, for she is against "all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word."

6. THE CHURCH'S PRINCIPLES.

We hear a great deal now-a-days of "Church Principles," and the term is intended to be a significant and strong one, but its true meaning is much misapplied. The distinctive principles of the Church are not her distinctive Episcopal form of Government, or her distinctive Liturgical mode of Worship, or her distinctive Rites and Ceremonies. These seem rather to belong to her Visible Constitution. Besides, the Church may possess them all, as we have already seen, and be at the same time in a most corrupt, useless and false condition. The African, Syrian and Roman Apostasies, are plain proofs that we need something more than Bishops and Liturgies and Rites in order to keep the Church alive and pure. The principles of the Church are deep and broad and Spiritual, deeper and broader than any external features, however valuable and necessary to the

bene esse of a Church's complete organization. They are those great fundamental truths of our Holy Religion which are enshrined in those Sacred Scriptures, of which the Church is the Witness and Keeper.

The Church's teaching or principles are essentially doctrinal. These marked her in the first centuries in Britain and elsewhere; these same have been her strength and stay since the Reformation.

Where shall we turn in order to find in concise form these great "distinctive principles?" To the Articles of Religion, which are bound up with and part of every complete copy of the Book of Common Prayer. These Articles are the Church's Authorized Confession of Faith. Their very title calls them: "Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the whole Clergy for the avoiding of diversities of opinions, and for the establishing of consent touching true religion." He who wants to ascertain what are sound "Church views" and "Church principles" ought to turn to the Thirty-Nine Articles.

A first distinctive principle of the Church is the *Doctrine of the Holy Trinity*.

In the first Article the truth concerning GOD—the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost—is set forth most plainly and emphatically. That truth is thus stated: "There is but one living and true God,

and in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." This principle of all others stands primary and fundamental.

A second distinctive principle of the Church is *the Doctrin of Christ's Nature*, that he is "Very God" and "Very Man." (Art : 2) The DEITY of the Lord Jesus Christ is declared in unmistakeable terms. Whilst the perfection of His humanity, "of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting," is maintained, it is also declared that He who as man was Born of the Virgin Mary, and suffered, and was crucified, and died upon the Cross, and was buried, is also the Very and Eternal God. On this Rock—"the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Church is built, where "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her."

A third distinctive principle of the Church relates to *the Holy Ghost*, who is declared to be a Divine Person, not a mere influence or attribute of the Deity, but, in the words of Article 5, "of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God."

A fourth distinctive principle of the Church is her recognition of *the sufficiency and supremacy of God's Word Written*, as the sole rule of faith and practice. The 6th Article says: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation ;

so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that if it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." The 8th Article says that "the three Creeds ought thoroughly to be believed and received, for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." The 20th Article says: "It is not for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another." Here is abundant testimony that the Bible, and the Bible only, is the rule of Faith in the Church, and that no doctrine is "Church Doctrine" which cannot be reconciled with the Word of God.

A fifth distinctive principle of the Church is the doctrine of *the Sinfulness of Man*. The Church which declares the Gospel, which brings pardon and peace through Christ to the sinner, first pronounces upon his sin and lost estate by nature, and his need of Divine grace and reconciliation. "Original sin" says Article 9, "is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil."

A sixth distinctive principle of the Church is the doctrine of *Justification by Faith*. Nothing can be more explicit than the language of Article 11. "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine and very full of comfort." The Justification of sinful man before the Holy God on account of the meritorious life and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, and that alone, is a vital Church principle. She stands as she holds fast by that Article of Faith, she falls as she rejects or slights it.

A seventh distinctive principle of the Church is *her wise estimate of the Sacraments*. Remembering that the two Sacraments of the Gospel are such as were given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, the Church's Divine Head, they must be worthy of honor and blessed Means of Grace. And so it is affirmed in the Articles of the first, which is Baptism:—"It is a sign of Regeneration or New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church, the promises of the forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the Sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed. The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the

Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Of the other Sacrament, which is the Lord's Supper, it is affirmed:—"It is a Sacrament of our Redemption by Christ's death, inasmuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the Bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ; and likewise the Cup of Blessing is a partaking of the Blood of Christ."

