

SOME COMMON SENSE REASONS WHY



Showing That Our Churchly
Customs Are Good
Manners in the House of God



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NAMES OF USUAL CHURCH FURNISHINGS

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I. In the Chancel

1. PRAYER DESK- The place where Morning and Evening Prayer are said by the minister.
2. LECTURN - The place whereon the Bible rests while the Scriptural lessons are read.
3. PULPIT- Place where the sermon is preached.

II. In the Sanctuary

1. ALTAR - The common name for the Lord's Table.
2. FOOT-SPACE - The elevated base on which the Altar rests.
3. CREDENCE - The shelf (or table) on which the Communion elements are placed before they are put on the Altar to be consecrated.
4. REREDOS - A carved wooden (or stone) screen placed back of the Altar at the Sanctuary wall.
*When a cloth hanging takes the place of a Reredos, the hanging is called a DOSEL.
5. RECEIVING BASIN - The larger plate used to receive the offertory plates when the offerings are placed on the Altar.
6. COMMUNION SERVICE --
 - (1.) Chalice - The cup from which the consecrated wine is received by the communicants.
 - (2.) Paten- The plate on which the consecrated bread is administered to the communicants.
 - (3.) Cruets- The vessels in which the wine and water are kept on the Credence.
 - (4.) Bread Box- The receptacle wherein the bread is kept on the Credence.
Ciborium is another name for this vessel.
7. RE-TABLE - An elevated part on the top and back portion of the Altar, whereon are placed the Altar Cross, the Altar Vases and the Eucharistic Lights.

III. In the Nave

1. LITANY DESK - The prayer desk where the Litany is usually said.
2. OFFERATORY PLATES - The plates used to receive the offerings of the people.
3. PEWS - The seats where the congregation sits.
4. BAPTISMAL FONT - The stone receptacle in which the water is placed for baptizing children and adults in the church.
*The Font usually stands near the church entrance to symbolize that Holy Baptism is the means of entrance into the Kingdom of Christ.
**The place where the Baptismal Font stands on its elevated base is called "The Baptistery."

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CHURCHLY CUSTOMS OF THE CONGREGATION

1. WHY DO YOU KNEEL IN PRAYER ON ENTERING THE CHURCH?

For precisely the same reason that the guests at a social gathering go the host and hostess, on entering the rooms, and greet them. Politeness demands this special mark of respect for those into whose home you have come as a guest. And in the same sense, politeness requires that at once on entering church we indicate our reverential regard for the Divine Being into whose presence we have come. Kneeling in private devotions as we reach our pew is the form of etiquette which the Church has long used to express this our bounden respect for God.

2. WHY DO PEOPLE REMAIN IN QUIETNESS UNTIL THE WORSHIP BEGINS?

The thought behind this question is Why are Church people so cold and so lacking in welcome for strangers and visitors as they enter the church; why do they not get up and go across the aisle and speak to them and greet them? In other congregations this is done; why do you not show this same cordiality in your churches?

For answer, ask yourself if you think it seemly for people to be engaged in a buzz of conversation, when they are congregated for a burial service. Is it coldness to sit in silence then? "Why no," would be the reply of all refined natures, "in the solemn presence of death it is fitting that all should be silent - reflecting on their lives and the eternity which sooner or later is to be theirs. All talking and social greetings are entirely out of place, as the casket is before the friends and acquaintances. People of good manners all feel this and act accordingly."

Well, this is the way Churchmen feel about the Sacred Presence into which they have come in the House of Prayer. To them it seems a time not for worldly conversation, but a time for quiet reflection; for people to go to other pews until there is an undertone of talking and whispering all through the church seems very irreverent. We believe in extending a welcome to all at the close of worship, in the vestibule. But true politeness, as it appeals to us, requires that on entering His house we all shall be still and know that the Lord is God and we are His creatures responsible unto Him for the conduct of our lives.

3. WHY DO THE PEOPLE RISE AS THE CLERGYMAN AND CHOIR ENTER THE CHURCH TO BEGIN THE SERVICE?

Were some great national hero, like Grant or Dewey, to come before a public gathering, all those assembled would think it appropriate to applaud the distinguished man for the services he had rendered to the country. This greeting would not be so much for the man as an individual, as it would be for the patriotic ideal which he had represented in his self-sacrificing efforts for his country's honor.

It is a feeling akin to this which animates our congregations as the clergyman enters the Chancel to begin worship. The rising of the congregation is not intended as a mark of respect to the minister himself. But he comes before the people as an ambassador from God - to read Divine Revelation and to preach it, to bless the worshippers in God's name, and lead the praises and devotions of the congregation. Therefore the people rise as

an homage to God, Whose worship is about to begin under the ministry of one of His ambassadors.

4. WHY IS THERE SO MUCH “GETTING UP AND DOWN” BY THE PEOPLE DURING THE SERVICE?

The frequent change of posture might be justified on the score of bodily comfort; for there is far less fatigue from often changing the position, than there is from sitting in one attitude until the service's end.

But the reason why our congregation makes their frequent changes of posture is that they are not listeners, but worshippers of God into whose presence they have come. They wish to be polite and show their part in the honoring of God which is being expressed through praise and prayer and through instruction from His Revealed Word. No more would our people think of being passive and listless, while this honoring of God was being shown to Him in His church, than a patriotic citizen would refrain from applause and similar demonstrations, while every one about him was cheering some high minded national sentiment, or hurrahing as the country's flag was being raised near the newly-erected monument at some hero's grave. Our people feel it a privilege to take part in the worship of God's Holy Name, and the frequent changes of posture are only the modes of churchly etiquette for evincing the honor that is due to the Good Father of us all. These modes are these: - we kneel in making our petitions to God, kneeling being the attitude of humility as we ask anything from Him; we sit while hearing instruction from His Holy Word, sitting being the attitude of learning from Him; and we stand when we praise God, standing being the attitude which best evinces that our whole soul and heart and mind and strength are then going out to the loving God who ever cares for us. In no sense is this frequent change of posture to be considered formalism and empty show - no more so than are handshaking, applauding, rising, etc., by which we indicate our kindly regards in common social customs. These are considered the modes of politeness in our relations one with another; and likewise our frequent changes of posture are simply the modes of politeness in our common worship in the House of God.

5. WHY DO THE CONGREGATION STAND AS THE OFFERINGS ARE PLACED ON THE ALTAR?

Here again we find parallel customs in the social usages which are commonly accepted all about us. If at a banquet or at other occasion, an assemblage were held to present a gift to some noted personage as a mark of appreciation for the services he had rendered to the community, the people would view it as a part of politeness to rise to their feet, as the gift was presented to him. The speaker who was appointed to present this gift would voice the kindly esteem of all the donors in making the address; but his would be only a general expression of public gratitude; and to indicate a more individual approval of the sentiment expressed by the speaker, every person present would rise to his feet and stand while address was being made.

A similar feeling of politeness and gratitude towards God moves our people when the offertory plate is placed on the altar. The choir sings the words, “All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own have we given Thee,” or words of a similar sentiment. But to express a personal part in this honoring of God and of his Churchly work among mankind, each worshipper rises as those words are sung or said.

6. WHY DO THE CONGREGATION SAY “AMEN” AT THE END OF THE VARIOUS PRAYERS?

The answer to this question is clearly implied by the reply to the preceding query. The clergyman acts as leader of the people’s devotions. He speaks the words of the prayers; and then individually the worshippers are expected to speak forth, in an audible voice, their participation in offering each petition unto God. The word “amen” means “so may it be;” and neglecting to say that expression in its appointed place not only deprives the individual of being a participant in that petition to Heaven above; it also, as we view it, marks this individual as listless and impolite to God in the supplications and thanksgivings which are being offered unto Him.

7. WHY DO THE CONGREGATION BOW THEIR HEADS AT THE NAME OF JESUS IN THE CREED?

To answer this question ask yourself another. Why does a gentleman take off his hat to a lady, when he meets her on the street or elsewhere? The reply to be given to this query is that it is done as a mark of special respect to the gentler sex. In paying this token of esteem to a lady, the man is showing a silent veneration for the virtues of his mother. It is an honor which he feels is due to the purity of womanhood and motherhood at all times.

For a reason of the same general nature the Churchman wishes to pay a special mark of honor and reverence for the Savior who came to this world in the form of flesh and for man’s sake instituted His ever present means of grace. Therefore we bow our head in the Creed and in Gloria in Excelsis.

Some worshippers bow their heads at the name of Jesus, wherever that revered name is heard in the worship; and to do this is the worshipper’s individual privilege, if he finds it bringing him nearer to Christ and inciting him to a godlier life. But it should be noted that Churchly precedent seems to confine this token of respect for Christ’s ministry for man, more especially to the name of Jesus in the Creeds. The reason for this is that at an early period in the history of Christianity a certain school of thought claimed that Christ was only a man with a special purity and holiness of soul; and to indicate that He was very God of very God, the Redeemer once come to earth, and then present in the “Church which is His body,” the practice arose of bowing the head at Jesus’ name at every reciting of the Creed, and later on, of the Gloria in Excelsis.

8. WHY DO THE CONGREGATION SIT DURING THE EPISTLE FOR THE DAY AND STAND WHILE THE GOSPEL IS READ?

This answer naturally follows the preceding, since it has the same general answer. When you are at such a gathering as the graduating exercises of a high school or college, you will notice that the people are requested to rise as prayer and benediction are pronounced. But during the exercises of graduation the people will be sitting. Why is this? Because it is thought fitting that a special regard be shown by those present for Him whose reverence is the beginning of wisdom.

And the same special regard for Christ’s own words, as compared with words written by St. Paul or other New Testament writers, do we endeavor to show by standing

as the Gospel for the day is read. We sit when the Epistle for the day is read - that is, when writings are read from other New Testament books than the four gospels. But when Christ's own words are read in the Gospel for the day, then we all rise to evince our bounden homage especially for what He has spoken or done.

The custom prevails with some of kneeling during the Epistle. This would seem to give more importance to the words of the Epistle than to the words of Christ.

9. WHY DO SO MANY CROSS THEMSELVES AT THE ABSOLUTION, BENEDICTION, ETC.?

We use the term "many" in this question because not all worshippers do this. This is their privilege if they desire to do so as bringing them closer unto the Divine presence and it is their privilege not to cross themselves thus, if they desire to omit this practice. Some minds are helped by having numerous illustrations in the book they are reading; other temperaments have reasoning powers so acute that they find such illustrations distracting from clear and attentive thought. And likewise some natures are really helped by many acts of personal ritual during worship; while other natures are helped not at all by this ceremonial, and so they omit it.

This diversity of practice often prompts certain minds to say, "Well, what do you Episcopalians believe anyway?" The reply to be made is that we believe in charity and personal choice in all non-essentials of the faith. We have no desire to bring all people to one uniform standing of practice or belief on secondary matters. God's provision in the kingdom of religion is like His loving provision in the kingdom of nature. In nature there are various kinds of foods; not at all necessary is it that all persons eat the same food. Nor is it necessary in the kingdom of religion that we all do the same ritual acts in public or private worship. If certain ceremonial practices help us, well and good; let us use them. If those same practices are not helpful to the spiritual life of theirs, then let these persons not use them, just as at a hotel they do not partake of those foods which disagree with them. It is the duty of a hotel to afford a variety in the bill of fare; and in the Church there ought to be a similarly full provision for the various worshippers in the way of personal ritual. Be it repeated then that on all secondary matters we believe in charity and the same common sense we exercise in all the realm of mere preferences.

10. WHY DO WE KNEEL IN PRAYER AT THE WORSHIP'S CLOSE?

This practice has come to us from a very early time. And like all the Church's customs, it is based on politeness in the presence of God. No person of good breeding would go away from an evening party where he had been hospitably entertained without going to the host and hostess and thanking them for the pleasure they had afforded him. And so the Churchman in retiring from the Sacred Presence of God feels it a pleasure as well as a mark of due regard for his God to kneel down humbly at the service's close and express his thankfulness for the privileges of worship, and for the inspiring impulses of heart which have come to him during the hour.

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CHURCHLY CUSTOMS OF THE CHOIR

1. WHY DO YOU HAVE A CROSS CARRIED AT THE HEAD OF THE CHOIR IN THE PROCESSIONAL HYMNS?

For the same reason that a regiment of soldiers carries a flag of the country as it goes to battle. That flag is a symbol of all the ideals for which they are fighting - liberty, freedom of speech, equality or rights, etc. The soldier would say that the very sight of the stars and stripes reminded him of the blood shed for his country, and made him braver and more self-sacrificing. He would scout the idea that this was only a painted bit of cloth. To him it is a solemn reality and an inspiration to better soldiership in behalf of his country.

And this is precisely the purpose which carrying the cross is designed to fulfill before all the congregation. The cross is a symbol of our Christian religion and of the self-sacrificing life every disciple is expected to live in behalf of all good causes. As the disciple sees it, he is reminded of what the Savior has done for man; and this thought must bring impulses to a nobler life unto every worshipper. Not at all is this designed as a pretty ceremonial. The aim is to arouse all to worthier lives.

2. WHY DO THE CHOIR SIT SIDEWISE TO THE CONGREGATION?

Their purpose in the church answers this question. At the opera house you expect a concert quartette or soloist to face the audience. Their object is to entertain the people. Any other position than facing the audience would be utterly inappropriate.

But this is the very reason why our choirs do not face the congregation; they are not to entertain the people or to give a sacred concert. Their office is solely to lead the worshippers in singing praises to God. From our custom of localizing the Divine Presence in the East or near the Sanctuary, it would be more fitting for our choirs to have their backs to the people; far more Churchly a position would this be than facing the people. But this would not so well enable them to lead the singing. Therefore our custom is to have the choristers sit sidewise to the congregation. This enables them readily to lead the singing, and is an object lesson to all that the choir is not giving an entertainment, but is occupying an official position in the common worship of all the people present - a service where all are supposed to take part and where none are to be mere listeners.

3. WHY DO YOUR CHOIRS TURN TO THE ALTAR IN PARTS OF THE SERVICE?

It was a pious belief of the early Church that at the Judgment day Christ was to come from the East to judge the quick and the dead. And so it became the devout custom to build the church edifice with Chancel end toward the East; and where this could not be done, owing to the peculiar position of the church lot, it was customary to turn toward the east (architecturally speaking), that is, toward the Altar, in certain parts of the worship. It was done to indicate that true worshippers were ready to meet their Judge whenever He might come.

This is the origin of what is known as the "eastward position" or Altar position. The special parts where the choir and clergy do this are those portions of the worship where the praise is given directly unto God - as in the "Glory Be to the Father," etc., in the Creeds, and in the Gloria in Excelsis. It is a mark of special regard for the Triune God,

having its parallel in such social courtesies as giving the prominent attention to the distinguished guest at an evening's gathering.

4. WHY DO YOUR CHOIRS WEAR VESTMENTS DURING THE WORSHIP?

For one reason it is seemly and more conducive to reverence; and for a second reason, the vestments have a symbolic meaning.

It would look very incongruous for a company of soldiers to be dressed, some in black, some in blue, some in white, and for them to have a similar diversity in the colors and shapes of their hats, etc. Besides this, how much more dignified does a regiment look where all have the same specified uniform! And the same is true of a church choir. It adds to the solemnity of the worship to see all the choristers attired in the same vestments - to indicate the truth that they are not men or boys, but are official leaders of the worship of Almighty God. In a day where worldly fashions are so engrossing, all this worldly distinction is put away from the chorister by the common vestment worn by all in the choir, and the lesson is impressed upon the congregation of our common equality in God's sight, despite our week day attire, as rich or plain, simple or attractive.

And besides the impressiveness and appropriateness of the choristers' having simple vestments, the principal vestment has a meaning. The cotta or white robe worn over the cassock is an emblem of purity, and it is designed to teach unto all that they who draw nigh to God must come in purity as to their life's intention and in guilelessness of heart.

5. WHY IS YOUR MUSIC OF SUCH A "SET KIND?"

The thought in the minds of those who raise this query is that in some places of worship you will hear the bright tunes of the street set to sacred words and sung by the choirs. Some people like this and talk of how cheery and spirited the singing is.

To us such tunes seem entirely out of place in the worship of God. We feel that all the music heard in the church ought to have a distinctively religious impressiveness; we want tunes such that the moment we hear them they bring sacred thoughts to our minds and souls. But this is an impossibility, if operatic airs, tunes of popular ballads, etc., are to be adopted into our religious worship. When these tunes are sounded by the organ, the first impression is not that of the more or less sacred words which are set to those tunes; necessarily the first sensations that come to us are memories of the concert hall, the drama or the opera, where we heard that tune. And while these recreations are all proper in their place and in due degree, we feel sure that the religious nature does not want such intrusive thoughts when one draws nigh to God. Better is it for the worshipper, and better is it for the sacred influence of religion, if the music heard in the hour of worship is ever associated with only those solemn and reverential impressions that befit the House of God. Religion is the salt of the Earth. "If the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?"

SOME CHURCHLY CUSTOMS OF THE CLERGY

1. WHY DOES THE CLERGYMAN OFTEN CHANGE HIS POSITION DURING THE SERVICE?

What is referred to here is the fact that the clergyman now faces the congregation, now has his back to them, and now is sidewise to them. These varying positions are taken for the sake of politeness in the House of Prayer. It should be remembered that the clergyman occupies a two-fold office in conducting our services. In portions of the worship he speaks as an ambassador from God to the people - in the absolution, benediction, etc. Then he properly faces the people. In some parts, he merely leads the people in their common devotions; then he should stand or kneel sidewise to the congregation, as was explained in justifying the sidewise position of the choir seats. But in the more direct worship of God, as in the presentation of the alms, in consecrating the Holy Communion elements, etc., he then makes supplications and sacrifices in behalf of the people unto God; and so he has his back to the people and his face (as politeness requires) toward the localized presence of God.

2. WHY DOES THE CLERGYMAN SAY THE LITANY IN THE NAVE?

Because in this office there is no part where he acts as a priest or ambassador from God. The whole office is a supplication of Divine wisdom and guidance on the part of the entire body of worshippers, the clergyman included. For this reason it is proper for the clergyman to face the Altar, or the East; and as he is, by the wording of the Litany, made one of the "miserable sinners" begging for God's mercy and care, what position could be more fitting and appropriate than that of his going to the nave of the church at the Litany Desk, and there saying the litany side by side with his congregation? It is a position designed to show that the clergyman is only a human being, and to teach the common equality of all the worshippers in God's sight, despite the earthly office or position one may fill.

3. WHY DOES THE CLERGYMAN READ THE EPISTLE ON ONE SIDE OF THE ALTAR, AND THE GOSPEL ON THE OTHER?

This is a time honored custom of the Church to show a special respect for the words and doings of the Savior as compared with the letters of the Apostles. The clergyman takes the left (less important) side of the Altar in reading the Epistle; but for reading the Gospel of Christ he takes the right or north side of the Altar.

4. WHY DOES THE CLERGYMAN WEAR VESTMENTS DURING THE SERVICES?

In order to add dignity and impressiveness to the worship which he is conducting, and to beget among all present an increased reverence for God, and in whose name he officiates. The surplice or white vestment worn by the clergyman is emblematical of that purity of life which should ever characterize the true follower of Christ. The stole (worn over the shoulders) is a symbol that he has taken upon himself the yoke of Christ and is ready to do all that the master may call him to do in His service.

Deacons, or the first order of the ministry, wear the stole over one shoulder; while the Bishop, as a badge of his higher office, in the three-fold ministry of the Church, wears besides the cassock, a rochet (straight sleeved surplice) a stole and a chimere, (a robe usually made of black satin with lawn sleeves).

5. WHY DOES THE CLERGYMAN PRONOUNCE THE ASCRIPTION AFTER A SERVICE?

The long continued custom in the Church has been that after concluding his sermon the clergyman shall turn to the East (i.e. to the Altar) and pronounce words of sentiment: "And now unto God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all majesty, honor, and glory henceforth and forever. Amen." The reason for this is that it is a devout usage reminding the people that all the sermon's value is given them in God's name, and reminding the clergyman that the glory of whatever is forcible and eloquent in this sermon is not to be attributed to his ability, but all honor is due unto God, who uses man as His instrumentality.

6. WHY IS THE INVOCATION OFTEN PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE SERMON?

The custom of many clergymen is to turn toward the Altar before beginning the sermon, the people standing, and say, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The purpose of this usage is the same as that of pronouncing the ascription after the sermon. Many clergymen do not use the invocation, since they feel that their private devotions before the sermon are sufficient indication to the people that they are about to speak to them in the name of God, and not on their own authority or with their own ability alone.

7. WHY DOES THE CLERGYMAN ELEVATE THE PLATES WHEN PRESENTING THE OFFERINGS OF THE CONGREGATION?

It is considered a mark of politeness for all assembled for the purpose of presenting a gift to some noted personage to rise as the gift is presented. The contributions of the people are asked to support the work of God's church. And to indicate this giving of their goods unto God, as a special gift to Him, the people rise.

The practice of the Church for this same purpose, on the clergyman's part, is for him to elevate the plates as he presents the offerings, in the people's names, unto God for his sacred work among men.

SOME GENERAL WHYS ABOUT THE SERVICES

1. WHY DO YOU KEEP GOOD FRIDAY, ASCENSION DAY, WHITSUNDAY, ETC.?

Well, why do the American people observe July Fourth, Memorial Day, Lincoln's Birthday, etc.? What is the good of that? Because it pays to keep these days in the way of teaching our countrymen patriotic ideals. Every youth is fired with zeal for high national sentiments, as he hears addresses and reads the comments of periodicals upon these yearly occasions.

And this is our reason for keeping the Church year. It brings the great central events of our Savior's life vividly before our congregations and makes His religion realistic to us. The child who keeps Christmas, Advent, Ash Wednesday, etc., learns in a way never to be forgotten, all the most important teachings of Christianity and the practical lessons suggested by these anniversaries of the Savior's earthly ministry. There is no empty formality in these days of the Christian year, any more than there is "folderol," as some term our ways, and empty show or parade in observing our great national holidays. The national year and the Christian year are each instructive and inspiring.

2. WHY DO YOU MAKE SO MUCH OF MERE FORMS IN YOUR WORSHIP?

We would answer this question by inquiring why parents make so much of the forms of politeness in training their children. The evident answer is that forms are a means to an end. The boy or girl who is trained to observe the forms of politeness grows to have a kindly feeling for others by the very use of those forms; those usages are channels for the flow of our kindly regards; and our very familiarity with these usages tends to incite the polite consideration. So is it, too, with the use of the Church's modes of worship. A person grows to be devout and reverential by the very use of these forms.

The mistake is sometimes made of thinking that our Churchly forms are a modern devise by some exclusive few. But this is a great error. Our Churchly forms are a growth; they are the modes of expressing a reverence for things sacred - modes which long experience has taught mankind as best for this purpose. This is as true of our Churchly forms as it is true that our social forms are those best adapted to our relations one to another, as experience has taught us in this realm of our living.

Easy is it to see that all congregations have forms and must have them. No public worship is possible without them. Those who object to the form of kneeling have the form of putting their hand before their eyes during these devotions, or the form of bowing their head. And thus is it with other portions of the service. A service without uniform forms which all observed would be a disorderly service. An informal service would be one where during the singing some were sitting, some standing, some walking about, some doing this and some that. Were all to do alike, it would be a form. In fact, all religious bodies have forms and must have them. And since this is so, we prefer to use those long accepted usages which experience has commended, rather than to devise some peculiar forms of our own.

3. WHY DO YOU HAVE ECCLESIASTICAL COLORS IN THE CHURCH?

Worldly usage has its colors to give certain indications, and why should not the Church have the same practice for her sacred purpose of teaching religious truth? The lady who desires to be left in quietness and seclusion during her sorrow, wears black as an evidence to all that she desires seclusion. The person in social life has her gayer colors for parties and luncheons, and her plainer attire for morning and afternoon wear at home.

So the Church has her varying attire of colors to help teach Jesus Christ and His Gospel to her congregations. As her plainer and more common color she uses green, the color of nature. For the festivals relating to Christ, Easter, etc., we use white, this being the emblem of purity since Christ is the one pure Being known to us. For Her great day of mourning, Good Friday, the anniversary of the crucifixion, black is the appropriate color. For the seasons of fasting and watchfulness (Advent and Lent), the proper color is violet; while for Whitsunday, when the Holy Spirit came down in the form of flaming tongues of fire, red is the symbolical color; red is also used on the days of the Christian martyrs, St. Stephen, St. Andrew, etc., as emblematical of their life blood, shed in martyrdom for their faith.

4. WHY DO YOU SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED AT YOUR SERVICES?

In our busy life today we do not expect each person to go to the fields and raise his own wheat; then to do the threshing; then to be his own miller and baker. He gets his bread on his dining table in a ready-to-be-used form. So he gets his fuel ready to use, his lumber in a ready-to-be-used state. Experience justifies specialization. It is the method of civilization and advancement.

The Church of God is in harmony with this spirit. It is mere talk to say that the Bible is creed enough for anyone. For how many of us have the ability to study the Bible and comprehend its meaning? As a kind Spiritual Mother the Church from Her long past has transmitted the essence of the Bible to us in a concise, easy-to-be-remembered form. In the Apostles' Creed She has given us the great central truths of Christianity in a ready-to-be-used form. And to give us a perfect familiarity with this key to Divine Revelation the Church drills her children at each service in reciting the Creed.

5. WHY DO YOU HAVE SO MANY SERVICES WITHOUT A SERMON?

Because mankind are so apt to forget that the purpose of coming to church is to render homage unto God, and only in a secondary sense to hear some man preach. In every department of life, we have to avoid misunderstandings. And when this tendency of human nature is to exalt some man's ability or eloquence, and to underrate God's governance of the world and the gratitude we all owe to Him, it is well that we have many services where all thought is directed heavenward, and where no address or sermon of man is heard.

6. WHY DO YOU AT BURIAL SERVICES PLACE THE CASKET WITH FEET TO THE EAST OR TO THE ALTAR?

This is the ancient practice of the Church to symbolize that the departed soul has gone into the presence of God; it is symbolical, also, to those present, that they, too, must some day be prepared to meet their Judge, the East being the place from which we expect Christ to come at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.

For a similar reason, the long continued Christian custom is to bury the dead with feet toward the East. In the burial of a clergyman, however, the ancient practice is to have the casket at the church with feet toward the people - this to indicate that in God's sight he is some day to face the flock entrusted to his charge.

7. WHY DO YOU OFTEN HAVE EUCHARISTIC LIGHTS ON THE ALTAR?

Ask yourself why at a county court house you usually see a statue of Justice holding the scales of right and equity in her hand. The reason for this is that such a statue is an emblem of the court room's purpose. So when used the two Altar lights are symbolical. They are an emblem of Christ as the Light of the world. There are two Altar lights indicative of the truth that Christ gives us this light upon our daily pathway through His union of the Divine and human natures in His Person. And these lights are placed on the Altar to teach us that in the Altar Sacrament we are especially inspired and strengthened to carry out the better impulses which come to our every heart.

8. WHY DO YOU PRAY OUT OF A BOOK?

The object of prayer is to bring our souls as near as possible to the Divine Presence. And we believe pre-composed prayers best accomplish this end. Words gather sacredness from our familiar use of them. No terms have so much of meaning as the old words "father," "home," "mother," etc. Sacred memories and thoughts entwine themselves about these words as the vine entwines itself about the trellis. In no prayers is there such sacredness and such richness of devotion as in the old familiar prayers of the Prayer Book which we have used over and over again. These wonted words never lose their force for us. Our thought goes more readily and more feelingly out to God through the words which are so familiar to us and have gathered sacredness from the associations clustering about them.

Besides this they are common prayers which we hear in our services - prayers which embrace the common needs of us all; these prayers are not special in their application, as the prayers of the individual clergyman are sure to be, suggested as they are by his personal, limited observations and experiences during the week previous. And above all, the carefully worded petitions of the Prayer Book contain nothing that is suggestive of irreverence or levity or incongruity, nor do they prompt criticalness regarding the praying ability or personality of him who leads the devotions. When our prayers are prayed, not merely read, we believe far more people are drawn closer to the secret of the Divine Presence, than by extemporized praying. Because of their very effectiveness, therefore, we use pre-composed prayers.

9. WHY DO YOU IN THE COMMUNION SERVICE USE WAFER BREAD?

This is ministered unto the communicants as in a real but mystical sense "the Body of Christ." To many of us, therefore, it seems irreverent to use common, home-made bread, which is so apt to crumble and fall to the floor from the hand. Wafer bread does not so crumble, it is always ready for use, as it can be kept pure for months and never does it suggest thoughts, by a peculiar taste, of its being, perhaps, uncleanly prepared.

Besides this practical reason, wafer bread is symbolical of the Scriptural teaching that true discipleship is to serve Christ “not with old leaven; neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

10. WHY DO YOU HAVE APPOINTED BIBLE LESSONS IN YOUR SERVICES?

By the query is implied the thought that it would be better to have the clergyman choose his own Scriptural lessons to read at each service. But the danger is that under this plan some portions would not be heard by the congregation all the year. As we read our Bibles, we find the teaching, “ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished onto all good works.” That our people may not miss any portion of God’s Word which is so important for this sacred purpose, we take pains to have all the Bible read through every year in our services; and our method is having appointed lessons for every occasion of public worship.

11. WHY DO YOU PUT SO MUCH STRESS UPON MATERIAL MEANS, BAPTISMAL WATERS, ETC.?

Because life’s revelations sanction this faith. All of God’s blessings to man come through material channels - food from material vines and trees and tubers, metals from material ore, cotton from plants, rain from material clouds, electrical power along material wires, etc. In fact, material channels are the process of all our life. What is more natural, then, than to expect God would give His spiritual blessings to us through some such channels as baptismal waters, etc.? When this is the revelation of all our practical life, and when our Savior touched the eyes of the blind whom He cured, we find the fullest reason for putting the greatest possible stress upon “mere material forms” as channels of spiritual grace to the human soul. The wonder should be that any reflective mind should expect Divine help otherwise than through material means - especially that any one should look for this help in an indefinite, unimaginable, ethereal manner.

12. WHY DO YOU CHURCH PEOPLE ORDINARILY OBSERVE FRIDAY AS THE TIME FOR YOUR WEEK DAY SERVICE?

The common mind thinks that for the regular week day service one day is a good as another and as denominational custom has fixed upon Thursday for this purpose, surprise is often expressed that we should be so peculiar as to select Friday. The reason is that it reminds us of our Savior’s crucifixion. It is a weekly commemoration of Good Friday and we wish our people to have even this minor help to the spiritual life.

