# PARISH LECTURES ON THE PRAYER BOOK

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# The Prayer-Book

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BY

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To the Memory of

H. L.

Whose words of encouragement made the preparation
of these Lectures a pleasure,
And whose name is still an inspiration to all
who knew her.

# Contents.

# Preface

*The purpose of these Lectures is to present in a simple and condensed form an explanation of the services of the Church in their general structure and their minor details. The author has availed himself of the abundant Liturgical Literature of the Church, and has drawn freely upon the works of Wheatley, Procter, Blunt, Freeman, Scuddamore, Goulburn, and other standard authorities, and makes no claim whatever for originality in the treatment of the subject. Well-informed churchmen are already familiar with the* rationale *of the offices; but to the large number of persons who are seeking the Communion of the Church, and to the younger members of the Household of Faith who desire to*

*comprehend the system and worship of that branch of the Church Catholic to which they belong, it is hoped they may be at once acceptable and edifying. In response to the request of many who heard them, they are now committed to the attention of that wider audience which to-day is reached only through the medium of the printed page, in the earnest hope that they may illustrate the Beauty of Holiness in the Worship of the Church, and so contribute to the Spread and triumph of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

LECTURE FIRST

# Historical

# Lecture First

## HISTORICAL

To understand fully the system of our liturgical worship, we must divest ourselves at once of the idea that a liturgy is merely a compilation of prayers and lessons and hymns. For every true liturgy is a growth, an arrangement of devotional offices from which much has been omitted because it failed to stand the test of time and use; and to which, by slow degrees, much has been added, as the needs of the church for such additions became manifest. That only which can meet these conditions survives, and the liturgy of a historic church is not a manual

of offices skillfully arranged by any one council or synod or bishop of the church, but rather the liturgical inheritance of all the ages, whose root and origin are to be found only in the life and period of the apostolic church.

As the baptismal formula was the germ of the apostles' creed, so the words of institution, in the celebration of the Holy Communion, constituted the nucleus of the liturgies of the early church. Around that central act of worship all other devotions gathered, and for its due observance the prayers and the psalms, the scriptures and the sermon, were but the preparation.

The apostles had scarcely passed to their rest, and their influence was certainly still a living power in the church, when there grew up in the great centers of Christian activity and life four principal liturgies, strikingly alike in their essential features, which have furnished the roots from which all subsequent liturgies have grown. These were:

1. *The Liturgy of St. James*, which was used at Jerusalem and Antioch, and from

which the present liturgy of the Greek Church is derived.

2. *The Liturgy of St. Mark*, or the liturgy of Alexandria, which was at once the center of learning and piety, and from which the present liturgy of the Egyptian Church is taken.

3. *The Liturgy of St. Peter*, which was the origin of the Ambrosian liturgy of the Church of Milan and of the present Roman service.

And 4. *The Liturgy of St. John*, or the Ephesine liturgy, from which the early Gallican and British liturgies were derived, and which is thus the legitimate progenitor of our own.

It is an interesting fact to-day that the early British services differed so much from the Roman ritual then in use that when St. Augustine came to preach the Gospel and establish the church in England, as he supposed, he found there a church already existing, and a liturgy in general use; and he was wise enough to concede

that while his own ritual might suit his own converts, it would not be wise to enforce its use upon the bishops, clergy, and laity who still maintained their church organization, which they had received, in all probability, from St. Paul. And with a prudence which has not always characterized church authorities in questions of ceremonial, it was decided to select what was best in each, and thus make a national liturgy for the entire British Church.

From these early beginnings in the course of history, the bishops arranged and modified the services for their respective dioceses; and these diocesan manuals of devotion were called "The Use" of the respective dioceses. The most conspicuous and influential of them was "the Use of Sarum," and from it, in the main, our present book is derived.

As religious life in England became monastic, its services naturally multiplied, so that from the early custom of prayers and praises morning and evening, there grew up a system of services for various other times during the day and night.

These were called the canonical hours. They began at midnight and continued at intervals of about three hours during the day until bed-time.

Of course, such an arrangement was entirely unsuited to congregational or parochial use, but it is interesting to know something about them, as they have a very close relation to our form of worship to-day.

The first of these monastic offices was the service of *nocturns* or *matins*, which took place soon after midnight. The second was *lauds*, which was said before day-break. The third was *prime*, which was a later and more formal service with fixed psalms and lessons. Then came the mid-day services, and in the evening at six o'clock there were *vespers*, with canticles and psalms; and the devotions of the day closed with *compline*, which was a brief service before retiring for the night. In restoring the worship of the church to the use of the congregation, and in translating both it and the Word of God into a language "understanded of the people," the manifold and constantly recurring

services of the monastic life were simply accumulated into two principal services of the day. The three morning services, matins, lauds, and prime, are essentially embodied in our order for daily morning prayer; and vespers and compline were accumulated into our order for daily evening prayer, which in the older English books is called by the expressive and beautiful name of even-song, while the office for the Holy Communion is properly the divine liturgy of the church, for whose due celebration the morning prayer and the litany are but the preparation.

At the time of the Reformation the services of the church were purged from the absurd legends and superstitious rites by which they had been overlaid and disfigured, and the order of worship was restored to its purity by a return to the principles of the primitive church. This was no easy task. For while the bishops and doctors of the Anglican Church were thoroughly acquainted with the rich liturgical treasures of Christian antiquity, and while they sought to accomplish the work of reformation in harmony with the prin-

ciples of an undivided Christendom, yet the sympathy and help of the Continental reformers were very desirable in their common warfare against the usurpations and errors of Rome. This distinction between the principles of the English Reformation and the Continental must constantly be kept in mind. The reformation of the English Church was conducted step by step by learned and devout men, whose only object was to restore the church to the purity and the order of its earliest days, while that of the Continental was practically, and indeed against the wish of its most learned and thoughtful leaders, the effort to construct a new church. It thus lost the moderation which was the characteristic of the English Church; and the influence of Continental ideas in shaping the revision of the English Prayer-Book was very great, but it never was successful in eliminating from it its statements of primitive and scriptural truth in regard to the doctrine and worship of the church.

To trace the history of the English Prayer-Book through its long and varied

conflict with the errors and obstinacy of its opponents both within its pale and without would be a tedious task and one that is quite unnecessary to-day. It is sufficient to recognize the fact that in all the vicissitudes of its history God has never left himself without a witness to his truth. And although there have been dreary periods of English history when the church was merely a machine of the state and a martyred victim of fanatical dissent, yet the Prayer-Book, like the Bible, contains the indestructible seeds of God's truth; and however overborne by worldly influences or frozen by the cold neglect of those who should have been its guardians and defenders, it yet, in God's own time, asserts its vitality; and the same form of sound words in the worship of Almighty God which was droned through in the time of the Georges, guides the devotions of the English Church to-day in the intense activity of her life throughout the world.

When the American revolution was complete, certain changes were necessary to adapt the Book of Common Prayer to

the uses of the American Church. At first it was thought sufficient to make such changes as the political condition of the country required; but, unfortunately, the American Church at that period, besides being thoroughly congregational, by reason of the lack of bishops, was also seriously leavened with the Socinian heresy which prevailed at the time. And both the Prayer-Book and the Church passed through a very perilous historical crisis when the whole book was revised and altered into what was called "The Proposed Book." This book so compromised the essential truths of the Gospel that the English bishops, who were not at that time notorious for their devotion to the faith, would not entertain the thought of consecrating a bishop for the United States upon the basis of its doctrinal statements. Another revision, therefore, was made, and certain safe-guards of scriptural truth were restored; and in that form it was adopted by the American Church, and the apostolic episcopate of the Anglican succession was in due time given to this branch of the church catholic. These

changes are barely alluded to in the preface to our Prayer-Book, which, next to the title-page and the certificate of ratification, claim our attention.

# LECTURE SECOND

## Introductory

# Lecture Second

## INTRODUCTORY

HE title-page of a book, like the face of a man, is an index of the character and contents within. From the title-page we gather that there are four departments in the Prayer-Book. It is the Book of Common Prayer—of the Administration of the Sacraments—of other rites and ceremonies of the church—and the Psalter, or Psalms of David. In fact, there is also another department consisting of the forms of ordination, consecration, and institution which is simply the Ordinal of the church.

If one word in this title-page is more

emphatic than another, it is that which declares the worship of the church to be an order of COMMON PRAYER; that is, an arrangement to be participated in audibly by the people as well as the priest. This conception of worship is so fundamental to the system that there is not a single service in the entire book in which the presence and participation of the people are not provided for. And the services of the church reach their most impressive rendering when the entire congregation unites audibly and earnestly in every part of the office.

The ratification of the Book of Common Prayer is the certificate of its authority; and no copy is properly authorized unless it has with this ratification the certificate of a bishop that it has been duly compared with the standard edition by a Presbyter appointed for that purpose. The ratification itself is the seal of the church's approval, which makes it the appointed Liturgy for her use in all the offices of public worship.

The preface explains very briefly the reasons which necessitated any change at

all from the English book, and asserts that, in these changes, "This church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship." The changes themselves are really very few. The first class are those which refer to civil rulers, and which were made necessary by our independent existence as a nation. They are chiefly verbal, such as the use of the words "president" and "congress" instead of "king" and "parliament," with some minor changes of ecclesiastical phraseology, such as "bishops and other ministers" for "bishops and curates." The second class is composed of certain liturgical changes, chiefly in the way of abbreviations. The versicles are fewer in number, and the canticles, especially Venite and Benedictus, are abbreviated by the omission of the closing verses; shorter canticles in the Evening Prayer are substituted for the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, and certain obsolete or archaic forms and words are either omitted or changed into those more familiar to modern use; the oblation of the elements and the invoca-

tion of the Holy Ghost in the Prayer of Consecration in the communion office are restored; the absolution in the Visitation of the Sick is changed to a prayer; the Athanasian creed is entirely omitted, and there are certain verbal alterations in the Te Deum and the Litany. There are also Six Selections of Psalms, prefixed to the Psalter, to be used instead of the regular Psalms for the day. But with all these minor changes the books are substantially the same. And now, after the lapse of a century, in the process of revision which is reaching its completion in the American Church, the omitted verses of the Venite and Benedictus are inserted, the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis are restored to their place in the Evening Prayer, and the substantial identity of the two books is made more complete than ever.

It is the glory of the English Church that she gave the Holy Scriptures to the people in their own tongue. And it is perfectly consistent with this proud position that at the very threshold of her prayer-book we should meet with directions "How

the Holy Scriptures are appointed to be read." These tables of lessons constitute "The Lectionary" of the church, and they comprehend three distinct though harmonious series. First, we have the Table of Lessons for the Sundays, which cover the entire ground of the Old Testament, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles once and the Historical Gospels twice in the course of the year. Second, we have the Table for Holy Days, in which are selections appropriate to the day, part of which are taken from the Apocryphal books, and are read for instruction in life. And, third, the Table of Lessons for the Daily Service, in which, if observed, the entire Old Testament will be read through once in the course of the year, and the New Testament twice. The Lectionary has been revised in recent years, with a view to improving the arrangement of the lessons; and appropriate tables for the forty days of Lent, the Ember and Rogation Days have also been provided. Add to this the fact that at every full morning service there are two appointed portions of Holy Scripture, the Epistle and the Holy Gospel, and we have

as the result this honorable distinction, that no service of the church can be properly rendered without at least two lessons from the Word of God, and that in the full morning service of Sunday, or festival, there are really four lessons from the Sacred Scriptures.

Next to the Lectionary comes the Table of FEASTS AND FASTS. These are of two classes,—the movable, which depend upon the date of Easter Day in the year, and the immovable, which always occur on the same date.

It is needless to enter into the methods for computing the date on which Easter Day will fall, though none of us can tell what labor and thought and study, what astronomical knowledge and mathematical skill, these dry tables of figures and rules of computation cost. Practically we learn it from the annual calendars, or we may ascertain it from the simple table of the dates on which Easter will fall in any year, and whose understanding requires no mathematical skill at all.

The immovable feasts are mainly the festivals of the infancy of our Lord, and

of the Apostles and Martyrs; besides two for the Blessed Virgin Mary, one for All-Saints, and one recently added to commemorate the Transfiguration.

There are but two fast days prescribed by this church. They are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Other days of abstinence are set apart as times and seasons when we are to assert our self-control and find a wholesome discipline in doing so. These are the forty days of Lent, the Ember days of the four seasons, the Rogation days and all Fridays of the year, except when a Friday coincides with Christmas day. These are the wise prescriptions of a loving mother who watches over the spiritual health of her children, and cares for them with the profoundest solicitude. Many, doubtless, are wayward and capricious in their obedience to her precepts. There is an unfortunate spirit of antagonism to all church authority and an assertion and exercise of individual judgment which has made the rule of our self-denials a very flexible and lenient one, and which does not hesitate to omit any duty whose performance might be inconvenient or

mortifying to the flesh. And there is a travesty also of penitential seasons and acts which reduces the element of self-denial to a minimum and feigns a sorrow which it does not feel. As we study the provision which the church has made for our spiritual discipline, we cannot but recognize the wide contrast there is in service and festival and fast between the ideal church of the Prayer-Book and the actual church of our every-day history.

And yet it is safe to say that the Prayer-Book is the echo of the Word of God. It differs from the Bible only in this, that the Bible is a mine of gold filled with untold and uncounted treasures, while the Prayer-Book is the mint in which that gold has been coined and the treasury in which it is stored for our daily use in life. And there is nothing which, in an age of contradiction and doubt, would more surely tend to elevate our Christian life, both personal and organic, to what it ought to be, than a simple and sincere following of its prescriptions and order entirely aside from the precedents of English history or the prejudices of our American life. The

precedents of English history have often been a paralysis to the working energy of the church and to the devotional reality of its worship; while the prejudices of American life are antagonistic alike to its historical claims and its conservative methods. But this church is never more powerful in her influence nor more successful in her work than when she is consistently true to her well-known principles and methods as defined in the Book of Common Prayer.

LECTURE THIRD

# The Morning Prayer

# Lecture Third

## THE DAILY MORNING PRAYER

HERE is a significant word in the title of the Morning Prayer: it is the word "daily"; and it clearly intimates the church's idea as to the frequency with which this service is intended to be used. And yet in the broad liberty which the church concedes to her children, there have been those who have argued that it had no significance at all. The more common use of a semi-weekly service on Litany days, or of a Friday-evening service and lecture in accordance with popular custom, seems to have obscured the idea that the daily prayer is the church's rule where

it is practicable. In many, if not most, parishes it is almost impossible to observe the maximum rule of services throughout the year, partly for want of a sufficient staff of clergy, and partly because the people are so scattered that a congregation cannot be assembled. But where such is the case it is a misfortune which we ought to mourn over and apologize for rather than glory in and defend. The law of the English Church requires that every priest shall say his Daily Offices, and that where he cannot obtain a congregation, however small, to unite with him in the service of the church, he is to say them in his own study at home, as part of his regular duty for the day. The daily service is not congenial to the intense hurry and bustle of our American life, and yet it may be only the more needful on that account, and it is a growing custom that where the daily prayer cannot be said, the church door at least can stand open to welcome those who may turn aside to seek a quiet moment of devotion in the house of God. In reaching any conclusion on the subject, two things must be remem-

bered. First, we must not estimate a congregation by the popular standard of an audience, in which the chilling effect of empty pews upon a speaker must be taken into the account. A praying congregation is a very different assembly from the multitude attracted by a popular speaker, and our Lord has fixed the minimum of such a congregation when he said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Nor must we forget that the benefit of such services of prayer cannot be confined to those who are able to be present and participate in them. If we believe in the efficacy of prayer and that God does hear the intercessions of his people, we cannot doubt that his blessing will descend upon an entire parish,—upon men in their counting-houses and shops and stores, upon Christian women engaged in their domestic duties, upon sufferers on sick-beds, and upon aged and infirm members of Christ who are prevented from coming to the house of prayer,—in answer to the petitions offered by the clergy and people, even though they be but the

two or three gathered together in Christ's name.

In taking up the study of the entire office, it is natural to ask, first of all, is there a reason for its arrangement? Why does the Lord's Prayer come after the confession and absolution instead of going before them? Why does the Creed always follow the Lesson or the Holy Gospel instead of preceding it? Why is the Venite sung before the Psalter? And why is the Collect for the Day necessarily inserted in the Morning Prayer when the office for the Holy Communion is not used? Each of these questions has a rational answer. For throughout the entire Book there is a reason for every detail of the arrangement, whether it be lesson, or canticle, or creed, or collect. But this *rationale* of the service will reveal itself to us as we proceed with the study of its component parts.

The service opens with one or more sentences of Holy Scripture, which declare God's willingness to hear the prayers of his people, and which inspire them to draw near to him. There is sufficient

variety in the sentences to adapt them to the various seasons of the Christian year, and thus to give a key-note of penitence or of joy to the service which is to follow. Special sentences have been added for the principal festivals of the year. The exhortation is a comprehensive homily on the uses of divine worship, as including the offering of thanks for God's mercies, the ascription of praise to him, the hearing of his Holy Word, the utterance of our united prayers for both bodily and spiritual needs, and it lifts our minds to that broad conception of worship which the church seeks to make real in her service.

But at the very forefront of this elaborate and harmonious act, we must first draw near to him as sinners seeking his mercy and forgiveness, and therefore the first combined act of priest and people is the general confession of our sins. This confession is general, in the sense that it is adapted to the use of an entire congregation, and also that it does not enter into specific details. It can be individualized and made specific by any particular worshiper who may choose to do so, but for

public use it must maintain its general character. The absolution is equally general—not confined to individual penitents nor applying verbally to specific sins, but comprehensive enough to include them all; and this declaration of God's forgiveness is the assurance to penitent and believing hearts of his pardoning mercy and love. And then, with this assurance of forgiveness, we are able to rise to a higher plane of devotion, and as children of God to take the sacred words, "Our Father," upon our lips.

This much of the service really constitutes an invocation prayer, or a preliminary to the act of worship upon which we now enter in offering our praises to God. But even our highest songs would be lifeless and dull unless inspired by his Holy Spirit, and therefore the act of praise is preceded by a prayer for the divine aid:

"O Lord, open thou our lips;

"And our mouth shall shew forth thy praise."

We rise from our knees and strike the key-note of all Christian worship in the formula of the Gloria Patri, the constant

recurrence of which throughout the service reminds us that the great work of redemption is made known to us only in connection with the revelation of the adorable Trinity.

And now the act of praise begins. First there is an invitatory psalm, which is a prelude to the Psalms for the Day, the portion of the Psalter being the opening hymn, and the Gloria Patri is added to each psalm because by its presence there it changes a Jewish psalm into a Christian hymn. Having thus completed our opening act of prayer and praise, we are ready "to hear his most Holy Word." First, a lesson from the Old Testament is read, which is almost immediately followed by a lesson from the New, to illustrate the harmony of the law and the gospel, the historical and theological unity of the Word of God. These lessons are, however, separated by a hymn, for the church never allows her children to be made weary in their worship, and therefore, by constant change of posture and by a harmonious variety of thought, both mind and body are kept from fatigue, and there

is no way by which the use of the service will be more full of freshness and force than by the participation of the worshiper in attitude and voice as well as heart, in all its parts. As we sit to listen to the lesson from God's Word, which is the proper attitude in which to receive instruction in the church, so also we stand to sing a hymn of praise, the Te Deum, or the Benedicite, and then resume our seats to listen to another lesson from God's truth, which is followed by its appropriate canticle. It is a familiar principle that "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." It is logical and consistent, therefore, that after this twofold hearing of the Word of God the next act should be the profession of our faith, which is made by repeating the creed. Of the two forms here used, the Apostles' Creed is the older and simpler, and is suitable for ordinary occasions; the Nicene is fuller in its statement, and is appropriate when the celebration of the Holy Communion is to follow.

And now that we have asserted our universal priesthood in the offering of our prayers and praises,—that we have de-

clared our discipleship by listening to the instructions of his Word, as scholars in the school of Christ,—and having claimed our membership in the household of faith by the repetition of the creed, we are ready to fall upon our knees in prayer again to ask God for those things which are requisite and necessary, "as well for the body as the soul," which we next proceed to do in the prayers which follow, to the end of the service.

It becomes evident that there is a liturgical reason for every particular and detail in the arrangement of the Morning Prayer; that there is a scientific idea underlying its order — that each separate act comes just at its proper place, and that its varied details constitute one united and harmonious whole.

LECTURE FOURTH

# The Morning Prayer

# Lecture Fourth

## THE MORNING PRAYER

AVING explained the general arrangement of the Morning Prayer and the harmony of its various parts as they blend into a united whole, we next proceed to study in detail the component elements of which it is constructed. These in the main are taken either from Holy Scripture or from the Ancient Liturgies, with here and there a homily that is the product of the reformation period.

THE SENTENCES with which the service opens are suited to inspire an appropriate reverence as we enter upon the solemn act of worship, while there is a sufficient

variety to adapt them to the different seasons of the Christian year. Some are general in their character, adapted to any occasion of worship; others are more especially suited to penitential seasons: — some to the preparation for the Holy Communion; one particularly to the Epiphany, and others, recently added, to other special seasons of the church year; but all combine to remind us of the humility and penitence with which, as sinners, we are to draw near to God. It is left to the discretion of the officiating minister to use whichever may be specifically appropriate to any particular occasion.

And now that we are reminded of the solemnity and responsibility of our approach to God, there is a fuller statement of its authority and object in

THE EXHORTATION,

which follows the sentences. This exhortation finds its origin in the custom of the Reformation period, when the Prayer-Book was revised. The standard of learning was very low among the clergy, and, there-

fore, homilies were provided to take the place of sermons, and when an exhortation was to be delivered to the congregation it was inserted in the Prayer-Book. We have other instances of such exhortation in the office for the Holy Communion, in the address to the sponsors in Holy Baptism, in the order for the visitation of the sick, and for the setting apart of deacons, priests, and bishops.

The exhortation in the Morning Prayer, while its general object is to incite us to a true confession and acknowledgment of our sins, is particularly valuable to us as defining the church's idea of the objects and purposes of public worship. And its constant repetition is an emphatic protest against the idea that we are to go to church merely to hear the sermon. It is that erroneous notion which has made so many assemblies of Christian people mere auditors and spectators, which has almost eliminated the element of worship from the popular religion, and which has elevated the demand of the itching ear above the requirement of the penitent heart.

Four essential elements are spoken of as entering into public worship. These are: (1) Rendering thanks for the great benefits we have received; (2) Setting forth God's most worthy praise; (3) Hearing his most Holy Word, and (4) Asking those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul. In briefer words, they are thanksgiving, praise, instruction, and prayer; and the fitting prelude to them all is the humble and penitent confession of our sin.

This is provided for in the

GENERAL CONFESSION,

which is then to be said by the minister and the congregation. For it must ever be remembered that the ministry is taken from among men, and that the heavenly treasure of the grace of holy orders is committed to earthen vessels, and that in leading the devotions of the people the saintliest and purest minister of Christ must utter his deep acknowledgment of sin as well as the weakest and most erring member of his flock. This confession is

general, first because all are required to make it; and it stands in contrast with that personal and particular confession of sin which was the custom at the time of the Reformation, and to supply the place of which this general confession was put into the service; and it is general, further, because it is expressed in terms so general that it is suitable to all. Any more particular form would have been inadequate to the uses of a miscellaneous congregation. It would be impossible for each one to specify audibly his own short-comings and faults, but he can think of them and include them in the comprehensive language which the church here provides. The analysis of the prayer gives us two parts beside the Introduction, which is the address to Almighty God. They are: (1) The Confession (a) of our sins of omission and (b) of our sins of commission, and (2) The Supplication for (a) pardon for the past and (b) grace for the future. It thus includes all that an assembled congregation need to acknowledge or to ask for; it could not be more comprehensive than it is, and it need not be more par-

ticular, since it is to be said alike by all, and is therefore adapted to the spiritual condition and needs of all.

The Confession is naturally followed by

THE DECLARATION OF ABSOLUTION,

which is to be made by the priest alone, as contrasted with the case of a deacon or lay reader officiating in the service; and it is to be made by him standing as a token that it is an authoritative declaration, intended to convey the assurance of pardon to penitent hearts, and not a mere platitude which any one can repeat who chooses to do so. There are two forms of the Absolution: the first suited to a promiscuous congregation; the other especially adapted to an assembly of the faithful. This second one belongs properly to the Communion Office, and should be used only there. The two are, however, but different forms of the same thing, and they are alike intended to guard against the groundless trust in sacerdotal power which prevailed at the time of the Reformation, as well as against narrow views of God's mercy

which had begun to find acceptance within the church. The Absolution contains four particulars: the declaration of God's mercy to repentant sinners; the authority of his ministers to pronounce pardon to the penitent; the declaration of that pardon on condition of true faith and hearty repentance, and an admonition to seek for the help of God's Holy Spirit, that the pardon pronounced in the church on earth may be effectual to our eternal salvation. To this solemn and authoritative proclamation the people are to say, Amen.

This naturally leads us to notice the use of the "Amen" in the services of the church. In some places it is said by both priest and people, as in the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, the Gloria Patri, and the Creeds; but in the Absolution, the Collects, and the Prayers it is said by the people only, the significance of which is, that by that act they add the efficacy and the faith of their own universal priesthood to the single voice and ministerial act of the officiating priest. This distinction is always recognized by the type in which the Amens are printed,

those which are said in common being in the same type as the prayer, and those which are responsive being printed in italics.

The Lord's Prayer naturally follows these preliminary acts, and it is to be said by the minister and the people kneeling. The English rubric expressly requires that it be said in an audible voice. This refers to the early use of the Lord's Prayer when it was said silently by the priest, and the audible service began with the versicle following. But the more recent custom allows the priest to use his own *secretum* or private prayer before each service, and makes the Lord's Prayer more really the prayer of the faithful, as the rubric requires that both here and wheresoever it is used in Divine Service it is to be said by all as the children of God and the members of his family. The only exception to this rule is in the opening words of the Communion Office, where the Lord's Prayer and the Collect for purity constitute the *secreta* of the priest and may be said alone by him.

It is to be noted that the version of the Lord's Prayer in this service differs in phraseology not only from that of the English Prayer-Book, but also from the forms of it given by St. Matthew (ch. 6:13) and St. Luke (ch. 11:4). But as the Scripture versions differ from each other, in one of them the doxology being entirely omitted, the version is sufficiently accurate for devotional use.

THE VERSICLES which follow are taken from Psalms 51:5, and have been used in this particular place in the Liturgy since the sixth century.

THE GLORIA PATRI is one of the oldest formularies of the Christian faith, and had its origin, doubtless, in the baptismal formula which our Lord gave to his apostles. The revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity is the key-note of our redemption; and the prophecies of the distant past, the mystery of the Incarnation, and the baptism of the Pentecost are all summed up in this brief statement, which is at once a creed, and a hymn, and a watchword of

Christian faith throughout the world and through all time.

THE act of praise begins with the *Venite Exultemus*, which has been used as an invitatory in the church's worship from the very earliest period. The closing verses were omitted in the first American revision, but have recently been restored, and the entire psalm is to be used on the Sundays in Lent. On other days the abbreviated form may be used, except upon days for which special anthems are appointed, as Easter and Thanksgiving Day, or when one of the selections is used instead of the Psalms for the Day, and upon the 19th day of the month when it occurs in the regular course of the Psalter.

The invitatory is the natural prelude to the Psalms for the Day. Our attention is at once arrested by the fact that the VERSION of the Psalms in the Prayer-Book differs from that of our ordinary bibles—a fact which, when understood, is an honor to the church, since it is the reminder that our English Prayer-Book is older than the popular version of the Holy Bible. The

Psalter and all other scriptural portions of the Prayer-Book were first taken from the translation of Tyndale and Coverdale (A. D. 1535), which was revised by Cranmer in 1539, and the epistles and gospels were not changed to their present form until after the last revision of the Authorized Version of the Scriptures in 1661. But by this time the choirs and congregations were so accustomed to the earlier version of the Psalter, and its rhythm was so much better adapted to a musical rendering than the later version, that it was permitted to remain as the arrangement for devotional use. We gain a decided advantage to-day by having two versions of this most interesting and important portion of Holy Scripture, since each has its advantages in accuracy of translation, and both together form a kind of philological stereoscope by which we can, at the same time, get two distinct views of the original.

It does not fall within the scope of these Lectures to discuss the interpretation of the Psalms or the occasions which gave rise to their composition. That would include a broad field of exegesis, for the lit-

erature of the Book of Psalms is an extensive library in itself. Our concern with it in the Liturgy requires that we take simply the book itself as the wondrous provision which God has made for the worship of the universal church, the rich and inexhaustible treasury of inspired poetry and sacred song which has furnished to every age and land, to every vicissitude of human life, to penitence and faith, to sorrow and joy, its most fitting and perfect expression.

The ARRANGEMENT of this book for devotional use, however, is worthy of notice; for there have been many arrangements of the Psalter in the history of the church. Some have included the entire book in the devotions of a single week; others have had special fixed psalms for the Sundays of the year; and thus some portions of the Psalter are constantly repeated, while others are scarcely known at all. But by the monthly arrangement of the Psalter, and the constant change of the day of the month on which Sunday falls, the whole book is brought into service, and its contents are better known by its various portions being used in turn. We may not

hope to reach the familiarity with the Psalms which was common in the early church, when they were "repeated so often that the poorest Christian could say them by heart, and used to say them at their labor in their houses and in the fields." (Proctor, p. 216.)

But they are still our precious heritage, suitable alike for the highest worship of the sanctuary, the sacred solitude of the closet, or the patient suffering of the sick-chamber, and in each and all adapting themselves to the varying needs and sorrows of human hearts.

The question as to whether the Psalter should be "said" or "sung," is one which can have but one answer in theory, however it may vary in practice. It would be considered an anomaly in worship to read the uninspired hymns which are used, and much more, therefore, should the inspired hymns of the Holy Ghost be dignified by a musical rendering. That they were intended to be sung there can be no doubt, but the incapacity of an infant church to carry out this intention may be an excuse for reading them. But in the light of God's

Word, where singers were always appointed for the sanctuary; in the hearing of the distant echo of psalm and canticle, as they float down to us through the ages from the Tabernacle and Temple service; in the memory of the Greater Hallel which was sung in the upper chamber at Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago, and whose chorus now fills the world; in the distant song which broke the silence of the Catacombs; in the unceasing antiphon which from cathedral choir and parish church now follows the sun in its pathway around the world; and in the apocalyptic hints of the song that is ever new, which is wafted to our ears to-day across the sea of glass mingled with fire, we must recognize the intention and purpose of God that the Psalms should be sung in his holy house, and this fulfillment of the intention is growing more and more general, as the musical culture and liturgical taste of the church are becoming equal to its demand.

LECTURE FIFTH

# The Morning Prayer

# Lecture Fifth

## THE MORNING PRAYER

(From the Psalter to the end)

THE arrangement of the Lessons from Holy Scripture has already been referred to in treating of the Lectionary, but it is to be observed that it is a striking illustration of the prominence which this church gives to the reading of Holy Scripture in public worship. The threefold course of lessons throughout the year, with the lessons for special seasons, is the standard of the estimate which the church places upon the Inspired Word.

WE come now to another principle which has always characterized the great

liturgies of the church,— namely, that the reading of God's Word in the public service has always been interspersed with the singing of hymns. Following this principle, the church has placed after the First Lesson two hymns, which have occupied their present position from time immemorial. The first of these is the TE DEUM LAUDAMUS, or, as it is sometimes called, the Canticle of St. Ambrose and St. Augustine. Its origin is lost in the legendary shadows of a venerable past, and its authorship has been attributed to various persons from A. D. 355 to A. D. 535. In all probability it was a growth rather than an inspiration, and for fifteen centuries it has borne the praise of God from the church on earth to the throne on high. It is, doubtless, the most ancient Christian hymn, with the exception of the Apostles' Creed and the Gloria in Excelsis, and its analysis would be a most interesting study. It consists of three distinct parts: an Act of Praise, a Creed, and a Prayer. In the first it represents all creatures in heaven and earth, angel and archangel, cherubim and seraphim, apostles, prophets, and mar-

tyrs, and the struggling children of God throughout all the world, as bowing in adoration before the Eternal Trinity; and in it the song of the church on earth catches an echo of the song that is ever new, the song not only of Moses, but of the Lamb, and which tells not only of Eden and Sinai, but of Calvary and Heaven.

The second part is a confession of faith, in which the great facts of the Incarnation are more particularly detailed, the great humility of our Lord in his birth and death; his triumph over its sharpness; his session at the right hand of the Father and his coming again to judgment.

The third part is a prayer for all those who worship and serve him, and for ourselves, that we may be kept from future sin, and find pardon because we trust in him. It is the sublimest uninspired hymn in human language, and its catholicity is the index of its power, since it is sung alike in Roman and Protestant churches, Greek and Anglican, East and West, everywhere throughout all the world.

The Benedicite is the Song of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, and is an enlarged paraphrase of Psalm 148. It is taken from the Greek addition to the Book of Daniel, and while it is jubilant in its tone of praise, it has, nevertheless, been used principally in Lent, because it was the song of God's children in affliction. It is also specially appropriate to any Sunday of the Christian year when the First Lesson refers to the act of creation.

It is susceptible of very complete analysis, and a careful study of its contents reveals many beauties and harmonies which the ordinary reading or singing does not suggest. There is a natural procession of thought in it which makes it but the more significant and effective when properly understood, but the full explanation of its contents belongs to the exegesis rather than to liturgics.

The recent revision has added another canticle, "Benedictus es," which is shorter than the Te Deum or the Benedicite and which may be convenient where the Daily Office is said.

The canticles which follow the Second Lesson are the BENEDICTUS and the JUBILATE. Both have been used in an abbreviated form, but the full Benedictus has been restored by the last American revision. It is especially appropriate during Christmastide, or on the festivals of our Blessed Lord, while the Jubilate is adapted to the season of Epiphany. On other Sundays they may be used indiscriminately. The Benedictus is a Gospel hymn celebrating the goodness of God in redemption. The Jubilate is an older and better form of the popular doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

The De Profundis has been added as a third canticle after the Second Lesson, and its use is appropriate during Lent and other penitential seasons of the year. The choice of the canticle at any particular time gives the tone, either jubilant or penitential, to the service, and thus provides for a variety which adapts it more closely to any special season.

NEXT in order comes the CREED, which is the confession of our belief in the

faith once delivered to the saints. The explanation of its contents belongs to the study of theology, and would require a volume to do justice to it. Our concern in these instructions is simply with its liturgical use. First, the position of the Creed in the service demands our attention. Its place in the Morning and Evening Prayer corresponds precisely with its place in the Communion Office; that is to say, it follows a lesson from the Word of God. The significance of this position is explained by a statement of St. Paul which has almost passed into an axiom, that "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." So that there is a logical propriety in the Creed following immediately after the lesson or the Holy Gospel, as much as to say, that, having heard the Word of God, we are now ready to profess our faith which has come by that hearing; and this we do by the repetition of the ancient symbol in which the faith once delivered to the saints has borne its changeless testimony to the ages and generations of men. And no act of common or public worship is complete without it.

There are two minor ceremonial acts connected with the repetition of the Creed to which reference may be briefly made. The first of these is the reverence at the sacred name. The origin of the custom undoubtedly roots itself in the early centuries, when the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ was first called in question, and the heresy in regard to that fundamental truth began to assert itself in the churches. At such a time it was an expressive testimony of a true faith to make due and lowly reverence at the sacred name, because it implied that the man Christ Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. To stand upright at such a time with a bold and defiant air was equivalent to identification with the skepticism which doubted or the rationalism which refined upon and explained away the divinity of our Lord; but to make the reverence at the sacred name was to acknowledge him to be God as well as man. It would not be safe to say that this distinction still adheres to the use of the reverence or its omission; but, in a conspicuously and intentionally irreverent age like the present, we do well to main-

tain a custom whose significance and antiquity alike entitle it to respect. And the significance of the reverence in the Creed is enhanced by the fact that it is required only there. In the older canons of the English Church there is one which provides that "due and lowly reverence should be made wherever the name of Jesus occurs in divine service." But the reverence, like the sign of the cross, is apt to lose its value by too frequent repetition, and, therefore, it is confined to its use in the Creed, as the cross is required only in the reception of the candidate after Holy Baptism, the presence of each respectively in these particular acts of Christian life and worship actually including all others. Their use in other places is merely a matter of individual taste, not required nor forbidden by general usage or canon law. The reverent inclination of the head in the Gloria Patri is an entirely different thing from the reverence in the Creed, for it is based simply upon the analogy that the angels veil their faces in the eternal Trisagion of heaven. But the reverence at the name of Jesus in the Gloria in Excelsis is

identical with that in the Creed, and though not prescribed either by general custom or law, it is the privilege of any Christian to use it if his heart prompts him so to do.

The question is sometimes asked, "Why not bow at the name of God, the Father, or of God, the Holy Ghost?" To which the answer is, that the meaning of the reverence lies in the fact that it is made at the name Jesus, which is the human and historical title of his manhood and which belongs exclusively to his human nature. So that by making the reverence at that name we declare our belief in the Deity of the man Christ Jesus. We need no such outward act when we use the name Christ, for that is his official name, and means that he is "the Anointed of God"; but the name "Jesus" is the designation of the Babe of Bethlehem, the despised Nazarene; the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, the victim of the Jewish mob at Jerusalem, the silent and uncomplaining captive before Pilate, the crucified man on Calvary; and by this token we silently declare that to him we pay divine honors and that he is our God.

There is another traditional custom connected with the repetition of the Creed, which is used chiefly, however, in cathedral services, though sometimes adopted in parish churches also: it is the custom of "Orientation," or turning toward the east during its recital. The attitude had its origin in the ancient idea that the East is the source of light and purity, while the West is the abode of darkness and evil. In the ancient church it was customary for candidates for Holy Baptism to turn their faces toward the west in renouncing the devil and all his works, and to turn toward the east in professing their belief in the articles of the Christian Faith. The observance of the custom is rare in parish churches, though general in England, where no partisan significance is attached to it. It is like the custom of chivalry in which every knight laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword when repeating the Creed, to indicate that, if need be, he would wield his weapon in its defense, a custom which has passed away with the chivalric spirit in which it had its origin.

Following the Creed we have next the Mutual Benediction of Priest and People, as if in commendation of the spirits of all to His care and strength who alone is able to keep us from falling and enable us to maintain our steadfastness unto the end. And then, in the VERSICLES which follow, there is a double prayer expressed in briefest words, but including in its petition the two great needs of the human heart. They are pardon and purity. The one refers to the actions of our lives, for whose shortcoming and sinfulness we ever need the mercy of God; and the other refers to the purity of our hearts, to effect which we ever need the cleansing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

THE comprehensiveness of these Versicles, standing thus at the commencement of our prayers to Almighty God, is very significant. They seem to strike the keynote of all the spiritual blessings that we need, the pardon of our actual sins, and the purification of our nature; in one word, the destruction of sin, both in its guilt and power.

Following this key-note of Christian prayer we have next "The Collect for the Day," a prayer which changes week after week with the varying seasons of the Christian year; which recalls every fact in the Incarnation; which is a memorial of the commemoration of saint and martyr; and which is a constant reminder of the Eucharistic Office to which it belongs.

The two permanent Collects which follow are those for peace and grace. They are suitable for every day of our earthly life, as they invoke God's protection against the assaults of all our enemies and his guidance and governance in our daily lives. Next in order comes the Prayer for Rulers, and all in civil authority, which is based upon the apostolic injunction to pray for the powers that be as ordained of God; and then the Prayer for Clergy and People, as a specific invocation of God's blessing upon the officers and members of his holy church. There is much that is instructive suggested by this prayer, for it opens up the entire subject of the church as a divine corporation, with its sacred brotherhood of the faithful and its author-

ized and appointed officers in the clergy. The very structure of the prayer implies a certain definition of the church and the ministry. It places the Apostolic Episcopate at the head as the organic representative of the authority of Christ, and it refers to the faithful people of God as committed to their guidance and care. To develop fully the meaning implied and included in its phraseology would require us to go into the whole doctrine of the ministry of the church.

There is one practical thought which it forcibly suggests,—namely, the duty of praying for the ministers of Christ. It is quite possible for us to forget the importance of this duty, and it is much easier to criticise them and find fault with them than to pray for them. But we should never forget that the treasure of the gospel is administered through human channels, that the incumbents of the sacred office have all the weaknesses and infirmities common to men, that their conspicuous position necessarily magnifies their defects and emphasizes their shortcomings, and that it is a far better thing for

us to invoke God's blessing and aid in the discharge of their sacred office than to weaken their influence and obstruct their work by unfriendly comments upon their failures and mistakes.

The next prayer in order is the comprehensive intercession for all sorts and conditions of men, and it is followed by the General Thanksgiving, which, even in its present abbreviated form, is a very comprehensive expression of Christian gratitude for all the blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which we enjoy.

It is a liturgical principle that, in the order of devotional thought, we pass naturally from the general to the particular. The special prayers and special thanksgivings follow the general. This rule finds at once its illustration and its authority in the special prayers of Ash Wednesday, which by rubrical direction are "to be said immediately before the general thanksgiving,"—that is, immediately after the prayer for all conditions of men; and the rule for special thanksgiving is defined in the Order of Service for Thanksgiving Day, where the special thanksgiving is to

be said after the general. These are minor matters, it is true, but they are not unimportant, since nothing is unimportant which is connected with the worship of Almighty God. The closing prayer of the Morning Service bears the name of St. Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed Bishop of Constantinople, at the close of the fifth century. It is the fitting conclusion to a service which has been common prayer throughout; and while it is addressed to Christ, as God, it also pleads the promise which he has given to united prayer, that if two or three agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of the Father which is in heaven.

To seal the whole as a completed act of worship, we conclude with the minor benediction which is a devotional invocation of the Trinity, and is thus the correlative of the Gloria Patri at the beginning. It is an inspired formula invoking upon us the grace of Christ, the Son, the love of God, the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and it includes all the bless-

ings, both temporal and spiritual, which our hearts can desire or our necessities demand.

To it, as to every other prayer, the people are to say, Amen. And in the constantly recurring response by which the congregation unite with the prayer of the priest, there is no better rubric than that which Moses gave the children of Israel (Deut. 27:26): "And let all the people say, Amen."

The use of the word indicates our inward assent to what has been uttered, and by it we adopt each prayer and make it our own. But the full effect of this is reached only when "all the people *say* Amen," — when they give audible voice to the assent and desire of their hearts. And the response is as universal as the idea of common prayer. *All* the people are to say it. Wherever a human soul bows down in penitence and prayer, it may voice its yearnings and utter its assent in the word which has responded to the prayers of the sanctuary for more than three thousand years.

LECTURE SIXTH

# Evening Prayer

# Lecture Sixth

## EVENING PRAYER

HE order for daily Evening Prayer follows closely the method of that for the Morning Prayer in its general arrangement. The sentences are the same. The general exhortation may be omitted, and a shorter substitute, "Let us humbly confess our sins unto Almighty God," may be used in its place. The Confession, Absolution, and the Lord's Prayer, Versicles, and Gloria Patri occupy the same relative positions as in the Morning Prayer and for the same liturgical reasons. The Gloria in Excelsis is permitted to be used after the Psalter for the Day, but the

permission is not availed of generally, as it is properly a eucharistic hymn and belongs to the Office for the Holy Communion. The canticles for the past century are the Cantate and Bonum Est after the First Lesson, and the Deus Misereatur and Benedic Anima Mea after the Second. The enrichment of this service authorized by the last revision consists in the restoration of the Magnificat and the Nunc Dimittis to the position which they respectively occupied before the American Prayer-Book finally took its definite form after the Revolution. There is a clear gain in the use of these gospel hymns, though to some minds there is an incongruity in placing upon the lips of a worshiping congregation the special utterances of the Blessed Virgin. A similar objection might be made to the use of the swan-like song of the aged Simeon; — but in both cases the long-established usage of the English Church seems to have sanctioned the propriety of their use, and their restoration has been heartily welcomed by the American Church. They give additional variety to the service and materially assist in mak-

ing the Evening Prayer an "Even-song," especially where the Psalter is chanted, as it always should be in the evening where it is practicable.

The Versicles of the English Liturgy have also been restored, with verbal changes to adapt them to the changed political conditions under which they are used in this country. The larger element of antiphonal or responsive worship thus introduced is a real gain and a valuable enrichment.

A larger liberty still is granted in the prayers which follow. The Collect for the Day and the Collect for Peace occupy their position as formerly; the Prayer for Aid against Perils has been changed to its original form, "Lighten our darkness," etc.; another form of Prayer for Rulers, including not only the President of the United States, but also the Governor of the State, has been introduced; and for the remaining prayers the officiating minister may select any he may choose from the other parts of the Prayer-Book, or may close the service at this point, omitting entirely the prayers which follow and

which are common alike to the Morning and Evening Prayer.

After the third collect, provision is made for an anthem, where it is practicable, which is another enrichment of the Evensong.

A GREAT variety of special prayers and thanksgivings has been added by the recent revision. They sufficiently explain themselves. Their use in the public worship of the church enables the officiating minister to give a specific direction and tone to the service. This is particularly the case in the use of the Prayers for Ember and Rogation Days, for the increase of the ministry, for congress and meetings of convention; while the needs of individuals are expressed in the prayers for the sick, for persons at sea, and those in affliction, as well as in other vicissitudes and needs of our mortal life.

LECTURE SEVENTH

# The Litany

# Lecture Seventh

## THE LITANY

HE Litany is a connecting link between the Morning Prayer and the Office for the Holy Communion. The word itself etymologically means an earnest and continual supplication. Liturgically, it has a technical meaning as applied to a continued series of petitions and responses which are said antiphonally by the priest and the people. It is a very ancient mode of prayer; and a form strikingly similar to our own is found in the Apostolic Constitutions, which is one of the oldest Christian documents extant.

The ancient use of litanies was processional. They were recited upon the eve of great battles, or in the midst of famine; they were used in case of drought or flood; and they were specifically assigned to the Rogation Days, when clergy and people united in solemn procession to invoke God's blessing upon the coming crops of the spring-time and harvest. They constituted a considerable portion of the monastic devotions, and many litanies sprang up, disfigured, indeed, by invocations of saints and martyrs, but expressing, at the same time, the deep and earnest yearning of devout hearts, which, however mistaken in the forms of their phraseology, were never lacking in the intensity of an unwearied devotion.

Our own Litany comes to us from the purest sources of Christian antiquity, and shorn of the excrescences which had gathered upon it during the ages. In the simplicity of its utterance, the comprehensiveness and variety of its petitions, the deep and stirring eloquence of its expression, and the perfection of its com-

pleteness as an act of united prayer, it stands unrivaled by any human composition, and is excelled only by the comprehensiveness and brevity of the Lord's Prayer itself.

The present form of our Litany dates from A. D. 1544, when it was derived by Archbishop Cranmer from the older litanies which were then well known. In the Prayer-Book of 1549 it was ordered to be said only on Wednesdays and Fridays; but in the book of 1552 it was printed in its present place and directed "to be used on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, after Morning Prayer." In the English Church it was frequently said as a special service, the notice for which was given by the tolling of a bell; and to emphasize its character as a general supplication of the people, it was said or sung, not at the prayer-desk in the choir, where the other prayers were said, but "in the midst of the church." Bishop Cosin, when archdeacon, made it one of the special inquiries of his visitation, whether the Litany was thus properly said; and whether there was in each parish church "a faldstool or

desk, with some decent carpet over it, in the middle alley of the church, whereat the Litany may be said after the manner of the Injunction." (Blunt.) The symbolism of such a use is very expressive, as signifying the popular character of the Litany as a united prayer of priest and people, and its impressiveness is greatly enhanced by such a rendering. Its recital, according to the old English injunction, is a reminder of the words of the prophet Joel, which occur in the Epistle for Ash-Wednesday, "Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar: and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach."

Wherever it may be said, it is always the fitting prelude to the Holy Communion; and although the Decalogue and its responses constitute in themselves a Eucharistic Litany, yet it is stated on good liturgical authority that the Litany should always precede the midday celebration, even when the Morning Prayer has been said at an earlier hour.

Proceeding now to the analysis of the

Litany, it naturally divides itself into two general parts:

I. The Litany proper, which extends from the opening invocation to the end of the *Kyrie Eleison* ("Christ have mercy"), and

II. The minor Litany, which begins with the Lord's Prayer and includes the remaining portion to the closing collect.

Each of these general parts contains a number of subdivisions; the first has six, and the second four distinct parts. Without entering into any detailed interpretation of these minor parts, it is sufficient simply to point them out. Their substance is so perspicuous that it interprets itself, but it may help us in saying it to know how perfectly systematic its composition and arrangement are, and how evidently, as in the Morning and Evening Prayer, a scientific method underlies what, to a superficial observer, seems to be but a miscellaneous collection of indiscriminate prayers and responses.

The first subdivision of the greater Litany consists of the Invocation, in which the three persons of the Trinity are first

addressed separately and then together, in a petition for mercy upon us, miserable sinners. There is a deep and fundamental truth underlying these opening words, for the mercy of God to man, as a sinner, is only revealed to us in connection with the doctrinal mystery of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The second division consists of Deprecations, which are petitions against impending evils. They are introduced by a prayer for deliverance from our offenses and the offenses of our forefathers, for it is a law of nature as well as of revelation that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation. In the details of these deprecations, mention is made of the various adversities which may happen to the body, as well as the evils which may assault and hurt the soul, and to each of these is added the deep and earnest response, "Good Lord, deliver us." The specifications are minute and particular, including not only the various forms and phases of sin, but also the providential calamities to which men are exposed and the civil and ecclesiastical

evils which lead astray the loyalty of Christian men, and their natural consequences, hardness of heart and contempt of God's word and commandment,— from all these, in the Deprecations, we pray to be delivered.

Following these, in the third subdivision, are the Obsecrations, or prayers on account of something,— petitions by what is most sacred in our estimation and thought. The mystery of the Incarnation, with its great events, and even its incidental circumstances, together with the coming of the Holy Ghost,— these are the sublime and awful obsecrations by which we give intensity to our earnest prayer; and the subdivision is concluded by a prayer for deliverance in the great disciplines and crises of our being, in tribulation and prosperity, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.

The fourth subdivision consists of Intercessions, which are prayers in behalf of others. In these the church, by the exercise of her universal priesthood, echoes the perpetual prayer of her Great Head, who ever liveth to make intercession for

us. In this subdivision there is an evident classification also, as we pray first for public bodies and public persons, in church and state, for all God's people, and for the the unity, peace, and concord of all nations. Next, in this classification, we pray for spiritual mercies, and then for temporal mercies, and the subdivision closes with three miscellaneous intercessions, for the forgiveness of our enemies, for the fruits of the earth, and for true repentance and grace to live according to God's Holy Word.

The fifth subdivision includes the Invocation of the Son of God, closing with the *Agnus Dei* ("O Lamb of God"), and the sixth is the Kyrie Eleison ("Christ have mercy") of the Eastern Church, which, in its antiphonal repetition thrice over, forms the solemn close of the Litany proper.

II. The second general division of the Litany, called the minor Litany, is opened, according to liturgical use, by the Lord's Prayer. For the use of the Lord's Prayer in the midst of any service always marks

a change in the thought, introducing a new line of devotion, or passing to a different phase of worship. And its use here justifies the title given it by the highest liturgical authority, as the Penitential Lord's Prayer. This peculiar characteristic of it at this place is indicated by the omission of the Doxology at its close.

The second subdivision contains supplications in trouble and adversity, a prayer in the form of a collect, and the Gloria Patri as a petition rather than an ascription.

The question is sometimes asked, why the words "Let us pray" are used twice in the minor Litany, when we are supposed to have been praying all along. The answer is, that the words simply mark a change from the use of a suffrage to the use of a collect, a suffrage being a brief petition with its appropriate response, and the collect being a longer and more formal prayer, to which, ordinarily, the appropriate response is the single word "*Amen*."

There is a third subdivision of the minor Litany which contains supplications appropriate to thickening calamity, and

the fourth, which is introduced by the words "Let us pray," is a comprehensive prayer for rescue and for faith.

This is the end of the complete office, a prayer so comprehensive that it includes an enumeration of all the wants the human heart can know, and yet so concise that it never can weary those who use it with an earnest spirit and a fervent faith.

LECTURE EIGHTH

# The Holy Communion

I

# Lecture Eighth

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

### I

N entering upon the explanation of "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion," we must confine ourselves to its liturgical aspects, and not attempt any discussion of the mystery itself. That is no subject either for theory or for definition. It was given to us, not for critical analysis nor even for reverent speculation, but for the trustful acceptance of our faith. And we may always be sure that if, in this highest act of worship and nearest approach to Christ, we do this in remembrance of him, we shall certainly receive the benefit which

is promised us, and undoubtedly be partakers of his most precious body and blood.

Nor will it be possible, in the limits we propose to ourselves, to enter into the explanation of the matter of this liturgical office. Much of it is composed of the words of Holy Scripture; and as they refer to the great fundamental verities of our faith, their interpretation is the permanent work of the Christian pulpit. The Decalogue is the lesson from the Old Testament which fixes the unchanging standard of character and duty, within whose comprehensive limits all ethical instruction is included. The epistles and gospels, varying throughout the year, constitute the liturgical record of the Incarnation, and furnish the fitting themes for sermons upon the Sundays on which they are respectively used. While the "comfortable words" are the echo of the infinite love, ever offering to weary and penitent souls the pardon and peace which the Gospel reveals, and making that promise real to faith in the sacramental mystery of the body and blood of Christ. And all Chris-

tian preaching and teaching are at once their commentary and their echo.

The other parts of the office are made up of ancient collects and hymns, whose words have become sacred by the long use of the centuries; — and of exhortations and homilies of more recent origin, which are their own explanation. And these all gather around the words of institution, and the symbolical manual act accompanying them, as the solemn consecration, which precedes the partaking by the faithful of the cup of blessing and the bread of life.

Our purpose, therefore, is limited to an explanation of the *rationale* of the office, a statement of the harmony and consistency of its various parts. It will be our object to ascertain why the Decalogue is used at the commencement of the office, and the *Gloria in Excelsis* at its close, instead of a reverse order; to observe how carefully the church has provided for the due reception of these holy mysteries; and to mark the gradual advance in intensity and earnestness from the humble petition for mercy and pardon up to the triumphant and jubilant song of

the angels which precedes the blessing of peace.

For this highest act of worship there are several distinct and expressive names. It is called "The Eucharist," to signify that this sacrament is especially one of thanksgiving for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Lord.

It is often called, by way of eminence, "The Sacrament," not to depreciate the other great sacrament of our religion, but rather to express the original meaning of this one as a renewed oath of fidelity to the captain of our salvation, since the *sacramentum* from which the name is derived was the military oath of the Roman soldier. And the secondary meaning of the word, in which the idea of mystery is prominent, suggests its incomprehensible character as the ordinance of Christ in which, by a penitent faith, we become "partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood."

It is called "The Lord's Supper," with reference, doubtless, to the Passover Meal of the Jewish Church, out of which it

grew, and at the conclusion of whose celebration it was first instituted. And it is called "THE HOLY COMMUNION," to express the idea of communion with Christ and with each other which it makes possible to human hearts.

IN the rubric which precedes the office, there are two disqualifications mentioned for participation in the ordinance. The first is the case of open and notorious evil livers, which excludes all who habitually live in voluntary sin, whose presence and partaking would be a sacrilege. The second is the case of those between whom malice and hatred exist, and who are thereby disqualified until they are reconciled or, at least, willing to be so. In this most solemn approach to Christ, we are reminded that if God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, we also ought to forgive one another.

Concerning the arrangement and vessels of the ordinance, the church has given but simple directions, leaving the details to the reverent love and care of those who provide for the service of the sanctuary.

It is required that the table at the communion time be covered with a "fair linen cloth," and an instinctive sense of propriety at once suggests that it should be of the finest material and scrupulously clean. Indeed, for everything pertaining to God's service, he has the right to expect the best and costliest which we can give; and, especially for this highest ordinance, it is the natural prompting of a reverent heart to provide instruments and vessels which will comport with the dignity of the service. The fair linen cloth may be enriched with fine needle-work, which loving hearts have made an offering to his service. The paten and chalice should be of the purest silver or gold, not cheaply made, but massive in construction; in shape, ecclesiastical and distinguished from all common and domestic uses; and even, if the means of the worshipers justify it, enriched with jewels and gems. The bread, whether loaf or wafer, should be made of the purest wheaten flour, in the most careful manner; and the wine should be the most pure and genuine which the ability of the parish can command.

While these details are not universally obligatory, on account of the varying circumstances and ability of men, there is a principle underlying them which is of universal obligation. It is this, that we should give to God and his service the very best we have. We have no right to be careful about the texture of our table-linen at home, and careless about that which is to cover the table of the Lord. We have no right to adorn our homes with costly ornaments, with silver and jewels, and then leave the house of God to the bare requirements of necessity. We have no right to be scrupulous about the wines we place upon our own tables, to be careful that they are costly and rare, and that their purity is undoubted, and then to use at God's board some cheap and common decoction for his holy supper. Everything pertaining to the Lord's table should correspond with the dignity and sacredness of the ordinance; even the vestments of the priest and the reverent demeanor of the communicants should be in harmony with the occasion and the office. And if we would consider it a breach of good manners to

retire from the table of an earthly friend the moment our repast is finished, and if we would not excuse ourselves, except for great and urgent cause, until all had finished their repast, neither should we, except for the most urgent cause, retire from the church until all have partaken and the service is properly ended with the blessing of peace.

THE Christian altar is here called a table, a name which was introduced into the Prayer-Book in 1552. There has been much unnecessary controversy in regard to these names. The term altar is, undoubtedly, the more primitive, and for the first three hundred years the Lord's table is never spoken of by any other name. When the word table was used, liturgically, it referred to the slab upon which the holy mysteries were celebrated, and it was even deemed necessary to explain that by it was meant the Christian altar. The substitution of the word table in the Prayer-Book was intended "to disabuse the minds of the people of the erroneous superstitions connected with the ordinance

at that time, and also to bring more distinctly into view the great truth which had been lost sight of, by the denial of the cup to the laity, that in this ordinance we are to feed upon the body and blood of Christ." Properly understood, both of these names, altar and table, are scriptural and correct, and they are the complement of each other. Before the altar we plead in the eucharist the one great, completed sacrifice of Christ. St. Paul has sanctioned the use of the name in I. Cor., 9:13, "Do ye not know that they who wait upon the altar are partakers of the altar?" And Heb., 13:10, "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle." On the other hand, at the table of the Lord we eat the Christian Passover and keep the feast; we come as the family of God to the table in our father's house, and the name presents a very distinct and important aspect of the ordinance. The words altar and table are thus different names of the same thing in different aspects of its use; both are correct and needful for a full and comprehensive expression of all that the ordinance means.

There is no order of celebration prescribed in Holy Scripture. The words of institution connected with the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the cup constitute the germ of all the early liturgies, and to this consummation all that precedes is preparatory. In the older liturgies the service divided itself into two principal divisions,—namely, the Liturgy of the Catechumens, at which all might be present, and which consisted of the collect, epistle, gospel, creed, sermon, and prayer for the church militant; and the Liturgy of the Faithful, which included the remaining portion of the office. A relic of this division still exists in the departure of the non-communicants from the church after the prayer for the church militant.

Preparatory, however, even to this Liturgy of the Catechumens, we have an introductory service, consisting of the Lord's Prayer, the Collect for Purity, the Ten Commandments and their responses, and the Summary of the Law, as given by our Lord himself. The reason of this preparatory service is evident to all who

are familiar with the history of the English Prayer-Book. As the General Confession and Absolution were placed at the beginning of the Morning and Evening Prayer to supply the place of auricular confession and absolution, to which the people had become habituated, so the decalogue was put at the commencement of the Communion Office to serve the same purpose there. And its use in that position enables us to try our lives by the standard — not of a fluctuating public opinion, nor even by the current moralities of the day, but by the inflexible standard of God's Law.

The Lord's Prayer and the Collect for Purity, which precede the decalogue, were originally intended to be the private devotions of the officiating priest; but as the rubric in the Morning Prayer directs that the Lord's Prayer should be said by the people with the priest, "wheresoever it occurs in divine service," it has become customary to do so here. And certainly no key-note could be more fitting, as the children of God gather around his holy board, than the united "Our Father," which he

himself has taught us. Further than this it stands here as the model of all the prayers that follow. There is a use of the Lord's Prayer which makes it the compensation for all the defects and inaccuracies of the prayers which have preceded it, and which, therefore, always concludes an act of devotion with it. This is quite customary in certain forms of family prayer, or of private devotion. But the church never puts the Lord's Prayer at the end; it always stands at the beginning of a service or of a division of a service. Originally, the Morning Prayer began with the Lord's Prayer. The Confession and Absolution which precede it were put there afterward. It stands here at the beginning of this office; it marks the commencement of the minor Litany; it introduces the post-communion service; and in each place it is intended to be the model upon which all the subsequent prayers are to be made.

The Collect for Purity expresses what ought to be the yearning of our hearts as we enter upon so high a privilege, and it reminds us of the sincerity and earnest-

ness with which, in this holy ordinance, we should draw near to God. It teaches us to seek, that even the thoughts of our hearts may be cleansed by God's Holy Spirit. And there is a ninefold repetition of the same desire in the Responses to the Commandments, in which we not only ask for God's mercy, but also that he may incline our hearts to keep his law. The high spiritual character of this Eucharistic Litany is emphasized by the Summary of the Law, as given by our Lord, which immediately follows, in which he declares the principle of love to God and to our neighbor to be the supreme command upon which hang all the law and the prophets. If it were possible for any one to be careless or formal in such a service as this, it surely is not the church's fault. And we need seek no higher standard, need ask for no better help than the carefully adjusted form of sound words by which she first seeks to inspire and then enables us to express the true devotion of our hearts as we draw near to the table of the Lord.

LECTURE NINTH

# The Holy Communion

II

# Lecture Ninth

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

### II

HE collect, epistle, and gospel constitute the variable portion of the Office for the Holy Communion. In this respect they correspond to the Lessons in the Morning and Evening Prayer,—that is, they change for every Sunday and festival. The general principle which underlies their use is the commemoration of some great fact or doctrine on every holy day; and by their arrangement the church provides for a weekly and Saints' Day celebration of the Holy Communion. If a more frequent celebration is desired, it also is provided for by the direction of the rubric

that the collect, epistle, and gospel for Sunday shall serve for every day thereafter during the week.

It is also to be observed that where the collect, epistle, and gospel are provided, there the mind of the church contemplates and its system proposes a celebration of the Holy Communion. The modern practice of stopping midway the service, though permitted by the rubric, was unknown to the primitive church. It is, however, the memento of a brave battle with foes on either hand; and it has had the effect of putting the weekly celebration at an earlier hour, which is more in accordance with the spirit and practice of the early church. It also relieves many earnest and faithful Christians from the embarrassment which the midday celebration brings when they are unable to remain and unwilling to depart; while it attracts to itself only those who are willing to sacrifice the luxury of the morning slumber for the higher privilege of meeting their Lord in the Holy Mystery which he has ordained.

The collects are taken mainly from the ancient liturgies, and they have the flavor

and tone of the church's life in her best and purest days. Their structure is remarkable for comprehensiveness and brevity, and in any comparison of ancient collects with modern prayers, the former are immeasurably superior. This may be explained upon the principle that the nearer we get to the fountain the purer the stream must be. As the prayers of the church, like her hymns, are the expression of her inner life, it is natural that the epochs of martyrdom and the severe conflicts of the faith should be productive of a richer fragrance of devotion than more peaceful times. War songs are never written in the luxury of a court; battle cries are unknown to the arts of peace; the phraseology of heroism is a strange language in the marts of commerce, the salons of fashion, or the rural life of a country. It is only when the shadow of impending disaster rests upon a land or a people that the expression of its intensest desire is compressed into words which, with an almost inspired brevity, put a volume of meaning into a single line. So these collects come to us, not as the calm product of the

scholar in his study, nor of the poet in his seclusion, nor of the peaceful Christian walking to the House of God in the undisturbed company of his friends; but they are the deep, intense expression of yearnings, and hopes, and desires wrung from the soul of the church in the days of her severest conflict, and which, losing all trace of historical period or local surrounding, have become, like the Psalms themselves, the fitting expression of earnest hearts throughout the ages and throughout the world.

There are certain peculiarities in the structure of the collects which deserve a moment's attention. After the Invocation there are usually three parts, before the closing phrase which connects them with the Mediation and Intercession of our Lord. First, there is stated either a historical fact or a theological truth as the basis of the prayer. In the collects of the great festivals,—for example, the Nativity, Easter Day, or Whitsuntide,—the historical facts which are commemorated are made the basis of our appeal to God. And each one contains a prayer which is justified by

the particular aspect of the Incarnation thus referred to. At other seasons of the Christian year, some attribute of God, some expression of his love and mercy toward us, is made the basis of our prayer. But both correspond in this, that in the formal and definite approach to God in the Collect for the Day, we come to him on the ground of the assurance either of some established fact or some revealed truth which authorizes such an appeal from sinful souls to an all-merciful God.

The second part of the collect is the Petition itself, which is usually the expression of the desire that the spiritual benefit guaranteed to us by the fact or doctrine may be ours; that its purifying and ennobling effect may enter into our souls and become a living force there; and that we, allying ourselves with the wonderful mysteries of the Incarnation and the divine truths which it revealed to man, may be lifted above our sordid human life into that sphere of the supernatural, where these facts and doctrines may become the daily food of our souls.

The third division in the analysis of

these brief but comprehensive collects is the moral result to be obtained, the effect upon life and conduct, upon our work here and our destiny hereafter, which is to be achieved by the answer to our prayer. As the closing utterance, the word which fixes it to the promise of God, there is the well-known phrase, "in the name," or, "for the sake," of our Lord Jesus Christ; and his relation to the Blessed Trinity. Thus, in the long list of seventy collects provided for the Sundays and Holy Days of the Christian year, each one commemorates some great fact of the Incarnation; some noble example of apostle or martyr; or some great truth in the Christian system; and upon this fact, or example, or truth bases its special prayer to almighty God in the service peculiar to the day.

THE arrangement of epistles and gospels insures us that there shall be at least two appropriate lessons from Holy Scripture, as an integral part of the celebration. The epistle was formerly called "The Apostle," because it contained the inspired words of an apostolic servant of Christ, but the

Gospel is the record of either the words or the acts of our Lord. It is for this reason that we pay peculiar honor to the reading of the Holy Gospel, by standing to hear it read, and by the ascription "*Glory be to Thee, O Lord*," when it is announced.

THE Christian year naturally divides itself into two parts: The first, extending from Advent to Trinity, commemorates in succession the great facts of the Incarnation; the second, from Trinity to Advent, presents us with the illustration and enforcement of duty. The first half of the year is doctrinal, the second half is practical. The arrangement has the advantage of bringing out the entire round of Christian doctrine and duty in the course of the year, and of giving to each truth in the Christian system its due position. Without such a safeguard both worship and instruction are apt to run in certain familiar channels and grooves and to become one-sided and partial. But following the order of the Christian year we have brought before us every essential fact and truth, and the sum total of the year's teach-

ings is a well-compacted and finished statement of our holy religion.

The Creed follows the Gospel, unless it has been said in the Morning Prayer immediately preceding, and its position in relation to the hearing of the word has already been explained in the Morning Prayer. There is, however, a peculiar fitness in its use here, as being part of the Baptismal Vow, and as thus defining, to a certain extent, those who are to participate in this holy privilege. Standing midway between the Scripture and the Sermon, it becomes a connecting link between the inspired oracle and the uninspired interpretation. And when we remember that the Creed in its earliest and simplest form was repeated in the Christian assemblies from the very beginning; that it antedates the written records of Christianity by at least one generation, and was familiar in Christian worship before the New Testament Scriptures were written; that it has been repeated ever since, day by day, and week by week, and year by year, for more than eighteen centuries; and

that in all that time no sun has ever risen in the east that has not been greeted by its utterance, nor set in the west that has not echoed its repetition, we may comprehend the reverent honor in which this venerable symbol is held. If not inspired itself, it at least finds its origin so near the fountain of inspiration that we regard it as little less than inspired, and use it with a reverence only less profound than that which we pay to the Holy Scripture itself.

THE Sermon follows as the uninspired interpretation of what has preceded, and its position implies that it is based upon Holy Scripture and is in harmony with the Creed. This is intended to fulfill the prescription of St. Paul, that he who prophesies must do so according to the proportion of the faith; that is, that all Christian teaching must agree alike with the general tenor of Scripture, and the comprehensive utterances of the Creed, and thus avoid the danger of making an entire system of theology out of a single set of texts and of ignoring all other doctrine as unimportant and subordinate. Such disregard

of the analogy of the faith can never occur where the system of the church is faithfully and loyally followed. For in it every essential truth has its appropriate place and must be systematically taught.

And we have here defined for us the true position of the Sermon in Christian worship,—namely, that is part of the proper celebration of the Holy Communion. It is not to be set aside for the impressive and solemn service which is to follow it, nor is it to be magnified into such proportions as to overshadow and exclude other elements and acts of worship.

When the Sermon is ended a new feature of the Communion Office appears. The priest returns to the holy table and begins the Offertory. The sentences to be used during the collection of the alms are of various classes. Some are suitable to giving for the relief of the poor; some to the support of the ministry of the Word; some are a fitting inspiration to missionary gifts, and others to the care of the sick; and as the proper officers of the church are gathering, throughout the con-

gregation, the gifts and offerings of the people, these sentences are either said or sung as the inspiration and warrant of this part of the service. When the alms are all collected, they are reverently brought to the priest, who is then to humbly present and place them upon the holy table. There is a deep significance in the act. It lifts the whole transaction above the level of a mere collection, and makes it an act of worship, and it emphasizes the truth that our giving to the cause of Christ may be just as sacred as the duty of prayer. There is high authority for the assurance that "with such sacrifices, God is well pleased." And the more fully we understand the meaning of this rubric and the scriptural principle which underlies it, the more certainly will the offertory be lifted above the sordid idea of collecting money from reluctant contributors, into a sacred and willing offering of grateful praise, in which each one is to give as God hath prospered him, and to make that gift an acceptable sacrifice to him. It is for this reason, also, that the custom is becoming general for

the whole congregation to rise at the presentation of the alms,—an act which is an emphatic assertion of the universal priesthood of the people, and which enables each giver — the rich man with his generous offering and the poor widow with her mite — to take part in the service, which makes their gifts an offering unto the Lord. In connection with the alms, the "other devotions" of the people are to be presented also. This phrase includes any offerings which may be made at the time for other pious uses, for the support and maintenance of the church; for missionary operations; for the various departments of Christian activity; in short, any gift which passes through the offertory and is consecrated to the work of Christ in the world.

Then the priest is to place upon the holy table the bread and wine required in the service which is to follow. These are properly the oblations, and for a compliance with the rubric a credence table is requisite. In all well-constructed chancels this convenience is now an essential feature of its architecture. The elements are to be

placed upon the holy table by the priest, and this, with the congregation standing and uniting in the act, is the key-note of the spiritually sacrificial character of the Holy Eucharist which is so distinctly stated in the Prayer for the Church Militant and whose deep significance runs throughout the entire service.

LECTURE TENTH

# The Holy Communion

III

# Lecture Tenth

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

### III

HE prayer for the whole state of Christ's church militant is the most comprehensive uninspired prayer in the entire liturgy. Even the Litany forms no exception to this statement, unless it be found in the fact that this prayer makes intercession only for those who are members of the mystical Body of Christ. In this respect it follows the example of the Great High Priest himself, who, in the intercessory prayer which preceded his agony, said: "I pray, not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me" (St. John, 17 : 9).

An intercessory prayer of this character has always had a place in the liturgies of the Church Catholic, though in the older liturgies it stands nearer to the prayer of consecration than in our own.

It includes three principal divisions, each of which, again, includes a variety of objects in detail. The general divisions are: The Oblation, the Intercession, and the Eucharistic Commemoration of the Faithful Dead. The warrant of our approach to the throne of grace is stated in the inspired teaching of St. Paul, and with this we enter upon what is the real substance of the prayer itself.

This word OBLATION brings distinctly before us the spiritually sacrificial character of the entire office for the Holy Communion; and the House of Bishops, in defining the attitude of priest and people during the celebration, assigns this as a reason why, through the entire office, except at the confession and the prayer of humble access, the priest should stand. There has been a vast amount of misunderstanding and controversy about this word, sacrifice, and its cognate terms, priest

and altar. The objection to them has been a natural protest against mediæval error and the erroneous theology which attributes a propitiatory value to the sacrificial offering of the mass. But the feeblest way to avoid error is the very common one of running into error on the opposite extreme. The truer way of safety is to follow closely the pathway marked out in God's Word, without predilection and without prejudice, and to accept its teaching whether it indorses our preconceived opinions or not. No error has ever yet gained, to any extent, the confidence of men which has not had an element of truth in it to give it that power. When it is asserted, on the one hand, that there is a sacrificial aspect of the Holy Communion, we may accept the statement as true in the light of Holy Scripture; but when a propitiatory value is attributed to it, we may well pause and ask ourselves whether this is not rather the reasoning of the schoolmen than the teaching of God's Word. On the other hand, while we deny any propitiatory value in the offering, we may recognize the spiritually sacrificial

character of the Holy Communion, in perfect analogy to the sacrifices of the older dispensations, of which it is expressly said that "the blood of bulls and goats can never take away sin." But it is quite possible for us to recognize what is true in both of these partial theories, and while giving the strongest emphasis to the solitary priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ, to recognize also and gratefully accept God's merciful arrangement by which the eternal priesthood of Christ has ever had its shadow and its memorial upon the altars of his earthly church.

In the oblation there is a threefold offering: our alms and other devotions; the oblation of the bread and wine; and our prayers. Each of these has a sacrificial character attributed to it in the Word of God: "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16). "Let my prayers be set before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Psalm 141:2), and both of these are combined in the message of the angel to the Roman Centurion: "Cornelius, thy

prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" (Acts, 10 : 4).

In the Prayer of Consecration, to which the people give audible assent by the responsive Amen at its close, we use these significant words: "We, thy humble servants, desire thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving." St. Paul uses almost the same words, when he says: "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the first fruits of our lips, giving thanks unto his name." And the great vow of self-surrender which we make not only echoes the spirit of the apostle's teaching, but also incorporates his very words: "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto thee." Our alms and prayers, our praises and our self-consecration, are all spoken of as a spiritual sacrifice in Holy Scripture, and these acts constitute parts of one elaborate whole in the highest ordinance known to the church. This is the true protest against the error which attributes a propitiatory value to the ordinance,

as it also elevates and emphasizes the solitary character of the one intrinsic and essential sacrifice offered once for all for the sins of the whole world.

It was this one and only sacrifice which was prefigured by Jewish types, and every lamb that ever was slain upon Jewish altars derived its only significance and value from its relation to the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world. And it is this one and only sacrifice which is commemorated in the ordinance which our blessed Lord has instituted for that purpose. It looks back upon the past and shows forth the Lord's death as the sacrifices of the older dispensation looked toward the future and trusted in one who was to come. The commemoration of the Lord's Supper is to memory what the Jewish sacrifices were to hope, and each, in its proper place, was a representation of the one great fact by which alone a sinner can draw near to God.

The Intercession, in the prayer for the church militant, contains five different specifications, which follow almost literally

the model given by St. Paul. The first is for the general well-being, unity, and concord of the universal church. Every word of this petition is significant and appropriate, as it echoes the intercession of our Great High Priest, that all his people may be one,—one in the truth, one in the deep, fundamental verities of the faith,—one in the personal consecration of heart and life to Christ. And when we reach that unity we may agree to differ on everything else; and the church of Christ will be as varied in its individual details as the leaves and trees, the lawns and streams, the skies and clouds, but one in the unity and harmony with which these varying elements blend into a perfect landscape.

The second specification of the prayer is in behalf of all Christian rulers, in which we invoke God's blessing upon them in three particulars: in the true and impartial administration of justice, in the punishment of wickedness and vice, and in the maintenance of true religion and virtue. The petition is based upon the scriptural principle that "the powers that be are ordained of God." It recognizes the fact that

human government is a divine institution, and the deeper truth that God is in history, directing and controlling the affairs of men. When a nation is needed for a special purpose, God creates that nation, gives it its characteristics, its ambition, and its government; and when it has completed its task, or has proved false to its mission, he wipes it out of existence and creates another nation to carry out the purposes of his will. In every age, whether Jewish or Christian, it has been the custom of the church to pray for the rulers of the people. In the synagogue and the temple such a prayer formed part of its constant liturgy, and the Church of the Christian Dispensation has taken up the same petition and repeats it from age to age.

The third specification is the prayer for bishops and other ministers; that they may both, by life and doctrine, set forth God's holy word, and rightly and duly administer his Holy Sacraments. There are two couplets of intercession here which deserve our notice. The first and most suggestive is that the church teaches us to recognize

the double function of the clergy as ministers, both of the Word and of the Sacraments. The prophetic and priestly offices are both united in his official character. The Christian minister is not merely a preacher, his sermons are not merely lectures on religious topics: the pulpit is not a platform, nor is the church assembly a lyceum; but he is an ambassador for God, in Christ's stead beseeching men to be reconciled to him, and finding the sum and substance of his teaching in the sacred oracles of God.

Nor is he, upon the other hand, merely a liturgical functionary. He has something more to do than to perform the rites and conduct the ceremonies of the church. As a Christian priest he is to be a steward of the mysteries, and to stand in the holy place as the administrator of the sacraments which Christ has ordained. Both of these aspects of his function are recognized here, when we invoke God's blessing upon the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments, thus putting side by side the two great means of grace which God has established in his church.

The other couplet is the prayer that to the spoken word the minister of Christ may add the emphasis of his example. It is an easy thing to find fault with a minister and to criticise him, to comment upon his peculiarities of style and manner, or to condemn his shortcomings. But it is far better to remember that the ministers of Christ are but men, with the infirmities common to our nature, and that it is our duty to help them by our prayers rather than to hinder them by our criticism.

THE intercession for the people, that they may, with meek heart and due reverence, hear and receive God's Holy Word, is but a continuation of the same idea. When St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, he congratulated them that when they received his apostolic word they received it, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." There is a prevalent idea in the popular mind that the purpose of the sermon may be to entertain and even to amuse rather than to edify the hearer. Or it may be considered

as merely a literary production which discusses in thoughtful mood the current topics of the day. But this prayer presents a very different conception of the work of Christian preaching, as it implies that even the most ordinary sermon is a message from God, and that if we listen to it earnestly and meekly, it will either teach us something we did not know, or remind us of some duty which we have not performed. And the spiritual effect of a sermon depends quite as much upon the congregation as upon the preacher. The most earnest message of the Gospel may be chilled by empty pews and inattentive hearers; but the simplest presentation of truth is quickened into life by the responsive thrill which passes from the reverent heart of the hearer to the trembling mortal who stands in God's name to speak the word of life to his fellow-men.

The next special prayer is for all who are in distress, and by it we are lifted to the broad level of our common humanity, to the philanthropic sentiment which such a thought inspires, and to the tender sympathy for the sorrows of human hearts

everywhere, which here, before the altar of God and as a prelude to the commemoration of the Saviour's death, remembers "all those who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity." There is a condensed and concentrated pathos in these words which it would require a volume adequately to express. Every anxiety of life, every shadow of grief, every phase of poverty, every sick-bed, and whatever of adversity or woe this sin-stricken world of ours may contain, is here commended to God's comfort and help, as our fullest benediction and his most blessed boon.

The third general division of the prayer is, in some respects, the most pathetic and touching of all, in which, before the altar and in the immediate presence of the memorial of the Saviour's death, we make the thankful commemoration of the faithful dead. It is natural that at such a moment, when we draw near to the deep mysteries of our faith, we should also think of the deep mystery of the dead in Christ, who rest in him, awaiting their final completion in the Resurrection. If

we may not follow them into the peaceful rest of Paradise whither they are gone, we may at least offer a thanksgiving for their good example, in the consciousness that we are drawing nearer to them as we draw nearer to Christ, with whom they are. The friends of earth who have passed on before us; saintly characters who once walked by our side in life or sat by us in the pew which is vacant to-day; loved names, once the common music of our home, now touched and stilled, and rendered sacred forever by death,— of these and their peaceful victory, we are permitted to think at such a moment, to remember their patient faith and godly fear, and then, in Christian hope, to look forward to the hour when we, with them, shall be partakers of the heavenly kingdom. In the creed we profess our faith in the communion of saints, in the brotherhood of souls which overleaps the centuries and spans the chasm of death, and in whose loving embrace the past, the present, and the future are one. And in this prayer we make that faith real to our deepest consciousness, and recognize and re-

joice in the fact that the separation which death makes is only temporary and apparent. The faithful followers of Christ are one, whether in the burden of the flesh or in the rest of Paradise.

> "One family we dwell in Him,
> One Church, above, beneath,
> Though now divided by the stream,
> The narrow stream of death."

The people of antiquity looked to a future bounded by the grave. Friends and brothers separated at the gates of death, and the only reunion they dared to hope for was that kindred ashes might mingle in one common urn. But Christianity has placed man upon the plains of hope; and the voice which once, to a bereaved heart in Bethany, said "Thy brother shall live again" has sounded throughout creation and wrested the scepter from the king of terrors. And the brightness of his triumph gilds the resting-places of the departed in the Lord, illuminates their memory, and makes their peaceful existence in Paradise real to our faith.

The conceit of purgatorial fires and prayers for the dead has travestied this truth on the one hand. On the other, unbelief has taken this natural yearning of bereaved hearts and trafficked in it, by the absurdities of so-called spiritualism; but notwithstanding the caricature, the scriptural truth is ours, alike for consolation and hope, that death cannot destroy the link which binds together souls that are one in Christ. The church on earth is compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. The glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs,—all are there. And names nearer to us, and dearer by their nearness, are also in that blessed company; and we can draw fresh courage for the struggle of life, by remembering their patience and thanking God for their victory.

The elect of God are "knit together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of his Son, Christ, our Lord," and it is our privilege so to "follow his blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys

which he has prepared for those who love him." And, in this thankful commemoration of the faithful dead, we look forward with every confidence to the hour when "we, with all those who have departed in the true faith of his holy name, shall have our perfect consummation of bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory."

LECTURE ELEVENTH

# The Holy Communion

IV

# Lecture Eleventh

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

### IV

HE end of the prayer for the whole state of Christ's church militant is the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Catechumens. In all the older liturgies the non-communicants retired from the church at this point, and the remaining portion of the service was called the Liturgy of the Faithful, in which the communicants remained for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries.

This usage is still preserved, not so much for the reason that non-communicants are not permitted to witness the celebration, as because so large a proportion of modern congregations are impatient of

the length of the service, and find their interest chiefly in the sermon. They therefore retire, and then the Faithful are shut in with Christ and, as of old, he is "made known to them in the breaking of bread."

Preceding the ancient Liturgy of the Faithful, which properly begins at the "Sursum Corda" ("lift up your hearts"), there are several preparatory acts of devotion, as if the church would provide her children with repeated opportunities of self-examination and confession of sin. Already in the Morning Prayer, which ordinarily precedes the office, there is a confession and absolution; but these are both repeated here with deeper intensity and more pointed directness; and even before this our hearts are stirred up by the exhortation which begins this part of the office.

This exhortation is nothing more nor less than a homily on self-examination, and a caution against anything like a heedless or irreverent participation in this holy ordinance. It is an enlarged and repeated echo of the words of St. Paul: "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat

of that bread and drink of that cup." It is intended to throw the responsibility of preparation upon the communicant himself. For, while the church is ever ready to comfort those who desire "to open their grief" to the minister of God's Word, "by such Godly counsel and advice as may tend to the quieting of the conscience and the removing of all scruple and doubtfulness," yet she never prescribes an auricular confession as a necessity, nor does she presume to decide for the communicant the question of his own fitness. Nor does she require an examination as to the details of doctrinal belief or technical experience as a condition precedent to partaking. She leaves all this precisely where God's Word leaves it, with the individual conscience and heart, repeating simply the inspired injunction of self-examination and a truly penitent heart.

The invitation which follows prescribes, in greater detail, the scriptural terms upon which the faithful are to come to the participation of this holy mystery. They are: (1) A true and earnest repentance for sin; (2) Love and charity to our

neighbors; (3) An intention to lead a new life; and (4) An approach to the mystery with faith. These terms express with all simplicity and clearness the disposition of mind and heart with which we are to come to the table of the Lord. They urge our coming, not as self-satisfied religionists, but as penitent sinners. They recognize the brotherhood of which each member of the mystical body forms a part, and the sentiment of mutual love and charity which must pervade that brotherhood. They remind us that it is not the achieved perfection of moral conduct in the past, but the earnest resolution of fidelity in the future that is to warrant our coming; they insist upon a living faith, as the hand with which we are to reach out and receive the heavenly food,— as the vision of the soul by which we are to discern, in the ordinance, the body and blood of Christ, and to see him, evidently set forth, as crucified for us.

And now, with this distinct and comprehensive statement of our own spiritual preparation, we are called to a confession of our sins, which is the deepest and most

heart-searching in the entire liturgy. To appreciate its intensity, we have only to compare it with the General Confession in the Morning and Evening Prayer, and we shall find that it expresses a self-abasement and penitence of soul, as much deeper than that as the service in which we are engaged is more sacred. It acknowledges and bewails the manifold sins and wickedness of our lives, and it extends that acknowledgment to the thoughts of our hearts as well as to the words of our lips and the actions of our lives; it recognizes the justice of God's wrath, and declares the burden of our sin intolerable. And from the depth of such a self-abasement it utters a *De Profundis* which has sounded all along the centuries, a *Kyrie Eleison* which has echoed from penitent hearts in every age, as it seeks forgiveness for the past and grace to lead a better life in time to come.

Then the assurance of that pardon is given in the *Absolution*, which is the authoritative declaration of God's forgiveness to penitent souls. The form which is used here is much more direct and spe-

cific than the larger form which is used in the Morning and Evening Prayer. It is suited to a congregation of believers as the other is to a miscellaneous congregation, and it is intended at once to express and to convey the comfortable assurance of God's forgiving love.

And yet, to accept that assurance with an humble faith is not an easy thing. The native infidelity of the human heart is so strong, and we are so disposed to measure the authority and the love of God by the standard of earthly authority and human love, that it seems to us almost incredible that God should pardon and forgive our sins. To meet that timid, shrinking faith, the declaration of absolution is followed by the comfortable words in which there is a condensed epitome of the Gospel, an assurance that because we are sinners we belong to the class which Christ came to save; and if the suggestion of an earnest self-reproach should remind us that ever since we have heard the message of his love we have wandered from him, even this need not drive us to despair, since we have an advocate with the Father; and

the repeated and manifold declaration of his pardoning love becomes a sure source of comfort and strength to trembling hearts seeking their consolation beneath the shadow of the cross.

And now the tone of the service changes to one of triumphant joy. We take up the ancient canon in the liturgy of the faithful in the *Sursum Corda* ("Up hearts!"), as it has been used since the early ages of the church. These versicles are the beginning of the eucharistic office proper. We enter upon the thankful commemoration, and the key-note of our praise is struck in the *Ter Sanctus*, in whose exalted strain the worship of the church on earth mingles with the worship of the church in heaven. This Trisagion is an abbreviated *Te Deum*,—a condensed *Gloria in Excelsis*, one of the highest strains of sacred praise ever set to uninspired words.

To make the great facts of the Incarnation more prominent to our faith in the eucharistic commemoration, proper prefaces are provided for the five great festi-

vals of the Christian year. The birth, the resurrection and the ascension of our Lord, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the doctrine of the Trinity are the special themes of eucharistic remembrance upon their respective festival days.

In this angelic hymn, the triumphant joy of the Eucharist finds its culminating point; it is not merely the echo of, but the participation in, the song of heaven, and higher than this no earthly chant can lift us.

But the sigh of penitence must mingle with our most exultant strains, and from the echo of the song of the angels we return to the expression of our deep sense of unworthiness, in the prayer of humble access, which precedes the consecration. This prayer is said by the priest, kneeling, in the name of all who shall be partakers of the holy table. It contains three distinct parts. The first expresses the humility of our conscious unworthiness. As if there might be in our hearts some lingering trace of self-righteousness, we disclaim any thought of such a thing, and declare

that so far from any trust in ourselves our only trust is in the great and manifold mercy of God. There is an impressive lesson of encouragement and hope in these words, for the greatest hindrance in the way of many sincere Christians is the deep sense of their own unworthiness. And taking counsel of their fears rather than their faith, they shrink from their privilege at the table of the Lord; while that very sense of unworthiness is the evidence that their approach is no rash or irreverent act. Indeed, anything like a sense of personal worthiness would be a disqualification for our participation in the holy feast; and the timidity which in its conscious unworthiness shrinks from the awful mystery is the true attitude of mind and heart which enables us to make these words in the prayer of humble access our own.

The second part of the prayer expresses an implicit faith in the participation of the Body and Blood of Christ. And for this we need no theories and no definitions. For a theory of the mode of this great mystery is a process of reasoning, and a

definition of it is an attempt to philosophize, but neither reason nor philosophy can explore its depths or express its meaning. It must be accepted simply by faith. We need not ask ourselves the old question of Jewish doubt, "*How* can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Our better way is simply to rest content with the assurance that if, in this holy ordinance, we faithfully obey the command of Christ, we shall undoubtedly receive the grace it is intended to convey. The participation, on our part, will be responded to by our Heavenly Father, on his part, without the necessity of any explanation to reason or sense. And we may rest assured that when we duly receive these holy mysteries, God does vouchsafe to feed us with the spiritual food of the most blessed Body and Blood of his Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Less than this would not fulfill the promise of his Word, and further than this we need give ourselves no concern to inquire.

The last thought in the prayer is an exceedingly important one. It is nothing less than the participation of our bodies

in the benefits of the redemption in Christ. We are taught in Holy Scripture that not only is the body to be glorified in the resurrection of the last day, but also, that even in the burden of the flesh it may become the temple and share the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost. And this fact is distinctly recognized here. Further on in the service, we make the eucharistic consecration of ourselves, our souls, and bodies as a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice to God; and in the yearning thought of this prayer there is a hint, at least, of the great truth that these mortal bodies of ours are related to the One Human Body, which has passed through the grave and which is now seated at the right hand of God. The words of our Lord connect the faithful reception of the Lord's Supper with the resurrection of the body, when he says: "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (St. John, 6 : 54). This is, undoubtedly, the doctrinal significance of this part of the prayer, and the service would be incomplete without it. It brings before us, at

this solemn moment, the fact that the body shares in the benefits of redemption, and that it is this fact which makes its being a temple of the Holy Ghost possible in the present, or its resurrection possible in the future. It is the resurrection of the body which makes the difference between the peaceful rest of the souls of the faithful dead in Paradise, and the perfect blessedness of the beatific vision, when the redeemed soul, united to the resurrection body, shall enter upon its perfect fruition in the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

By what mysterious link the participation of the Lord's Supper is connected with the immortality of the body we cannot tell, except in the comprehensive thought that the perfect sacrifice of Christ touches and ennobles every phase and department of our being, alike in its present experience and its future destiny. But this, at least, is certain, that this faith in immortality, which is the boon of our earthly pilgrimage, which sustains the dying Christian as he passes through the valley of the shadow of death, and which

for us to-day kindles the lamp of hope in the sepulchers of our departed, finds at once its prophecy and pledge in that sacred ordinance; and that "all those who are departed in the true faith of his holy name shall have their perfect consummation, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting glory."

LECTURE TWELFTH

# The Holy Communion

V

# Lecture Twelfth

## THE HOLY COMMUNION

### V

HE Eucharistic and Memorial Prayer, commonly called the Prayer of Consecration, is the culmination of the Office for the Holy Communion. It contains within itself the germ of the entire office. The sacred words of institution and the symbolical acts which accompany them, together with the command of our Lord, "Do this in remembrance of Me," constitute the nucleus of the whole service and, indeed, of the entire liturgy. They are the germ of all Christian worship, as the baptismal formula is the germ of the Creed. And as from the words used at the appli-

cation of the water in Holy Baptism the whole service of prayer and gospel, of exhortation and vow, of the benediction of the water and the thanksgiving for regeneration naturally grew, so the words used at the institution of the Supper, with the breaking of the bread and the consecration of the wine, have gathered around themselves the elaborate service of preparation which precedes and the thanksgiving which follows them. These are the outer vesture of the sacred acts of consecration and partaking; and when they are all complete, we are lifted again in the Post-Communion to the Song of the Angels in the greater Doxology, and then depart with the blessing of peace.

Before making the actual celebration, however, the authority for doing so is first recited. It is the command of our blessed Lord, who "did institute, and in his Holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that his precious death and sacrifice until his coming again." The terms in which this preliminary announcement is made are carefully chosen and

theologically accurate, and they are intended to guard the sacred mystery from error. It has been claimed that the sacrifice of Christ may be repeated in its propitiatory character upon the altars of his church. This preface refers to it, in the exact terms of Holy Scripture, in its completeness and perfection as offered once for all. It has been asserted, on the other hand, that the real value of the death of Christ is to be found in his teaching and example, and that his death was only that of a hero or martyr. This preface distinctly echoes the teaching of Holy Scripture, that it was a sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. There is a false conception of God which represents him as a relentless tyrant upon the throne of the universe, from whose wrath men could only be rescued by the death of his Son. This preface breathes a higher strain and expresses a truer conception of the character of God, when it addresses him as the Infinite Father, who, of his tender mercy, did give his only son to die upon the cross for our redemption. Every word is the memento

of a battle for the truth. The solitary and unrepeated sacrifice of Christ, its atoning value, its vindication of law in the government of God are all distinctly asserted and hedged about; and as we study its analysis, the only wonder is that so much meaning could have been crowded into so few uninspired words.

And then, as in this ordinance, we are to "shew forth the Lord's death until his coming again"; this limit, also, is recognized, for the use of the sacrament is found for the church only in her earthly pilgrimage. And it will be needless when the glorified Christ shall be reunited to his people. The memento of an absent friend is very precious when that friend is in distant lands beyond the sea, but the portrait which we cherished while he was gone loses its value when he returns, because the loved original is better than any picture. So, in this sacred ordinance, we show forth the death of Christ, but we are to do so only until his coming again. There is a point in the future when its celebration shall cease, when the last hour of time shall be numbered, and the faithful serv-

ants of Christ shall be gathered into the upper sanctuary, and then and there this memorial will be needless, for in the midst of the throne is the Lamb, as it had been slain, before which the multitude, which no man can number, sing the ceaseless song that is ever new; — and that is the eternal Eucharist of heaven.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper, if duly appreciated, thus lifts us to a point above the fleeting years of time, and clasps together in its embrace the eternal past and the eternal future. It roots itself in the purposes of God, conceived in the silence of his bygone eternity before the foundation of the world; and it anticipates the fulfillment of his purposes in the distant ages of an eternity yet to dawn; and between these two it makes the Cross of Calvary the central point and summit alike of the economy of God and the redemption of man. All that is precious to memory or inspiring to hope meets and centers in the sacrifice of the Son of God and in the sacred memorial by which it is perpetuated throughout all ages in his holy church.

THE Service of Consecration includes three distinct acts. The first is the rehearsal of the history of its institution, and it carries us back to the solemn scenes of that last Jewish and first Christian Passover in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, when in the night in which he was betrayed he ordained the memorial of his death. The second is the repetition of the words of our Lord and the reverent imitation of his holy act in the breaking of the bread and the blessing of the wine.

In these simple but significant manual acts there is no superstition and no magic, but a sincere and careful following of the consecratory act of our Lord, as the priest first takes the bread, and then breaks it, and then lays his hand upon the holy loaf while he repeats the words, "This is My Body which is given for you"; and afterward, taking the cup and laying his hand upon it, he repeats the words, "This is My Blood"; and to both of the ceremonial acts adds the repetition of the command of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Around these brief words and simple

but significant acts the intensest thought of the church has gathered in every age. The libraries of the world are filled with the controversies they have inspired; with the devotional books they have suggested; with the lessons of gratitude and duty they have taught; with the volumes of explanation they have suggested; and the literature of the Holy Eucharist has been the testimony of its estimated value even though the profoundest reasoning has ever failed to explain the mystery.

That perpetual failure defines for us our true position and duty. It is simply to do what Christ commands and leave the rest to him. No curious questioning concerning the mode of the mystery can increase its benefit to our souls: it will prove rather an obstacle to our true partaking of him; while the humble faith that kneels in unquestioning and implicit trust before the Altar and the Cross will surely feed upon heavenly food.

And, therefore, the celebrant is required by the further words of the succeeding prayer to take precisely this position, as, by Christ's command and acting for the

people, he proceeds to make the oblation of the consecrated elements, to invoke upon them the benediction of the Holy Ghost, and then to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, which includes the personal consecration of ourselves, our souls, and bodies to his service, and the prayer that, by the participation of this Holy Communion, we may be worthy recipients of his most blessed Body and Blood.

To this entire act of consecration the people are to say, "*Amen*," thus making it their own, by the exercise of their universal priesthood, and giving audible assent and approval to all that the official celebrant has said in their name.

The singing of a hymn at this point of the service is peculiar to the American Liturgy, the older custom being for the organ to play in a subdued tone during the administration.

And now follows a very essential part of the Eucharistic Office which is the complement of the Prayer of Consecration. It is the participation by the faithful of the

consecrated bread and wine. In this connection two things are to be observed: First, that no Sacramental Eucharist is complete which is not administered to the people in both kinds. The denial of the cup to the laity is an outrage of mediæval tyranny, and no refinement of metaphysical reasoning that the Body necessarily includes the Blood can justify the administration of the Lord's Supper in the mutilated form which withholds the cup from the people. It is without warrant, either in reason or Holy Scripture, and it suggests a serious question whether such a half-obedience to the command of Christ constitutes any sacrament at all.

It is also to be observed that the command of Christ implies that all who are present should partake of the consecrated bread and wine. There is a theory which permits attendance upon the sacred mysteries without partaking, but it is to be seriously doubted whether such attendance is a full compliance with the dying command of our Lord.

It is true there is a *sacramentum in voto*, a spiritual feeding upon the Body and

Blood without the actual partaking of the consecrated bread and wine. It is recognized in the rubric, in the Communion of the Sick, and it is a consolatory truth to those who, by reason of extremity of sickness or any other cause, are unable to receive the Sacrament of the Body and Blood. But it is a provision which does not at all apply to those who are able to be present in the church and take their part in the services. To each and all the command of Christ says, "Do this in remembrance of Me," and to stop short, in our obedience, at the point of partaking would seem to be a positive disobedience to the command of the Lord.

The words of administration are fitly and carefully chosen, to express at once the great objective reality of the Eucharist and the subjective faith by which it is to be received. Both of these aspects of the mystery must be recognized. We may emphasize the objective reality to such an extent as to undervalue the spiritual discerning of the Body and Blood. On the other hand, the spiritual and subjective

character of the ordinance may be dwelt upon until the outward and material consecration shall be undervalued or lost sight of entirely. Each theory contains a half truth in what it asserts, but each by its negation destroys the nature of the sacrament,— the one by reducing it to a magical and superstitious ceremony; the other by emasculating it of all objective character and quality, and making it, as Jeremy Taylor says, "The untrue memorial of an absent Christ."

Both of these errors are discountenanced and both of these truths are asserted in the Words of Administration, the first half of each sentence expressing the objective reality of the sacrament, and the latter half expressing the faith and gratitude with which we are to partake. If there were any doubt in regard to the recognition of the objective reality of the sacrament, it would be set at rest by three incidental instructions which occur in the rubrics at this point. If the consecrated bread and wine be spent before all have communicated, the priest is directed to consecrate more according to the form

prescribed. The question naturally arises, Why consecrate more? If consecration effects nothing, why consecrate at all if the faith of the recipient alone can make the partaking of bread and wine a sacramental communication of Christ? When all have communicated, the minister is directed to return to the Lord's table and "reverently to place upon it what remains of the consecrated elements, covering the same with a fair linen cloth." This reverent care and tender respect can only signify and assert a sacredness in those consecrated elements which ordinary bread and wine do not possess.

And when the service is over, the consecrated elements which remain are not to be remanded to any ordinary use, nor to be subjected to the possibility of any superstitious regard, but by explicit direction of the rubric the minister and other communicants are to reverently consume the same.

The church thus carefully guards and defends both the outward ceremonial and the spiritual reality; she asserts both the objective and subjective aspects of the or-

dinance, and, without any attempt to explain or to theorize, helps us to obey the command of our Lord and by so doing to obtain the blessing which he has promised, —leaving the mystery to faith and the result to God.

ALL that follows the administration is liturgically called the Post-Communion Service. It consists of a prayer of thanksgiving, an act of praise, and the blessing of peace. It is introduced by the Lord's Prayer, which, whether for prayer or praise, is the fitting key-note of every act of worship.

The prayer of thanksgiving recognizes the blessings which have been imparted to those who have duly received the holy mysteries and does not admit of the shadow of a doubt that their due reception is the vehicle by which they are conveyed to the soul. Of course the due reception implies the earnestness and sincerity of our hearts, the genuineness of our repentance, and the implicit confidence of our faith, and, upon this supposition, the benefits accruing are distinctly and fear-

lessly named. And with this recognition of the blessings received there is a closing prayer that we may continue in the holy fellowship of his mystical Body, and do all such good works as he has prepared for us to walk in.

A better epitome of sacramental doctrine has never been put in fewer words, nor written in uninspired words, whether few or many, and with this thankful recognition of the refreshment of our souls we are ready to go to the daily path of our pilgrimage and duty again.

But before we do so there is a touching memorial of an incident which occurred, not accidentally but by divine arrangement, on the night of the Institution of the Supper. The evangelist records the facts of the Passover, the words and symbolical acts of the institution, and when all was over and the agony about to begin he makes the simple record, "And when they had sung an hymn, they went to the Mount of Olives." The hymn was, doubtless, the greater Hallel which was sung at the close of the Passover Supper; and from that day to this it has been the custom of the

universal church to conclude its solemn celebration with the singing of a hymn. The *Gloria in Excelsis* which is used here is one of the oldest of Christian hymns. Its authorship roots itself in the most venerable Christian antiquity. It was the familiar song of martyrs and confessors in the ages of fire and blood. Its mingled strain of triumphant joy and penitential sorrow was never drowned by all the clangor of early persecutions; and its sweet reverberations have sounded along the ages until they have found their fitting resting-place near to the liturgical shrine of our holy faith.

For generations and centuries it has been exclusively a eucharistic hymn, and while the rubric permits the alternate use of a selection in its stead, yet that permission is intelligently used only during the celebrations of Lent and Holy Week, when by long custom the tones of the *Gloria in Excelsis* are silent for the time being, that they may burst forth in richer harmony amid the rejoicings of Easter Day.

The entire service concludes with the

Invocation of the Peace of God and the Benediction of the Blessed Trinity, and it expresses at once the desire and the pledge that that peace shall keep both our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God. It is an echo of the words of Christ himself, when he said, "My peace I leave with you," and however the surface of our lives may be rent and broken by the storms of trial and conflict, in the deep recesses of the Christian soul that peace dwells for evermore.

It is the fitting conclusion of a service whose object is to bring us near to the cross that we may find that peace; which has been the consolation of unnumbered faithful now in the Paradise of God; which is the highest boon to earthly pilgrims as they tread life's weary pathway; and which shall be the consolation of generations yet unborn, even until the end shall come.

LECTURE THIRTEENTH

# Holy Baptism

# Lecture Thirteenth

## HOLY BAPTISM

THE occasional offices in the Book of Common Prayer illustrate with peculiar distinctness the care which the church has taken to provide for every want of our spiritual nature and every contingency of our mortal life. Their arrangement implies that the ordinances of the Christian church are intimately connected with the duties of the Christian home, and that the sanctions and consolations of religion are blended with the great events and crises of human life,—with birth and holy baptism, with confirmation and marriage; with the time of

sickness and the hour of death,— and that the church and the home are linked together by the daily sacrifice of praise and prayer at the family altar.

Taking these up in the order of the Prayer-Book, which is also the usual order of life, we are to study first the Office for the Administration of Holy Baptism. It does not fall within the limits of our purpose to discuss the doctrinal bearings of the office. We shall confine ourselves rather to its liturgical aspects, with especial reference to its connection with the life of the family and the responsibility of parents and sponsors connected with it.

The position of the office in the Book of Common Prayer indicates its importance. It stands first among the occasional offices, as it is the first to meet us at the threshold of life. When God, in his providence, sends a new life into a Christian home, and a tender infant comes out of the great unknown to the embrace of parental arms, the first concern of an earnest faith will be to consecrate that new life to God, and, in the sacred ordinance which Christ has

established, to recognize the fact that it belongs to him. And the almost universal care of Christian parents to bring their children to holy baptism is the expression of a concern for their souls which the most common suggestions of parental instinct demand for their bodies. The physical life of a child is guarded, and watched, and nurtured with the unceasing care of scientific skill and domestic tenderness. Its food, its clothing, the atmosphere which it breathes, and its protection from every harm demand and receive the most assiduous and unwearied attention.

And the office and the fact of holy baptism suggest the complementary truth that the soul of a little child, as well as its body, must be the object of unwearying watchfulness and care; that it "must be born again, of Water and of the Spirit," and that after this second birth there is needed for the soul—as after the natural birth there is needed for the body—the most constant and careful nurture, that it may grow up into a healthy and mature Christian life.

The Office of Holy Baptism thus be-

comes a connecting link between the Christian church and the Christian home, a perpetual reminder of the obligation and claim which Almighty God lays upon every human life for his love and service, and a constant inspiration to faithful duty in training up the children of our households in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The authority for Christian baptism is distinctly stated in the great commission of our Lord to his apostles: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Its scope and comprehensiveness are suggested by the rite of circumcision which preceded it as the ceremony of initiation into the Jewish Church. And as the children of the Jewish household were always included in the covenant of mercy and were entitled to its seal in the appointed rite of circumcision, so the children of Christian households are included in the covenant of the Gospel and are entitled to its seal in the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

It is needless to enter into any detailed

account of the various ceremonies which from time to time have been connected with its administration. They are not of the essence of the ordinance. And it will be sufficient for us simply to follow the order of our own service and the requirements of the rubric, which carefully guard against all irreverence and impropriety in its administration, and which at the same time surround it with the calm and dignified beauty which is inherent in all the offices of the Book of Common Prayer.

The rubrical requirements which precede the office are simple and appropriate. The first defines the proper occasions on which the ordinance may be administered, and is intended to apply, as far as practicable, the ancient rule to the necessities of modern life. In the primitive church the stated times for baptism were Easter and Whitsuntide; the preparation of the catechumens taking place throughout the year, and culminating in the spiritual harvest which was gathered at these great festivals. In our own day, however, it may be administered on any Sunday or holy day, or on any other prayer day, so that it be

done publicly in the church, as an open transaction in admitting a candidate to the covenant of God's mercy and to the fellowship of the congregation of Christ's flock.

The second rubric makes provision for sponsors, the object of which is to insure the subsequent education and training in Christian truth and duty which is necessary to the full benefit of the grace conferred in this holy sacrament. Formerly, parents were not admitted as sponsors, since they are sponsors in fact and by nature, and therefore no vow can increase their obligation of duty to the child. But while the church prefers that there should be three sponsors for every child, in addition to the parents, in order to insure by a fivefold promise the future guardianship of the infant soul, she yet permits parents to stand as sponsors in order to accommodate every variety of circumstance and need, and to save the office of sponsor from ever being merely a formal or perfunctory thing. And this requirement will remind us of the real and obligatory character of such a proxy. Its

importance and solemnity are not generally appreciated at their true worth. It seems to be thought, at times, that sponsors are needful only to complete the tableau of the font, as bridesmaids are in the marriage ceremony, and that their duty is as quickly performed. And thoughtless and worldly persons are at times permitted to assume responsibilities and take vows for the infant candidate, which they have never sincerely sought to meet and perform for themselves. And we cannot too clearly recognize nor too constantly practice the higher idea of the church, that sponsors should themselves be earnest Christian men and women, who will add the force of their example to their theoretical and doctrinal instruction; and who will not consider their duty performed to their god-children until they have brought them to the rite of confirmation where they may take their vows upon themselves.

The third rubric defines the point in the service and the place in the church at which the ordinance is to be administered; namely, "after the second lesson," and "at the font." A literal adhesion to the ad-

ministration after the Second Lesson is required only as a general rule; there may be exceptions to this, provided the baptism take place in the church. Its administration in private houses is permitted only in cases of sickness, or for some other great and reasonable excuse. The rite of circumcision was always performed in the temple: the Infant Saviour himself was taken there upon the eighth day for that purpose; and his fulfillment of all righteousness, in this respect, has fixed forever the standard of what is proper and dutiful for the Christian child.

And now, preceding the entire service, there stands a question upon its very threshold whose deep significance we are apt to forget,—"Hath this child been already baptized, or no?" For although the officiating minister may be himself well assured of the fact, yet this public and formal statement of it is placed here as the church's protest against the repetition of this holy ordinance. As there is one Lord and one faith, so there is one baptism; and the implied meaning of the church is the echo of the Nicene Creed,

which is itself the echo of Holy Scripture, when it says, "I acknowledge One Baptism for the remission of Sins." And as the formal and public statement of this truth and the verification of this requirement, it must always be asked by the officiating minister, whether he is privately aware of the answer or not.

THE general analysis of the entire office corresponds precisely with the threefold service of the early church. The first, or introductory, part corresponds with the order for the admission of catechumens; the second is the baptismal vow and its suffrages; the third is the baptism itself, preceded by the benediction of the water, and followed by the signing of the cross; and the whole service is concluded with the post-baptismal thanksgiving, with the exhortation and admonition to the sponsors.

LECTURE FOURTEENTH

# Holy Baptism

# Lecture Fourteenth

HOLY BAPTISM — *(Continued)*

THE first general division begins with an exhortation, which states the necessity and authority of the divine ordinance about to be celebrated; and which is also an invitation to prayer on behalf of the candidates presented, that the benediction of the heavenly washing may accompany the ordinance of the church. In compliance with this exhortation, two forms of prayer are provided, either of which may be said by the minister. The first is the one generally used, as being more appropriate to the baptism of infants.

Following this immediately is the Holy Gospel (taken from St. Mark, 13 : 10), which declares the good-will of Christ to little children; the tender care with which he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them, and his displeasure with those who would forbid them to come. And although the children spoken of in this gospel were not brought to our Lord for holy baptism, yet the propriety of its use in this connection is found in the fact that it declares the mind of Christ toward little children, and his desire that they be brought unto him. And there is no surer way in which they may be brought to Christ than in this holy ordinance which he has established for this purpose.

A brief homily follows the reading of the gospel, whose object is to emphasize and apply the teaching of the words of our Lord; and, upon the application of its divine promise to the candidate present, both the minister and people unite in a thanksgiving for the grace and knowledge vouchsafed to us in Christ and a prayer that the fullness of this blessing may de-

scend upon the child now presented. This much of the service is introductory and corresponds with the ancient ceremony for the admission of a catechumen, and the instructions and prayers are alike preparatory to the subsequent portions of the office.

THE second part of the service is The Baptismal Vow, which is vicariously made by the sponsors in behalf of the child. It is introduced by a brief exhortation which asserts the strong confidence we may have in the promise of God, and which, upon the basis of that confidence, urges an equal fidelity on the part of those who represent the child. The covenant nature of the transaction is thus distinctly recognized. The two parties to the sacred compact are God and a little child. Each of these appears by a representative, the minister as the ambassador of Christ representing his divine master, and the sponsors, in their voluntary action, representing the little child. And the representative character of both parties in the transaction, with the remembrance of its covenant

character, would dispel many a doubt and misapprehension concerning this sacred rite. It has often been assailed, upon the one hand, as if children had no place in the covenant of God's mercy to men—an error which is repugnant to every idea of redemption which the Scriptures authorize, and to the practice of every dispensation of grace by which that redemption has been made known to men.

And it has been assailed, on the other hand, as if it were a magical performance, in which the sprinkling or pouring of some drops of water upon an infant's face, in connection with the Triune Name, were to effect a supernatural change in the soul. But both of these ideas are defective, because they do not take into account all the elements in the case. This last one, especially, ignores the underlying fact that the regeneration of the child does not depend upon the virtue of the consecrated water, but upon the promise of Almighty God. And it ignores, also, the prayers in answer to which that promise is fulfilled; and the vows by which its fulfillment is claimed; and the blessed words

of Christ, that the Father in heaven is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children.

THE Baptismal Vow represents man's part and duty in this covenant of grace. It includes, as the catechism carefully teaches, three particulars: The Vow of Renunciation, of Faith, and of Obedience. The renunciation was anciently made facing the west, and the other two facing the east, to correspond with the conventional ideas of the origin of evil and of good prevalent at the time. The Vow of Renunciation includes the threefold form of evil, which, as Christians, we are to resist and overcome,—namely, the world, with its vain pomp and glory; the flesh, with its sinful desires; and the devil and all his works. And it is the distinct and personal repudiation of these as dominant and controlling forces in our lives. Turning from the negative to the positive, we have next the Vow of Faith, which is the promise of belief, not in any doctrinal system, nor in any theory of the Atone-

ment, but in the great fundamental and essential articles of the Christian faith, as contained in its most venerable symbol, the Apostles' Creed.

The Vow of Obedience is equally comprehensive. Its law of duty is simply God's holy will and commandments, as interpreted by an enlightened conscience and the teachings of his holy church. It does not attempt the impossible effort of constructing a system of casuistry for every man's life. Nor does it prescribe what particulars of conduct each one must follow. It does not enter into the details of moral duty, but gives us as the law of our action only what the Holy Scriptures sanction, and the principles which the Gospel reveals, leaving the application of those principles to the ever-varying exigencies of life, precisely where the Scriptures leave them, to the intelligent conscience and the earnest heart.

The moral law of the Gospel is the simplest utterance of Christ, and yet it points out the way of duty in every possible contingency of life. To love God with all our heart, and soul, and mind, and our neigh-

bor as ourselves — these are the two universal principles of duty upon which the law and the prophets hang, and within them all systems of morality and all codes of moral action are included. To apply them daily and hourly to the circumstances and demands of our mortal life is the unceasing duty of the Christian in the warfare and pilgrimage of this mortal life.

These three things, therefore,—the renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil; the belief in the articles of the Christian faith; and the promise to obey God's holy will and commandments and to walk in the same all the days of our life,—constitute the human side of this sacred compact, as the promise of salvation and eternal life constitute the divine side.

That it is solemnly entered into by representatives of both parties is only analagous to what is constantly taking place in behalf of children in every other department of their being. The selection of the schools which they shall attend; the matter of their food and clothing; the companions with whom they may associciate; and the management of their in-

herited estates, all lie within the decision of those to whose care they are committed, either as parents or guardians; and if, in every phase of secular, and physical, and social life, the infant will lies within the sphere of the parental will; and if, in the case of orphans, the act of the guardian is legally the act of the child, it would be a monstrous exception if the same representative action were impossible in the concerns of its eternal destiny, and in the vastly more important concern of the nurture and care of its soul.

And now, as if to consecrate this solemn compact before it is finally sealed, there are specific prayers that this present child and all who are dedicated to God by the office and ministry of his earthly priesthood may become the children of the second Adam and members of that new and redeemed race which he has purchased with his precious blood.

The longer prayer which follows these suffrages is taken from the ancient service for the benediction of the waters, which was used once a month; and its insertion here complies with the requirement of the

rubric that at each Administration of Holy Baptism the font shall be filled with pure water.

And now, after all this careful and elaborate preparation, the sacramental seal is to be attached to the covenant, that its mutual stipulations and promises may at once become effective. The minister, in Christ's name and following the significant action of his master, takes the little one in his arms, and, with the application of the consecrated water, breathes over its unconscious head the mysterious name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. That is all that is essential, because it is all that Christ has commanded.

THE ceremony of signing with the cross and of reception into the congregation is not a part of the baptismal act; but it is a beautiful and significant recognition of the reality of the transaction which has just taken place. As the candidate has been consecrated to the service of Christ and admitted to his sacred fold, it is fitting that his mark should be placed upon him;

and, as by baptism he becomes a member of the mystical Body, which is his church, it is appropriate that upon his entrance he should be formally received into the congregation of the faithful. And this is done with the earnest prayer that he may never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but "continue his faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."

THE Post-Baptismal Service recognizes still further the profound reality of this sacred covenant, and gives thanks to Almighty God for these great benefits, with an earnest prayer that the young Christian just born into the kingdom of God may prove to be his faithful servant here, and an inheritor of his everlasting kingdom hereafter.

And that no human instrumentality and care may be wanting to accomplish this result, it concludes with an exhortation to the god-parents and an admonition to them to complete the task they have assumed by bringing, at the proper time, the child to the bishop, to be confirmed by

him, upon the assumption of the personal responsibility of his vows.

The sacrament of Holy Baptism is thus the solemn ratification to the individual of the great privilege and promise of the Gospel. On the part of the recipient it is the expression of penitence, and faith, and the determination to lead a new life; while upon the part of God, it is the assurance and pledge of his help and grace by which the resolution shall be brought to good effect. And when its conditions are faithfully complied with, and its obligations as well as its privileges recognized as realities, its legitimate result is the growth of Christian character and the performance of Christian duty in this world, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

LECTURE FIFTEENTH

# The Catechism

# Lecture Fifteenth

## THE CATECHISM

THE word "catechism" is itself significant of the church's method and idea of teaching Christian truth. It implies a system of questions and answers by which the truth taught is "echoed" back again, and in this respect it places the teacher and the taught in their proper mutual relations.

There are methods of Christian teaching prevalent to-day which, unconsciously and unintentionally, furnish a preliminary training for subsequent skepticism and doubt; young persons are frequently called upon to give their original views of the

interpretation of some obscure or difficult passage of Scripture, and the habit thus formed, with the self-confidence it inspires, comes in maturer life to tamper with the most sacred and unquestioned verities of the Word of God. But the church does not esteem very highly the immature precocity which presumes to decide theological questions without knowing anything about theology, or which enters the difficult arena of biblical criticism without a biblical training and apparatus. She rather assumes her true position as "witness and keeper of the truth," and bids us hearken to her words of wisdom, that, thus humbly listening, we may hear some echo of the voice of God.

The catechism is a condensed system of Christian truth. The instructions of the church, as stated in the exhortation to sponsors in the baptismal office, are grouped around the three great symbols of Christianity: the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. But in the systematic arrangement of these they are both preceded and followed by other instructions which are needful to

give completeness to the entire statement. The general analysis of the catechism will therefore include five principal divisions. These are:

I. The Christian covenant.
II. The symbol of our faith.
III. The symbol of our duty.
IV. The symbol of our devotion.
V. The seals of the Covenant, which are the two great Sacraments of the Church.

The statement of the Christian covenant is introduced by the question, "What is your name?" referring to the universal usage of giving a name to the candidate in holy baptism. But the Name we bear has a deeper significance here, as it becomes the signature to the compact between God and a human soul. The answer, "N or M" (name or names), includes only what is known as our Christian name. The family name we inherit by our natural birth; but the Christian name which is given to us in holy baptism becomes the distinctive appellation of the individual as a member of the flock of Christ. In

the delineation of our Lord as the Good Shepherd, there is no more touching thought than the fact that in his omniscient pastorate of souls, which gathers its flock out of many centuries and from every land, "He calleth them all by name." There is an intimacy of personal knowledge and relationship implied in the fact, which reminds us that the great Head of the Church watches over us and loves us, not in crowds and multitudes alone, nor even in the aggregated whole of his organic church, but in the individual distinctness of our personal character and name. Even in the ordinary relationships of life, there is a sacredness in the names of men which is often forgotten. For they are the distinctive titles which distinguish one man from another; and even human law recognizes that sacredness when it pronounces the signing of another man's name to be a high crime and attaches severe penalties to its commission. What must be the deeper sacredness of our Christian names, therefore, when we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ knows us by them, and that in the records of eter-

nity the name of every faithful Christian is written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

In the old Hebrew nomenclature every name was significant. It recorded some circumstance connected with the birth of an individual, or it was the permanent memorial of some great hope, or sorrow, or consolation, and in many cases it embalmed almost an entire biography in a single word. The old Roman names were ponderous in their dignity, but beautiful in their systematic and significant order, and full of music in their stately rhythm. But the Christian names we bear have reached a significance which neither Hebrew nor Roman names ever knew, since by their conferring in the sacred act and moment of baptism, they become at once our individual signature to the solemn covenant then entered into between the human soul and God; and for all our subsequent life it is the perpetual memorial of our privilege, and the constant reminder of our duty in the Church of Christ. The family name, as we have seen, we inherit by nature—it is the necessary patronymic

of our birth; but the Christian name we receive, by immemorial usage, at our second birth, and it is by this name that the church addresses her children ever after in the offices which she provides for the subsequent Christian life. Recognizing, therefore, the Christian name as the signature, and the sacrament of holy baptism as the seal, of God's covenant of mercy, we are brought face to face with that solemn transaction in which, as postulants for the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free, we are admitted to the privileges and responsibilities of our covenant relation to him. These are stated to be threefold, on both sides:

I. The Christian covenant.

(1) The divine side of that covenant is declared to consist of the three great Christian privileges which are offered to us in the Gospel. They are:

*a.* Membership in Christ.

*b.* Being made the children of God.

*c.* An inheritance of the kingdom of heaven.

But the privileges of the one side im-

ply also the duties of the other. And therefore

(2) The human side of this covenant includes the three Christian vows; which are

(1) The Vow of Renunciation:

*a.* Of the devil and all his works.

*b.* The pomps and vanities of the world.

*c.* The sinful desires of the flesh.

(2) The Vow of Faith, in which we pledge ourselves to believe all the articles of the Christian Creed; and

(3) The Vow of Obedience, in which we promise to "keep God's holy will and commandments and to walk in the same all the days of our life." Both of these are subsequently enlarged by the incorporation of the Creed and the Ten Commandments. But immediately following the statement of the covenant there is a

(4) Practical application of the truths taught, in which the children of the church are impressed with

*a.* The binding nature of Christian vows; and

*b.* The need of God's grace to help us in keeping them.

THE Second Division of the Catechism contains

II. The symbol of our faith, which is the Apostles' Creed, and this is immediately followed by a brief exposition, as teaching the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the relations which the three Persons of the Godhead sustain to us; as, the Creator of the world, the Redeemer of all mankind, and the Sanctifier of the people of God:

III. The symbol of duty is found in the Ten Commandments, the two tables of which define

(1) Our duty toward God, and

(2) Our duty toward our neighbor; and the expository words which follow the rehearsal of them constitute a condensed system of morality in themselves.

IV. The symbol of devotion is the Lord's Prayer, which is the model of all our prayers; and the explanation which follows gives us a glimpse of its comprehensiveness.

V. The seals of the covenant are the sacraments which Christ has ordained. Following closely the divine authority of our Lord, the church recognizes but two sacraments as "generally necessary to salvation"—

(1) Holy Baptism, in which there are

*a.* The outward sign;

*b.* The inward grace;

*c.* The prerequisites of repentance and faith; to which also is added

*d.* The binding nature of sponsorial and parental vows.

The teaching of the church culminates in the simplest possible statement of the great mystery of

(2) The Lord's Supper; in which, without defining the mode of the mystery, either of the presence or the participation, the essential features are declared to be

*a.* The outward sign;

*b.* The inward grace;

*c.* The spiritual effect; and

*d.* The prerequisites demanded of those who would approach the table of the Lord; which are

(1) Self-examination;
(2) Repentance;
(3) Purpose to lead a new life;
(4) Faith in God's mercy through Christ;
(5) Thankful remembrance of his death; and
(6) Charity with all men.

From this general analysis of the catechism, it will be evident that it is a condensed but comprehensive body of divinity which the church provides for her children; a sum of dogmatic teaching which she thinks fit for them to learn; an orderly arrangement of truth which all children may commit to memory, since all Christians believe it; and which, while it is not intended to make theologians of all who learn it, is yet designed and calculated to enforce God's own combination of the spiritual verities of the Christian life with the outward ordinances of his church; and which, while emphasizing both of these, will enable every one to give a reason for the hope that is in him.

LECTURE SIXTEENTH

# Confirmation

# Lecture Sixteenth

## CONFIRMATION

HE apostolic rite of Confirmation is the natural and necessary complement of infant baptism; though by apostolic usage and the rule of the church everywhere and always, until modern times, it is applied to adults also. The fact that the vows in holy baptism when administered in infancy are made by proxy implies a future occasion when their responsibility may be voluntarily assumed. And this is done in connection with the laying on of hands and the precatory benediction of the bishop, together with the invocation of the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Ghost. It

has constant reference to the baptismal vow, to the promises then made, and the system of Christian instruction then prescribed; and it looks forward to the admission of the candidate to his full privilege, as a member of Christ, in the Holy Communion.

A twofold preparation is needful to obtain fully the blessings it conveys: There must be a preparation of mind, which implies an intelligent perception of the principles of faith and duty: and there must be a preparation of heart, by which the spiritual nature shall be made ready to receive the manifold gifts of grace. Both of these processes are presumed to continue from the first intelligent days of childhood to the hour when the catechumen becomes a communicant. The intellectual preparation is that which is prescribed in holy baptism,— the knowledge of the great truths of our holy religion as embodied in the three great symbols of faith, devotion, and duty, together with such other instructions as are in the short catechism contained. And the preparation of heart implies that devout and prayerful habit

of thought which is cultivated through all the years of a Christian childhood, and which is, in its truest sense, that scriptural conversion which is the process of our whole mortal life. While this general preparation is the work of all the early years of a human life, there is a special interest connected with the administration of the apostolic rite, and it is customary for the parish priest to meet the class of candidates, in anticipation of the visitation of the bishop, for instruction in regard to the Christian life, and especially with reference to their first communion.

The "Order of Confirmation" states very distinctly the outline of truth and duty which the church prescribes. It includes three distinct and yet closely related particulars: (1) The knowledge of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Catechism; (2) The ratification of the promises made by sponsors in baptism; and (3) The promise of obedience in the future and the "endeavor to observe such things as by their confession they have assented unto." The rubric at the close of the office defines the relation which the

rite of Confirmation bears to the Holy Communion.

The service throughout is simple and almost interprets itself. The occasion of its use is always an interesting one in the parish, as the gathered harvest of the parochial year. It is the form by which those who have come to years of discretion are enabled to make their good confession of Christ before the world, and to be enrolled among the number of his acknowledged disciples, by the personal ratification of their baptismal vow. The versicles which follow this ratification recognize the truth that all our spiritual strength must come from God; and the prayer which is then used refers alike to the blessings conferred in holy baptism and the manifold gifts of grace needful in the subsequent warfare of the Christian life. The "laying on of hands" is accompanied by a benediction which states both the irrevocable character of the Christian vow and the progressive nature of the Christian life. It asks that the person confirmed may continue to be the Lord's forever, by the defense of his heavenly grace; and that he

may daily increase in the Holy Spirit more and more through all the disciplines of this life until he come to the everlasting kingdom. The idea of a progressive sanctification of heart and life here expressed is almost the echo of the apostolic injunction, "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And it conceives of our earthly probation as a constant advance in holiness and duty until its consummation is reached in the diviner life to come.

The succeeding prayers imply the same conception of the Christian life, and the service concludes with the blessing of the Holy Trinity upon the person confirmed.

The use of the word "Confirmation" in two different senses, in connection with this office, has created some confusion of thought concerning the nature of the rite. The candidate does "ratify and confirm" his baptismal vow; but also he is confirmed and strengthened in his religious life. It is this latter sense which gives the name to the rite. "The laying on of hands" is a significant and essential act. It corresponds to the manual act in the ordination of the

clergy to their sacred office; and its significance here as applied to the laity implies an ordination to the universal priesthood of believers, in which we are to offer not only the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving to God, in the ritual worship of his church, but also the more comprehensive and permanent sacrifice of a consecrated life.

LECTURE SEVENTEENTH

# The Marriage Service

# Lecture Seventeenth

## THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

HE first thing that strikes our attention in the "Form of Solemnization of Matrimony" is the emphasis which the church places upon the necessity of publicity in the celebration of this rite. This is based upon the sacred character and the intrinsic nature of the marriage bond, which is a union of two hearts and two lives in one, and which can properly be separated only by death. The mutual consent of the parties to be married is the fact which underlies the marriage ceremony. And this fact is based upon that mutual affection which renders a man and

a woman essential to each other's happiness; in the fulfillment of which they are ready to take each other for better or for worse, for sickness or for health, and to pledge to each other their faithful promise to share all the vicissitudes and contingencies of an unknown future. And the idea of the marriage service is the placing of the benediction of God and his holy church upon this mutual union, together with the public proclamation of it before the world. While, in the sense of mutual honor and faithful love, the parties may be said to belong to each other from the moment of what we call their "engagement," yet, for the protection of society, it is needful that this private union of mutual affection should be formally and publicly recognized and declared. And this is done in connection with the benediction of the church and solemn prayer for God's blessing upon the union. Anything like a clandestine ceremony is, therefore, contrary to the idea of marriage itself, and finds no sanction whatever in the office of the church for its solemnization. It is the more important for us to

observe this principle because the ease with which young people enter into this solemn compact, and the secrecy which so frequently attends its solemnization, in the popular usage of the day, is one of the crying sins of our time, and has become the prolific source of domestic unhappiness, of infidelity to the marriage vow, and of the shameful frequency of divorce, which blots and disgraces our civilization. In the hurry and excitement of our American life, there are thousands who marry in haste only to repent at leisure; who marry in private only to be disgraced in public; and it is quite worth our while to observe how the church, like a careful mother, guards and shields her children from the possible results of youthful impulsiveness and impetuosity.

In the church of England the old custom of "publishing the banns" for three Sundays preceding the ceremony was a perpetual safeguard against hasty and ill-assorted unions. And it is no improvement on the old churchly way that we have substituted for this, the requirement of a license, in some States (which is

usually only a revenue law at best), or, in others, the lower requirement still of a report of the marriage, after it has taken place, to the board of health, for statistical purposes. The fact is, the more public and solemn the marriage rite is made, the more careful will persons be in entering into its irrevocable vows; and there is nothing which more thoroughly undermines the foundations of society than looseness of practice in this matter, and the ease with which divorces are obtained to-day. The publication of banns has gone out of use, as a general thing, and it is much to be regretted that it is so. The formal announcement of an engagement takes its place in society to some extent, but it fails in this respect, that such formal announcements are common only in spheres of social life which least need it as a safeguard, and leave the great mass of people without the protection of even such a custom.

The necessity for a public and open ceremony, in the church's idea, is further recognized and emphasized by the fact that it is to take place, either in the body of the church or in some proper house,

in the presence of the friends and neighbors of the parties to be married. Of course, the church is always the better place, as it is for all the public rites and offices; but when special circumstances justify or even require that the ceremony should be in a private house, then that house must be, for the time being, transformed into a church, and the congregation must be represented by a sufficient number of friends and neighbors to make the ceremony a public act.

With these preliminaries all properly settled, the marriage service proceeds to its benediction with every care to discover any real obstacle in the way of the proposed union, and to provide, as far as possible, against any future cause of regret for the irrevocable step about to be taken. It commences with a double challenge, first to the witnesses of the transaction and next to the parties themselves. This challenge to the witnesses contains also the statement of the honorable and sacred character of this holy estate: the fact that it is commended in Holy Scripture to be honorable among all men, and that it

is to be entered into "reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God." With this reference to the scriptural authority and sacred character of the institution of marriage, the challenge proceeds to demand any objection which may possibly be offered, and although it is usually only a form, yet it is valuable as the formula of a great truth. A similar challenge is addressed to the parties about to be married, and it warns them that unless their union be such as is in every way proper, the benediction of God cannot rest upon it. The next thing is to ascertain the willingness of the parties themselves to enter into this life-long contract, and this is done by taking their mutual consent, in order to certify to the church and the world that they enter into this compact freely and voluntarily, and without any compulsion whatever.

It is difficult for us in this country to appreciate the value and the importance of this part of the service. But we shall be assisted in our appreciation if we remember that in European countries, in the past, marriages were frequently arranged by the parents of the parties for reasons of family

influence or estate, or by the representatives of governments for political or diplomatic reasons, and that thus the family pride, or the avaricious cupidity, or the political ambition of men has degraded the holy estate of matrimony by uniting together, in the solemn compact of an indissoluble bond, parties who were not drawn together by mutual affection at all. It is quite probable that in the hasty and ill-assorted unions which occur in our own day, this form of taking the mutual consent might be powerless to arrest a great wrong upon the threshold of its consummation, but if it be so, it is not the church's fault. She has done what she could to prevent such a result.

After the assurance of mutual consent follows what is usually known as "the giving away of the bride." And there is a deep significance in this. It is introduced by the question of the minister, "Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?" and it implies that no young woman has a right to become a bride without the consent of her parents or those who represent them; and that her future husband receives

his bride as a sacred trust from her father through the medium and by the hand of the holy church. The principle applies specifically to the bride who, in the early morning of her womanhood, is led forth from the safe protection of her father's house "to share her cloven half of destiny with another"; but even where the bride is a person of mature age, the question is still asked and answered, in recognition of the fact that a woman entering into this holy relationship should do so with the approval and sanction of her natural protectors and friends. The proper form of giving away the bride is for the father of the bride (or the friend who represents him on the occasion) to take the right hand of the bride and place it in the right hand of the officiating minister. He thus surrenders her to the church to be transferred by the minister to her future husband by placing her right hand in his, with the right hands of both parties clasping each other. Then the solemn vow of marriage is taken and the mutual troth is plighted. The words in which this compact is expressed are comprehensive and carefully chosen. They mean precisely

what they say, and they embody a truth which lies at the foundation of all social order, of all domestic happiness, and of every Christian family and home. It is a union which is to be irrevocable; which no vicissitudes of fortune can sunder; a tie which neither sickness nor adversity nor the ills of life can sever, but which is to last through the whole period of this mortal life. The mutual vow is identical on both sides, with the single exception that on the part of the woman she also promises obedience to her husband as well as love and honor. This is simply the recognition of the scriptural relation of the wife to the husband, and can never be unjust or degrading where the union is based upon mutual esteem, respect, and love.

As a seal of this indissoluble union, the ceremony of the ring is next performed. For this there is the precedent of a remote antiquity. The ring is the symbol of eternity, and it implies constancy and integrity as well. And its use, at this particular moment, implies the enduring character of the union thus entered into. In olden times, it was accompanied with the gift of

gold and silver, but this is equally effected by the declaration of the man in which he endows his wife with all his worldly goods, and thereby asserts that for the future their interests, their life, and even their property are one and undivided.

The prayer of benediction then follows, in which there is incorporated a reference to the romantic union of Isaac and Rebecca, whose propriety and significance is to be found in the fact that their marriage union was the first recorded instance in the patriarchal age of one man and one woman united in this holy estate. The sentence of marriage which follows consummates the union, as the minister, joining their right hands, unites them in the sacred bond which death alone can sever. There are no more solemn words in the Prayer-Book than these. They assert, and for ages have asserted, the vicarious function of the priesthood in the church, and, with unfaltering accent, they place upon this act the seal of the impressive words, "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." It is thus recognized as God's transaction; the voice of the

minister is the audible echo of God's voice; and his act, thus performed, in God's name, becomes the act of him whose representative and minister he is.

The proclamation of this completed compact is then made to the witnesses, and through them to the world. And henceforth, among the families of men, and in the social life of the community, these two persons are recognized as one, united in the oldest and most sacred of human relationships. The final benediction of the Holy Trinity is then given to the kneeling couple, and, with this invocation of God's blessing, they go from his altar to be ushered into the realities of life by the congratulations of friends, by the timely gifts and tokens of affection with which loving hearts express their best wishes for the future happiness of the newly married couple; and by the domestic and social festivities which, in one shape or another, usually accompany the bride in her transition from the years of maidenhood to the fuller and more sacred womanhood of a true and loving wife.

The lesson of the Marriage Service, in

this day of loose and irreverent notions upon this subject, ought never to be forgotten. In contrast with the low and unworthy idea of a temporary compact, based upon transient affinities and to be abrogated when those affinities cease, it is recognized as an ordinance of God as old as the race itself. It is a perpetual parable of the mystical union between Christ and the Church; its celebration was adorned and beautified by the presence and first miracle of the Incarnate Christ at Cana of Galilee; it was instituted in the time of man's innocency, and the union of two loving and faithful hearts in the fidelity of the marriage vow and the blessings of a Christian home is as near as we may ever hope to realize on earth the blessedness of our first parents in the Garden of Eden before the Fall.

LECTURE EIGHTEENTH

# Visitation of the Sick

# Lecture Eighteenth

## VISITATION OF THE SICK

N providing for all the contingencies of this mortal life, the church places next to the marriage service the office for the Visitation of the Sick. Its object is to bring the consolations and helps of the church to those who are unable to enjoy them in the sanctuary, and thus to afford, at the time they are most needed, the means of grace, by the aid of which the ills of this life may be patiently endured and sanctified to the health and comfort of the soul. The office includes all the provisions needful for the most complete and edifying visitation of a sick

person; and yet, from the suffrages and collects, the exhortations and psalms which it contains, a shorter service may be selected by the officiating minister, adapted to the varying necessities of the special cases which come under his care. The full office should be used at least once during every serious illness, though for the occasional visits of a pastor, during a brief attack of sickness, or even during the tedious progress of a long disease, the shorter service may be sufficient.

The rubric which precedes the order for the visitation of the sick contains the statement of a forgotten duty which, if properly attended to, would often save much embarrassment to the pastor and many complaints on the part of the parishioner. It is this, "When any person is sick, notice shall be given to the minister of the parish." This rubric is the echo of the apostolic precept of St. James: "Is any among you sick? let him send for the elders of the church." In many instances, the neglect of this prescription of the Holy Scriptures and the church creates a feeling of injured innocence on the part of the

sick and of unperformed duty on the part of the pastor, which has no foundation at all in fact. Too frequently it is left for the minister of the parish to hear of the sickness of the members of his flock by casual chances of conversation with other parishioners; and then, after hastening, upon his first information, to perform his pastoral duty, he is met with the reproach that the sick person has been ill for a fortnight and he has never been to see him. And there is an implied charge of neglect here that is very painful to the heart of any faithful parish priest. The actual neglect rests with the sick person and his friends, and not with the pastor at all. The family physician is not expected to know of the sickness of his patients, and of their desire to have his attendance, unless he is informed of the fact; and no more has the pastor a right either to know of the sickness or to be assured that his visits are desired and would be acceptable. He has no attribute of omniscience by which he can tell of the bodily health or illness of those committed to his care. In a large congregation, it is impossible for him to

detect the absence of this or that member of his charge; and even if it were, he has other things to think of during divine service than making a mental memorandum of the calls to be made during the week, and he is compelled, therefore, to rely upon the compliance of his people with the rule of the Scripture and the church. Otherwise he is not amenable to the charge of a neglect of duty, when any member of his flock endures, day after day and week after week, the sickness which God sends, without the consolations of the church.

But no sick-room is fit for a Christian unless its very atmosphere is hallowed by prayer. For this, there is ample provision in this office, and its construction admits of any degree of flexibility in its use and of adaptation to any particular circumstance or case.

The service opens with a benediction of peace upon the house, and is followed by appropriate introductory prayers, which may be abbreviated if necessity so require. For the aid of those who are unskilled in the consolation and instruction of the sick, forms of exhortation follow, in which the

ministry of sickness is fully explained, that it may be sanctified to the health of the soul. This homily upon the use and office of God's providence in sickness is divided into two parts in order that it may be better adapted to the strength and condition of the patient. Following this there is an examination of the faith of the sick man, which is needful only in case he be a stranger, though proper in every case as a rehearsal of Christian belief. And the rubric then directs that, in case of dangerous illness, the minister shall admonish him to forgive, from the bottom of his heart, all that have offended him; to seek forgiveness of those whom he has offended; that so he may die at peace with God and in charity with all the world; and then he is to move the sick man to arrange the settlement of his estate, and to make proper disposition of his earthly goods, not forgetting, in their distribution, the necessities of the poor, and we may add, also, the requirements and needs of the church. The liberality to the poor, which the rubric prescribes, is best exercised by bequests to charitable institutions, to hospitals, and

orphan houses, by which the apocalyptic benediction of the faithful dead may be most specifically and permanently realized: "They rest from their labors and their works do follow them." Nor should the needs and the sacred work of the parish be forgotten. There is always some special way in which the steward of God's bounty may recognize his goodness, in the parish life itself. In the completion of an unfinished building, or the erection of a tower or belfry provided for in the plan of the church edifice, but never completed; in the provision for a memorial window, in which the name of the departed may be associated with the services of God's house rather than be the subject of some marble extravagance in the cemetery; in a permanent fund, whose income shall be appropriated to some charitable object or some needy class,—in a hundred ways, if he choose to think of it, the devout churchman may make his works follow him, long after he himself has passed to his rest.

There is a noticeable difference at this point between our service and that of the English Prayer-Book. It is the substitution

of a prayer for pardon instead of a sentence of absolution. And, considering the controversy which the judicial form has caused in the English Church, and remembering also the fact that there is such a thing as the absolution of penitents provided for by our Lord, it is no matter of great importance, since in every serious case of illness there will be the administration of the Holy Communion, which contains an absolution sufficiently direct and authoritative to quiet the anxieties and dispel the fears of any truly penitent heart.

Two forms of benediction follow, either or both of which may be used as circumstances require, and the remaining portion of the office is made up of special prayers to be used as occasion may demand. Two of these are among the most precious formularies of the church's devotions, and are associated with the most solemn crises and events of human life. One is the commendatory prayer "to be said for a sick person at the point of departure," and whose solemn words have so often been used in the impressive hour when the soul is passing from the burden of the flesh to

the realities of the invisible world. And the other is the prayer for all present at the visitation, whose associations are almost equally solemn and impressive, since it is so frequently used in the burial service, on account of its recognition of the shortness of human life and the great blessing of a peaceful Christian death. A form of thanksgiving is added for the beginning of a recovery, which, when said, is usually one of the heartiest prayers which ever ascends to God, as it recognizes the nearness with which He comes to us in sickness and accepts, with a gratitude which words can but feebly express, the returning signs of health as the gift of his merciful hand.

Providing for all contingencies, however, the church next arranges in her services for The Communion of the Sick. And this provision contemplates not merely the possibility of death, in which it becomes the *Viaticum* of the faithful Christian, but also and equally its use in any sudden or long-continued illness, by which a member of Christ is deprived of

the refreshment of his soul in the partaking of his Body and Blood. The service is necessarily an abbreviated form, since a prayer of consecration is required upon every occasion of administration. It was thought needful in the arrangement of the English book to forbid the reservation of the consecrated elements — a prohibition which, however needless now, for the reasons upon which it was originally based must nevertheless be obeyed. And therefore, to make the service possible without injury to the weakened condition of the sick, it is sufficiently abbreviated to make it entirely practicable even in cases of severe and dangerous illness. It begins with the Collect, omitting the Decalogue and its responses; the Epistle and Gospel are the shortest possible, each consisting of but a single verse, and the service then passes to the invitation beginning, "Ye who do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins." And of all the ministrations possible at the bedside of the sick, none is so helpful and consoling as this.

There are four rubrical directions connected with this service, two of which

refer to incidental matters and two of which assert fundamental principles of the church's system. The incidental arrangements are that in the administration the minister shall first receive, then those who are present, and, finally, the sick person—which is a prudential safeguard against the risk of infection, as well as a suggestion of propriety; and the second is that when the Visitation Office is used in connection with the Lord's Supper, only the earlier part of it is required. But the first of the fundamental principles is that there must always be others to commune with the sick person, where it is possible. And the meaning of the requirement is that in this church the Holy Communion is never to be celebrated as a solitary mass. Like every other service, it requires a congregation of at least two or three gathered together in order to render it complete and the more confidently to claim the promised presence of Christ in their midst. There must be a communion as well as a consecration; a feast as well as a sacrifice. And this is everywhere in her system recognized

as necessary, except only when circumstances render it impossible.

The other important principle is the statement of the possibility of a Spiritual Communion, where the outward ordinance cannot, for any just impediment, be observed. But the Spiritual Communion, without the Sacrament, is as exceptional as the solitary one is intended to be. By due care neither of these contingencies need ever occur, and it is the privilege of every Christian to enjoy in the fullness of its benediction the highest ordinance of the church; and, if he need it constantly in the pathway and struggle of his daily life, much more does he need it in the time of sickness or in the prospect of the hour of death.

Taken together, these two services, the Visitation and the Communion of the Sick, are intended to interpret, and by God's blessing to sanctify, the dispensations of his providence in our mortal life. They are calculated to lift the soul in its depression; to strengthen faith in its weakness; and to cheer the sinking heart when the waves and the storms go over it. And,

by that interpretation and help, these light afflictions, which last but for a moment, are made to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

LECTURE NINETEENTH

# The Burial of the Dead

# Lecture Nineteenth

## THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

THE funeral rites of any people are naturally the expression of their faith and hope concerning the departed. The service which the church provides for her children is at once an appropriate consolation for the grief of the living and a fitting tribute of respect for the dead. The various forms of the office used in different periods have always borne its testimony to the share which the body has in the redemption by our Lord; to the fact that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost; that the Body and Blood of Christ are to preserve both the body and soul of

the faithful Christian unto everlasting life; that the day is coming when the power of Christ shall "change our vile bodies, and make them like unto his own glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself"; that, as the light of his resurrection rests upon the tombs of the faithful departed, it reveals the grave to be but the guardian of their dust and the treasury of the skies; and that ever through the long ages which elapse between death and the resurrection

> "God, the Redeemer, lives,
> And ever from the skies
> Looks down and watches o'er their dust,
> Till he shall bid it rise."

The burial service of the church, both in its general structure and in the requirements of its rubrics, is conceived and arranged for use in the ideal parish church or village chapel, where the edifice stands in the midst of the graveyard, where the sleeping faithful lie who in life have worshiped within its walls. The intimate association which is thus recognized between the

church militant here on earth and the departed who rest in Paradise is almost impossible in large cities, where the cemetery lies miles away from the parish church, and to which the remains of the deceased must be borne, oftentimes with unseemly haste, through crowded streets to their final resting-place.

The rubric directs the service to begin at the entrance to the churchyard or the door of the church. And while there is a certain propriety in some cases in holding the final service in the late residence of the deceased, there are always inconveniences and improprieties connected with funerals in private houses which might easily be avoided by having the public service in the church. This is especially the case where the deceased person has been prominent in the community, or in any instance where the number of friends is greater than the capacity of the house. It is altogether inconvenient and awkward to conduct a funeral service when the parlor is crowded with the acquaintances of the deceased, the immediate relatives and friends necessarily confined to an upper room, and

the minister placed half-way up a flight of stairs, attempting the difficult feat of making his voice audible to the scattered assembly; while other friends who have come to show their respect and express their sympathy are compelled to do so by shivering or sweltering on the pavement in front of the house. All of these inconveniences are obviated by simply following the arrangement which the church prescribes.

As we study the simple and reverent form of service by which the church lays her children to rest, we are met at once by the fact that it is distinctively an office for Christian burial. There are three classes of persons who are not entitled to the use of this office at their burial. These are: (1) Unbaptized adults; (2) Any who die excommunicate; and (3) Any who have laid violent hands upon themselves. Concerning the first of these classes, it is only necessary to remark that any baptism, however irregularly performed, is supposed to confer a title to its use. On the other hand, it is only fair to reason that if a man has spent his lifetime in indifference

and unconcern in regard to the offices of the church, he is certainly not entitled to them after his death. If he disregards in life the simplest and most fundamental distinction between a Christian and a heathen, it would be a strange and unreasonable demand that the distinctive office of baptized Christians should be accorded him when his life on earth is ended. It would be as incongruous as to have a military funeral for a civilian; or the peculiar rites and ceremonies of a fraternal order for one who had never been a member of that order in life. The difficulty may easily be obviated by using a service composed for the occasion, and there are abundant selections of psalms and lessons which are appropriate; but this service is to be reserved for use only at the burial of those who have been made by holy baptism members of the mystical body of Christ.

The second class includes those who are under the bann of the greater excommunication, which, in the absence of church discipline to-day, is a thing almost unknown. Indeed, neither the major nor the

minor excommunication has any great terrors now, since, in our day, self-excommunication in most instances saves all trouble to the authorities of the church. To refuse the use of the office on the ground of excommunication, therefore, would only be justifiable in a case where the sentence had been formally pronounced and recorded, and then ratified by the bishop.

The case of suicide presents a more difficult question for decision. The plea of insanity is so constantly urged as an excuse, or at least as a palliation of every desperate crime, that we have come to look with a strange degree of leniency upon every such violation of God's law. There is but one rule for the parish priest to follow in regard to suicides, and that is to abide by the verdict of the coroner's inquest. And for the consolation of surviving relatives, it is quite feasible to arrange a service specially adapted to the occasion, and so to meet the requirements of the case and the obligation of the rubric.

In regard to all of these excluded classes, it is to be observed that it can make but

little difference to the dead man himself what services may be used at his funeral, though it is a matter of concern to his surviving friends. But this aspect of the case is relieved by the fact that it is only this authorized service of the church that is prohibited. Another psalm may be used for the anthem and another chapter for the lesson, and any other form may be used at the grave, provided no part of this service be used at all.

Turning away from these exceptional cases to the constant rule and practice of the church, we find that the real consolations for mourning hearts begin with the opening words of the service and end only with its final prayer. As the sad procession enters the church there are three anthems which may be said or sung. They are the expression of faith, of patience, and of thanksgiving. The anthem of faith is the word of consolation which came from the lips of our Lord to a sorrowing heart in Bethany before the miracle at the grave of Lazarus; the anthem of patience is an echo from the patriarch Job, which has floated down to us over many

centuries, and which has been uttered in the presence of unnumbered Christian dead; and the anthem of thanksgiving is the fitting formula of an uncomplaining submission to the will of God, which is made by clasping together the words of St. Paul and of the patriarch Job, and which from the depths of sorrow can yet smile through tears and say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." These opening sentences correspond in place and use to the opening sentences of the Morning and Evening Prayer; and when the coffin is placed before the altar, facing the east, and the congregation is composed for the further solemnities, the service proper begins with the burial anthem, which is made up of parts of the xxxixth and xcth Psalms. The first of these psalms was composed by David after the death of Absalom. The second was composed by Moses while the children of Israel were dying in the wilderness; and together they constitute a most fitting expression of human sorrow as well as a recognition of the shortness and uncertainty of human life.

The lesson is the sublime argument on the resurrection in the xvth chapter of First Corinthians. It is sometimes called St. Paul's Gospel, because it contains the fullest account of the resurrection of our Lord, and the strongest argument in proof of it to be found in Holy Scripture. It is so full of consolation and hope, of strong faith and well-grounded expectation of the immortal life beyond the grave, that no other words of instruction or consolation are needed; and therefore no provision is made for what is commonly known as a funeral sermon. The idea of such a sermon is foreign to the church's entire system, and a devout churchman would far rather have his remains laid to rest with the simple and adequate words of the church's service, which she uses alike for the rich and the poor, the high and the low, the king from his throne, and the poor man's child. For in death there is an equality which is nowhere so completely recognized as in this service, and which goes beneath the outward and temporary distinctions of life to the immortal spirit which is enfolded alike in the

robes of royalty and the rags of the beggar.

The service at the grave begins with the translation of a mediæval hymn which is to be said as a meditation while the preparations are going on for laying the body in its final resting-place. This hymn (*In media Vitæ*) dates its origin as far back as the ninth century, and the reason of the strong language used in its petitions is the fact that it was written at a time when the faith of the Christian was often tested by the courage of his life, and the realities of the invisible world and the danger of falling away were constantly recognized amid the shadows and the struggle of this mortal life. In the Middle Ages it was sung as a dirge; soldiers chanted it as a battle song upon the eve of a conflict; but as an anthem in the burial service, its use is peculiar to the Anglican branch of the Church Catholic.

The form of committal to the grave is accompanied by the threefold casting of earth upon the coffin, a custom which was common among the Romans, and which is referred to by Horace, though, of course, without its scriptural accompaniment of

"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

The hope of future blessedness is strengthened and confirmed by an anthem from the Apocalypse, which pronounces the benediction of "the dead who die in the Lord," and the prayers which follow are a thanksgiving for the good example of the faithful departed, and a petition that we may be found acceptable to God in the general resurrection of the last day.

In the entire service, the church pronounces no verdict upon the life of the departed; has no word either of eulogy or condemnation upon a career whose mortal period is closed; but with simple words and appropriate ceremonies lays the body to rest, and leaves the spirit in the care and to the mercy of our God and Saviour.

"Our mother, the Church, hath never a child,
To honor before the rest,
But she singeth the same for mighty kings,
And the veriest babe on her breast.
And the bishop goes down to his narrow bed
As the ploughman's child is laid,
And alike she blesseth the dark-browed serf
And the chief, in his robes arrayed.

She sprinkles the drops of the bright new birth
The same on the low and the high,
And christens their bodies with "dust to dust"
When earth with its earth must lie.
And wise is he, in the glow of life,
Who weaveth his shroud of rest,
And graveth it plain on his coffin plate
That the dead in Christ are blest."