These several statements concerning Seven Primary and Distinctive Church Principles are according to the Church's own standard true and correct. These doctrines are the ones to which the Church gives prominence, and upon which her whole and complete system of dogma and teaching rests.

7. THE CHURCH'S WORSHIP.

The Public Services of the Sanctuary have always been conducted according to a prescribed Form or Liturgy.

A Liturgy is clearly of Divine Authority. When the Tabernacle was reared in the Wilderness, and the children of Israel gathered into it, God gave Moses a Form of Words wherewith to bless the people as they departed, saying: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The

Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace." (Numbers vi. 22-26).

In their approaches to the Temple and in the worship at the Feasts the Psalms of David were liturgically used. For the Passover, for Marriages, for Burials and other solemn Ordinances there were set services ; indeed the whole worship of the Temple was after a prescribed Form, in order that the people, as Maimonides the famous Jewish theologian says, might not suffer in their service from the incompetency of the Minister, and that they might more effectually join in prayers known beforehand.

In the time of our Lord, the Jews had a Liturgy in their Synagogues, Forms of Prayer, were repeated, Lessons read from Scripture, and discourses preached, and Jesus must have taken part in it when, "as His custom was," He worshipped there. It was the same with the Apostles in their Ministry. It would appear as though John the Baptist gave his disciples a Form of prayer, for Christ's disciples came to their Master and desired Him to teach them, as John had taught his disciples, to pray. And the Lord Jesus at once dictated a Form, saying, "When ye pray say, Our Father which art in Heaven." (St. Luke xi. 2-4). It is not a little remarkable that this Lord's Prayer is compiled mainly from the old Hebrew Liturgy.

The earliest form of Apostolic Worship is to be found immediately after the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, when as we read in Acts ii. 42. R. V. "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles teaching and fellowship, in the Breaking of Bread and *the Prayers.*"

The first Christians in their public worship must have used the Lord's Prayer: it was called by them "the appointed prayer" and "*the prayer.*" In the administration of Holy Baptism they used, by Christ's own direction, the formula: "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

As new members were added to the Church, Confession was made by them in the form of a Creed, such as Philip required of the Eunuch. (Acts viii. 37). Their praises were formulated in "Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs." (Eph. v. 19). And in the "Breaking of Bread" there would be the same words and acts as Jesus used at the Institution. (1 Cor. xi. 23-25).

We may reasonably conclude that there was some such outline of Divine Service in the Church of the Apostles. Some well-known and well-remembered Form, though not necessarily written down, to which additions were made as time went on.

The earliest account of the Service in use in the Church after the Apostles, is that given by Justin Martyr in his Apology for the Christians, addressed to the Emperor, Antoninus Pius, about A.D. 140.

In it we find clear proof of a Form of Worship which included the assembly of believers upon the first day of the week, the reading of the Prophets or Memoirs of the Apostles, the delivery of a discourse based thereon, the united offering up of prayer and the Celebration of the Eucharist.

The original British Liturgy and Ritual which Augustine found in use on his arrival in England were identified with that of the Ancient Gallican Church, and this Gallican Liturgy seems to have been the one or similar to that employed in the Apostolic Church of Ephesus, said to have been compiled by St. John, and brought by Irenæus to Lyons in Gaul, in the second century.

This Ephesine Liturgy became the original groundwork of a number of Service Books, which prevailed in Britain up to the time of the Reformation. These were known as "*Uses*," because they differed somewhat from each other, and were in use in the several Dioceses having grown up under the distinct authority and direction of successive Bishops. The more important of these were

the Uses of York, Sarum, Hereford, Lincoln and Bangor. These and more especially the Sarum or Salisbury Use, drawn up about 1085, became the basis of the present Book of Common Prayer, which was finally put forth after several revisions in the reign of Charles II, A. D., 1662. And thus the Liturgy, as we have it, comes to us a precious heritage from the primitive Church.

The spiritual excellency of the Service itself and the Divine authority for forms of prayer have taught us to heed the injunction of the Apostle, to "hold fast the Form of sound words."