13. WHY DO YOU HAVE TWO CREEDS IN THE PRAYER BOOK?

We do not. The Nicene Creed is only a fuller statement of what is included in the Apostles’ Creed. In substance the two formulas of faith are identical. Oftentimes when a person makes a statement, he finds it advisable to give forth, later on, somewhat fuller statement to prevent misunderstanding. In the same way, the Nicene Creed is only the Church’s fuller expression of what She always has taught and meant by the wording of the earlier Creed.

SOME WHYS ABOUT THE CHURCH EDIFICE

1. WHY DO YOU HAVE SO MUCH SYMBOLISM IN YOUR CHURCHES?

Why does the teacher at school have diagrams on the blackboard? Why does she have globes to teach geography? Why in the science room is there a cabinet of minerals, botanical specimens, etc.? Why are there illustrations and maps in the school history? Why in a Grand Army hall do they have portraits of prominent soldiers, and relics of many bloody contests, etc.? Why does the public speaker use gestures; why do we decorate our homes and stores with red, white and blue on July Fourth, etc.?

Because these are all helps to a desired end; they are inspiring and instructive. And for the same reason precisely we use symbols all through our church edifices; we have embroidered hangings on Altar, Prayer Desk, etc.; we have carvings in Chancel and Sanctuary. We do not propose to omit any rightful help which will tend to teach Christ to our congregations. We want to use every aid we can in furthering the hold of the Gospel on human hearts.

2. WHY DO YOU HAVE A THREE-FOLD ARRANGEMENT OF YOUR CHURCHES?

This is a part of the general symbolism we referred to in the preceding question. It is the primitive plan for arranging a church, to represent Baptism, Confirmation, and the Communion; also, the Nave symbolizes the life on earth; the Chancel, the life in the Intermediate State; and the Sanctuary, the life in Heaven.

3. WHY IS THE ALTAR THE MOST PROMINENT ARTICLE OF CHURCH FURNISHING?

In all our churches the first furnishing which the eye is likely to see is the Altar. And this is designedly so; the Altar is placed in an elevated position to attract the most notice. This is to teach the truth, so often forgotten by man, that religion is to minister unto our needs; Christianity is God coming to us, not so much our going unto God. And emblematic of this nearness of God to us, ready to help us and inspire us, stands the Altar, the Holy Table of man's spiritual food and sustenance, most prominently before our sight.

4. WHY DO YOU NEVER HAVE TRAVELING CONCERTS, ETC., IN YOUR CHURCHES?

If we did, the tendency of our people would be to have their minds go back, on the following Sunday, to some comical song or melody, etc., which was heard in the Chancel a few days previous. These worldly thoughts would detract from the sacred purpose of the House of Prayer and our congregations could not feel the same nearness to God and to things holy as they now feel when the church is used strictly for worship. The religious instinct is none too strong in any of us; and we cannot afford to weaken it by turning the church into those common uses which are perfectly proper in the music hall or opera house, but most unfitting for the place where we meet in Christ's name, partake of the Bread of Life, baptize the young, and pay the last sad rites to our loved dead who depart this life in faith.

5. WHY DO YOU HAVE SO MUCH REVERENCE FOR YOUR CHURCH WHEN NO SERVICES ARE BEING HELD?

To see our people kneel in private devotions when no worship is being conducted, and to notice them speak in a low tone at these times - this seems very strange to many people. But when it is understood that we look upon the House of Prayer as the sacredly appointed meeting place with God, then all becomes clear. We feel a sensation of the Sacred Presence in the lone quiet church, just as all feel the mysterious nearness of God as they stand in the cemetery near the grave of a beloved one of former days. And this feeling of nearness to God is awe and an inspiration which the devout nature will wish to cherish; he will not do anything to lessen this sacred feeling. To help him in his spiritual life, and in the inspiration of thought which he desires in the House of Prayer, the Church man always evinces a marked reverence for the church edifice whether others are present or not. He can never treat his place of worship in a light and trifling manner.

6. WHY DO WOMEN WEAR THEIR HATS IN CHURCH?

It has been the usage of the historic Church everywhere, and through all ages, that women should have their heads covered in church, and at every service including the solemnization of matrimony (which is a religious service). To controvert this usage is to violate the custom of the Church - which custom is based upon Apostolic authority.

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