The arrangement of the Church's Services according to a Calendar or register of the year, setting apart certain Days or Seasons for the commemoration of events religiously important, whilst it may not be directly of Divine authority, is certainly after the Divine plan of the annual seasons in nature, and of the times and Feasts ordained of God in the law of Moses. This cycle of days makes what is known as the Church's Year. By means of it *every prominent event in the Saviour's life is regularly and in due order commemorated*, and every Cardinal Doctrine of the New Testament brought to the attention of worshippers throughout the year. Thus are they systematically instructed in *every part* of the Gospel Story.

The propriety and necessity of a Liturgy has been freely acknowledged by men of all sects and denominations, even by those who do not use it themselves ; and this cannot be wondered at when we consider, not alone the pervading Scriptural tone of the Book but that it has been estimated that above two thirds of the Daily Service of the Church consists of extracts from the very language of Holy Scripture.

8. CHURCH UNION.

The Son of God who is "The Head of the Church," on the night before His great sacrifice of Himself prayed thus to the Father, for His immediate Disciples, and for those in all the ages to come: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us." (St. John xvii. 21).

In the Spirit of the Master, this Church has ever labored and prayed for Unity. She stands before the world to-day a symbol of the "one Catholic and Apostolic Church." Her work has been to bring men "unto an agreement in the Faith and knowledge of God." In her Daily Prayers she thus pleads with the Creator and Preserver of all mankind: "More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church, that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit, that all

who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." In the Communion Service she prays God, "to inspire continually the Universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord; that all who do confess Thy Holy Name may agree in the truth of Thy Holy Word, and live in unity and Godly love."

Accordingly the Church is foremost in desire and effort after Church oneness.

At the General Convention of the Church in the United States, held in Chicago in 1886, the House of Bishops set forth a proposition containing four articles, to supply a basis on which appeal might be made toward the reunion of Christendom. This plan was deliberated on at the Pan-Anglican Conference held in Lambeth in 1888, and with some slight modifications adopted as follows :

I. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of Faith.

II. The Apostle's Creed as the Baptismal Symbol, and the Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith.

III. The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—Ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of Institution, and of the Elements ordained by Him.

IV. The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.

Upon some such sound Scriptural basis as this, with large freedom of variation on secondary points of doctrine, worship, and discipline, it might be possible, under God's gracious Providence, for a reunited Church, including at least the chief of the Christian Communions of our people, to rest.

The time certainly has come when Christianity should present a united front against the heathenism, the worldliness, and the infidelity of the age.

Yes: and on all sides to-day, and among all bodies of Christians, are to be seen hopeful significant signs of an inclination to return to primitive usage.

In most quarters of Christendom we observe a general tendency to return to the primitive constitutional characteristics of the Church. The plan for our day which is commending itself so universally is this ; (1) The Primitive Creed. (2) The Primitive Ordinances. (3) The Primitive Life.

In the matter of doctrine and polity, Liturgies and Holy days, Fasts and Festivals, modes and places of Worship, there are happy and promising changes going on in many religious organizations.

The Church and her ways are making an ever deepening impression upon the thought and faith and worship of the great Christian world.

And if the Church has much to impart she will not be unmindful that there is also much she can receive. One section of the broad Christian family will contribute to her a higher standard of Missionary effort, whilst more advanced and effective methods of preaching will come from others, and from yet others will be received a rich literature of the devotional life. So when once again it is knit together in love will the body grow by that which every joint supplieth. So will the Church of every nation find its place in that City of God which lieth four square, and opens wide its twelve gates to all nations and Kingdoms and people and tongues.

9. CONCLUSION.

After all that has been advanced in these pages concerning the Church, let us still never lose sight of this highly important fact, that after all; the Church and her history, her principles, her Worship, and her union are not an end but only a

means. The end is the glory of God, and the Salvation of men. The conditions of that Salvation are "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

May the Lord God continually inspire His Church with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, that she may be a Spiritual power everywhere upon earth, till "all the ends of the world have seen the Salvation of our God." "Till we all come in the unity of the Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ."