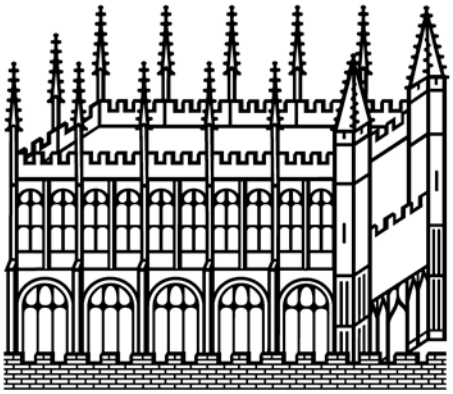

THE REFORM

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

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THE REFORM

OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

IN

WORSHIP, GOVERNMENT, & DOCTRINE

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ONE OF HER MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY IN SCOTLAND

PART I.—WORSHIP

EDINBURGH
EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS
1864

πρὶν εὔξασθαι ἑτοίμασον σεαυτὸν,
καὶ μὴ γίνου ὡς ἄνθρωπος πειράζων
τὸν Κύριον.

Σοφ. Ἰησ. xviii. 23.

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PART I.—WORSHIP.

CHAPTER I.

INSTITUTIONS PERISH THAT ARE NOT REFORMED.

> If it be no news to have all innovations ushered in with the name of Reformation, sure it is less news to have all reformation censured and opposed under the name of Innovation, by those who, being exalted in high place above their merit, fear all change, though of things never so ill or so unwisely settled.—MILTON.

I AM induced by discussions which have lately arisen regarding Presbytery and Episcopacy, the union of the Church of Scotland with the Church of England, and on ecclesiastical questions in general, to publish some observations which have occurred to me on these and kindred subjects.

In doing so, I hope I shall not be considered as advancing any claim either to authority or to superior wisdom; but it has long appeared to me that one of the greatest dangers to which churches are now exposed arises from the silence of their members on matters of great and even pressing importance—a silence which cannot fail to be pernicious in many ways, chiefly as being sure to be misconstrued. Moderate and judicious men will indeed always feel unwilling to excite controversies, which generally prove the parents of so much mischief; but this laudable feeling may easily be, as it has often been, carried to a length which compromises truth and honesty. To many men, indeed—as well as St. François de Sales—no time ever appears seasonable for the promulgation of a new doctrine, or the reform of an old corruption; for

who can tell how far the love of novelty may go, or to what lengths the spirit of innovation, once indulged, may carry us? Quiet times are unsuitable, for "nobody is making any complaint;" and times of agitation are unsuitable, for "men's minds are in a fever, and if let loose they will work mischief."

It is, indeed, impossible to deny that all changes involve certain risks. By "putting it to usury," we may, by possibility, lose "our Lord's money;" yet this risk we must run in the discharge of our trust, and in order that we may prove "good and faithful servants." It is indeed easy and natural for certain tempers to exhort us to "let what is well alone," and to quote that favourite text which speaks of "asking for the old paths, the good way;" forgetting that some very old paths are not "good ways," and that all old paths would soon be very bad ways, unless frequently renovated and repaired; as also that those ways which the prophet exhorts the children of Israel "to look for" and "walk in," were the very paths which they had forsaken (Jer. vi. 6). This text, therefore, though generally quoted in the interest of obstructiveness and stagnation, is indeed rather an encouragement to reform and progress. For is not all repentance a practical innovation? and is not this the sum of all the promises—Behold, I make all things new?

One class of minds is indeed charmed with whatever is new; as another, with no better reason, admires and clings to whatever is old. But we need a better criterion of judgment and action than either the one temper or the other; both of which are mere *feelings*, and may be commendable or the contrary, in different circumstances. It needs only a moment's reflection to convince us that it is not left to our choice whether, in this world, there shall be changes or not—these

are inevitable for the most part, and arise from the very constitution of our nature and of the world in which we live. We cannot make *yesterday to-day,* however we may cherish its memory or value its lessons. It is gone, dead and buried, and we inherit only the legacy it has bequeathed to us. It is only left to our choice to control, in a greater or less degree, changes which themselves are inevitable; to welcome or resist them; and to turn those torrents, which must descend, into safe and salutary channels, or to permit their undirected fury to devastate all around. Every state, and every human institution whatever, which has affected to imitate the laws of the Medes and Persians, has perished or is in ruins; for though man may have thought them too sacred for his hand to touch, the arch destroyer Time has, without intermission, shattered them with his irresistible stroke, and consumed them with his remorseless tooth. Change is the order of the universe, the normal condition of all things mundane and human. Man may modify, he cannot prevent or arrest it; he may use it to his own benefit, but he can no more abrogate this than any other of the laws of nature. The chariot of Divine Providence still moves on in its glorious course, but it crushes those who stand in its way.

All the stagnant nations of the earth are in the dust. *Non possumus,* is the reply which Pio Nono and his College of Cardinals make to all projects of reform. The words are history and prophecy united; they furnish at once a true character and an appropriate epitaph.

On the other hand, at this moment every people in the world that enjoys any considerable measure of internal peace and stability, and is prosperous and powerful, has made great and vital changes in its laws and institutions, and is even, in a great measure, prosperous and powerful by means of those

changes: which is only saying that nations, like individuals, reap the fruit of their knowledge of the laws which regulate human affairs, and of their compliance with those laws, and that divine providence is too strong for man—either singly or aggregated in the largest communities. No doubt those great reforms of which our own country, for example, has been the fortunate subject, were hailed with dire forebodings on the part of many whom superstitious dread actuated, or private interest, or some other form of selfishness. It is satisfactory to find so many of these now reading their recantation, and renouncing their political heresies, by applauding the results of those measures which they formerly, in their state of ignorance, blasphemed. Such confessions are gratifying, even though extorted; they are a striking testimony to the power of truth, and they want nothing but a little of that personal humiliation which always forms so large an element of true repentance.

All human institutions, as one of the acutest of our philosophers remarks, rest ultimately upon opinion. This applies less to *states*—which are concerned directly with the material interests of mankind—than to religious societies, which are the immediate fruit of conviction. The Christian Church is the direct offspring of Faith; this is its *raison d'être:* and particular churches are founded upon particular conceptions of that Faith; that is, upon particular opinions, which also they are designed to represent, maintain, and disseminate. Of all societies, therefore, they are most liable to perpetual modifications; and they could remain absolutely unchanged only by the utter suspension of thought among their members, and the absolute stagnation of human society. This, however, being impossible in the strict sense—the most immovable societies being only comparatively so—when the outward

symbols of Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical institutions are long maintained without alteration, the cause has always been either a general indifference, or hypocrisy, or worldly policy and selfishness, in some form or other, among the ruling classes.

The religious Reformers of the sixteenth century accomplished, perhaps, the most daring, sudden, radical, and extensive revolution the world ever saw. It is wonderful, and also sad, to find so many of their successors—I mean the clergy of the churches which they either founded or reformed—now actuated by the very spirit against which those Reformers had to contend, and using arguments which would shew that reformations of churches are needless, dangerous, or even sacrilegious, unless they chanced to take place in the sixteenth, or at latest, in the seventeenth century: as if it were our duty to follow in the footsteps not of the Reformers, but of those who denounced them as revolutionists and heretics, enemies of God and man, and therefore worthy to be exterminated, like other noxious creatures. All this, no doubt, is justified by a pretended deference to the Reformers, and a professed zeal for the doctrinal systems which they introduced. But this is to uphold Luther and his coadjutors in the letter, against the spirit, of their teaching and conduct.

Certainly none of the Reformers imagined that their ideas were to become the standard, according to which all succeeding Protestants were to think. Nor could they suppose that those "Confessions of Faith," which embodied the opinions they then entertained, and which they composed, sometimes hurriedly, and generally at the call of their opponents, to exhibit to hesitating or hostile governments what the doctrines were which they really held and taught, should be turned into Rules for the opinions of future generations of Christians,

and Tests for excluding such as might not believe, or at least profess, according to their tenor. It is said, accordingly, that Melancthon proposed that every seven years there should be held some convention, or other theological assembly—not to bring back, if possible, advancing opinion to the Augsburg Confession, but to adapt the Confession to those modifications of opinion which were inevitable; so that the Symbol might at all times truly represent the faith of the existing church. Whether this suggestion were really thrown out by that great man or not—for I am not aware of the original authority upon which it rests—it certainly was in perfect consistency with the Protestant principle; or rather, something of that sort was evidently dictated by that principle, however inconsistent with it Protestant practice may sometimes have been.

Accordingly, Lord Bacon, in the very beginning of the seventeenth century, represents it as a monstrous thing that the Church of England *should have remained without any reforms for less than half a century,* when reforms were being unceasingly made in the civil government by Parliaments which met every third or fourth year.

"Who knoweth not," he says, "that time is truly compared to a stream, that carrieth down fresh and pure waters into that salt sea of corruption which environeth all human actions? And, therefore, if man shall not, by his industry, virtue, and policy, as it were with the oar row against the stream and inclination of time, all institutions and ordinances, be they never so pure, will corrupt and degenerate. But I would only ask why the civil state should be purged and restored by good and wholesome laws, made every third or fourth year in parliament assembled, devising remedies as fast as time breedeth mischief; and, contrariwise, the ecclesiastical

state should still continue upon the dregs of time, and receive no alteration now for these five-and-forty years and more? . . . But if it be said to me that there is a difference between civil causes and ecclesiastical, they may as well tell me that churches and chapels need no reparations, though castles and houses do; whereas, commonly, to speak truth, dilapidations of the inward and spiritual edifications of the church of God are in all times as great as the outward and material. Sure I am that the very word and style of reformation used by our Saviour—*ab initio non fuit sic**—was applied to church matters, and those of the highest nature, concerning the law moral."—(*Of the Pacification of the Church.*)

In the same spirit wrote our Scotch Reformers, who, in their Confession of Faith, 1560, "protest that if any man will note in this our Confession any article or sentence repugning to God's holy Word, that it would please him of his gentleness and for Christian charity's sake, to admonish us of the same in writing; and we, upon our honour and fidelity, *do promise unto him satisfaction from the Holy Scriptures, or else reformation of that which he shall prove to be amiss.*"—(*Preface.*) They had not such an opinion of their hasty though honest labours, as to conceive that their work might not contain errors, and so need changes: and if by themselves, no less by their successors, who had the same interest in truth, and the same rights respecting it as they, besides larger experience, and, probably, better means of knowledge and judgment.

More emphatically still, they declare (ch. xx.) that while "in the kirk of God, it becometh all things to be done decently and in order," they did "not think that any policy or order of ceremonies can be appointed for all ages, times, and places; for as ceremonies, such as men have appointed, are but tem-

* From the beginning it was not so.

poral, so may and ought they to be changed, when they rather foster superstition than edify the church using the same."

If the world continually go forward, and the Church stand still or go backward, what can happen but an eternal separation between science and religion; they who study God's works and they who preach his Word regarding each other not as allies and friends, but rivals and enemies, and the multitude gradually imbibing the notion that He who inspired the Bible is not the same God who governs all things and made the worlds.

CHAPTER II.

THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND A CONTINUED SERIES OF CHANGES.

Passibus ambiguis fortuna volubilis errat,
Et manet in nullo certa tenaxque loco.—OVID.

Surely every medicine is an innovation, and he that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils; for time is the greatest innovator: and if time of course alter all things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end?—BACON.

WHATEVER reasons certain other churches may have to plead antiquity and to stand upon tradition, it would be both unreasonable and inconsistent in the Church of Scotland to do so. This church has been founded upon the denial of those reasons; which denial, also, its whole history exemplifies, and by which it has always sought to justify itself. The Roman Church may plead for most of its peculiarities an antiquity of a thousand years, and in many instances of yet older date. The Greek Church, which pronounces the Roman heterodox and schismatical, carries up its traditions, both theological and ecclesiastical, to a much earlier period. It boasts that it is now, in its creed, government, and worship, what it was in the fifth century. We can easily understand how men should be shocked by the very mention of innovation, whose minds are overshadowed with such a mass of ancient traditions, and who have been taught that the first of Christian

duties is to abjure the use of reason, and submit to authority in matters religious.

By such men rational inquiry and independent judgment are esteemed, not duties, but presumptuous sins: to change any institution, rite, or doctrine, under pretence of improvement, would be an act of rebellion or sacrilege. The apostles, they conceit, left all things in the state of highest perfection, under the guardianship of Scripture, Tradition, and the Church, whose high calling it is to preserve what she has received in integrity and purity through all ages till the second coming of the Lord. To reform the Church, therefore, can mean nothing else than to desecrate and destroy the temple of God.

Such is the position maintained by the Greek Church, in all its branches and by all its offshoots:* from the awkwardness and inconveniences of which position the Church of Rome has sought to escape by its ingenious but inconsistent and rationalistic doctrine of *development.* The Holy Ghost being now conveniently lodged in the Vatican, the Church, thus divinely authorised and guided, may at any time add a new article of faith to the already overgrown creed, whensoever the voracious credulity of the faithful may crave for a new dogma, such as that of the Immaculate Conception. But whatever may be expected of those whose minds are oppressed by a long history, by venerable traditions and inveterate customs, the ministers and members of our Presbyterian Church can plead no such temptation. This Church itself is no more than 300 years old, and it has seen more revolutions than centuries; its history is an almost uninterrupted series of innovations. At first it had Superintendents, who, though not in any

* See Rodwell's Translations of Æthiopic Liturgies, etc., in "Journal of Sacred Literature," No. viii. N.S.

essential respect *bishops*, yet maintained a shadow of Episcopacy, and showed that the absolute equality of ministers was not yet ripened into a point of faith. The English Book of Common Prayer was for some time employed in public worship. This appears to have been gradually superseded by the Book of Common Order, or the Order of Geneva, which was composed for the use of the English congregation in that city. This book had been published so early as the year 1557, and authorised by the lords of the congregation; but that it had not superseded the Book of Common Prayer so late as the years 1565 and 1566 may be inferred from this, that we find the General Assemblies of those years enjoining, "that every minister, exhorter, and reader, should have a copy of the Psalm Book lately printed at Edinburgh, and use the order contained therein in prayers, marriages, and the administration of the sacraments." So unfounded is the statement which was made in our Church Courts a few years ago, that Knox's Liturgy was never enjoined or obligatory upon the ministers of the Church of Scotland. How long the Book of Common Order was actually used by the generality of the ministers, or whether it was ever minutely adhered to, is not easy to ascertain. Indeed, some of its own directions or *rubrics*, afforded a plausible apology to those who had an itch for extemporising in public prayer. There can, however, be little doubt that long before the year 1645, when the Directory was adopted, the Book of Common Order had been generally disused. The last mention of it in the Proceedings of the General Assembly is said to occur in the year 1601; though Bishop Sage asserts that it was still in use at the beginning of the civil war, and that persons alive near the end of the seventeenth century remembered to have heard it read in the churches.

However this may be, the General Assembly, without venturing either to find fault with it, or even distinctly to mention it, superseded, of its own authority, both that public Liturgy of the church and the venerable Confession of Faith which had hitherto been its legal and authorised symbol of doctrine, in favour of the Directory for the public worship of God, and the Confession of Faith, agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as "part of the Covenanted Uniformity in Religion betwixt the Churches of Christ in the kingdom of Scotland, England, and Ireland."

Though, shortly after its first adoption, one or two feeble efforts were made by the General Assembly to secure compliance with the Directory, there is no proof that there ever existed any real zeal in the matter; and this, at least, appears certain, that very soon the ministers paid very little attention to it; till at last it came to be doubted whether that document was of any authority at all.

During the half century which comprehends the *Moderate æra*, the Directory, as we have been told by one who should know, was considered, *as not a rule, but a guide:* if so, it was a guide which nobody followed any further than pleased the private fancy of each. "The lapse of time," says Principal Hill, speaking of the Directory, "and the change of circumstances, have introduced various alterations; *and the ministers of the Church of Scotland are in general disposed to conform, in the manner of performing the public services of religion, to the practice of that part of the country in which Providence orders their lot, and are always ready to attend to every recommendation from their ecclesiastical superiors.*"*

I fear these two dispositions are hardly consistent with each other; in this case, at least, the former quite prevailed:

* Counsels respecting the Duties of the Pastoral Office, p. 2, ed. 1862.

for almost everything was done in public worship, otherwise than as the Directory appointed. The service, as the Directory appoints, was to begin with a solemn call to the congregation, and with prayer: it began with singing. The first prayer was to be a short introduction to the service: it was long, being the principal act of worship, next to the sermon, which was the grand centre of the whole, the other acts being considered as mere *garnishing*. Two chapters, at least—one from each Testament—were to be read at each meeting: it became the custom to read none, as is still the case in some parishes; the ministers of the church, as Dr. Hill truly says, being "much disposed to conform to the practice of that part of the country in which Providence orders their lot." But as a substitute for the Word of God they "lectured and preached" their own words; and these continue to be the terms used to the present day in appointing persons to conduct public worship in the High Church "before His Grace the Royal Commissioner," during the sittings of the General Assembly. The Directory also recommended the use of the Lord's prayer; but this came to be considered *popish*, and was universally discarded—nay, a great uproar was excited, in some cases, by the attempt to reintroduce it; and within the present century, some leading ministers, even in Edinburgh, preached sermons to show that the Lord's prayer did not belong to the New Testament dispensation, and was not properly a Christian prayer. The same Directory ordains that rebuking of penitents, and the celebration of marriages, should take place in public before the church; but they came to be universally done in private. The mode of celebrating the Communion which was general or universal during the last century, and which still survives, though now divested of some of its most unedifying peculiarities, might appear to have been contrived in contrast to the direc-

tions of that document which still was formally maintained as the Law of the Church.

Even at the present day, the mode of conducting public worship on Sundays, though having that kind of general agreement which is inevitable even where a liturgy is not in use, yet varies in its details as much as it easily could where the elements admitting of difference are so few; the number of possible "permutations and combinations" always depending upon that of the elements to be so dealt with. In some churches there are two prayers at each service, in many three, in some four. Two psalms are sung in some cases, in some three, in some four; and frequently the number is varied according to the judgment or fancy of the minister, as is also the place in the service at which at least one of the psalms shall come in. The Lord's prayer is now frequently used, but more generally it is not; and it is introduced at what part of the service the minister pleases—at the end of the first prayer, or of the second, or of the third, if there be a third; and often it is used by itself before the sermon. Many use the Lord's prayer in one diet of public worship and not in the other; others use it occasionally.

The prayers of one minister differ from those of another in every respect in which such exercises can be conceived to differ. In one case they are dry, didactic discourses, discussing points of theology, sadly wanting in solemnity, pathos, simplicity, and beauty, and expressed in commonplace, and often vulgar and inaccurate language—bad sermons, addressed to God, for the instruction and reproof of the people, who are put, and cannot but feel that they are put, in the position not of worshippers but of *hearers*. Very often they are little else than a string of Scriptural quotations, connected by hardly the slenderest thread of thought, some word in the conclusion of

one quotation suggesting that which is made to follow, and so failing to leave any definite impression, except perhaps a sense of bewilderment, upon the minds of the congregation, who learn that the rhapsody is at length concluded only by the minister saying the "Amen," which they ought to say.

In other cases, the prayers are neat and concise, but poor, thin, and meagre; deficient in comprehensiveness, depth, fulness, and fervour; leaving out many essential petitions and other elements of public prayer, and containing little reference to those great facts, doctrines, and duties, which, though not to be discussed, are always to be remembered, in the worship of the Sanctuary.

A few ministers, young and inexperienced, who affect ecclesiastical costume and are suspected of Episcopal sympathies, are much censured by some of the clergy because they offer prayers made up of scraps from the Liturgy of the Church of England, as if they were ambitious to exhibit the Kirk as some poor Lazarus, subsisting on crumbs that fall from the table of a rich neighbour; while by others this conduct is rather commended, as a confession of need, a protest against things as they are, and a call for reform. But whatever "the brethren" may think, "the hearers" are said to declare themselves "much refreshed" with this innovation.

Many ministers pray always the same prayers in public worship, without change or variety, from month to month and year to year, during their whole lives. Others have two, three, or four prayers, which they repeat in succession; and probably a much larger number pray extempore in the most absolute sense—plunging, on each occasion, into the great wilderness of thought and language—like Abraham who went forth not knowing whither he went, but who was safe under

the promised guidance from above, which these men shew, by their dreary wanderings, that they do not enjoy.

In one church the prayers seldom exceed five, six, or seven minutes; in others they are prolonged to fifteen, to twenty, to thirty, and even in some instances to forty minutes.

In some cases—I hope they are many—the public prayers are pious, comprehensive, solemn, judicious, and in every respect excellent. "Happy are the people that are in such a case." But what has been said may suffice at least to shew that individual liberty has had, and now has, very ample scope in the Church of Scotland in this regard; and that a boundless variety is the only tradition, in connection with our worship, that we can appeal to.

This liberty has been claimed and insisted on by our clergy during two centuries at least. Indeed, it belongs to the genius of Presbytery, and has always distinguished it.

And accordingly it was that feature of the system with which the Episcopal party in Scotland always found most fault, and which they were most desirous to reform; as everyone knows who has even that slight acquaintance with our ecclesiastical controversies which may be derived from such well-known writers as Burnet and Leighton.

This greater independence of the individual minister arises naturally from the different position which he holds in relation to his flock, compared with the Episcopal clergyman. The latter is visibly "a man under authority." His flock see over his head the chief pastor or bishop, whose deputy, in some sense, and curate the parochial clergyman is, and to whom he is in all things responsible. It appears natural, therefore, or rather inevitable, that the chief pastor should interfere with the form of worship in the different churches in his diocese, all of which compose in some sense one church,

of which the bishop is the chief pastor, and in relation to which he alone is competent to perform certain acts. Whereas under Presbytery, though the Episcopal power be vested, according to the theory, in Church Courts, yet each minister, as a member of these courts, himself partakes of that power; so that his congregation, perceiving no superior officer standing above him, naturally regard him as their highest ecclesiastical authority and ruler, who rather acquires importance than otherwise in their eyes from the existence of Church Courts, in whose proceedings he takes part, and whose power he shares. The Presbyterian minister himself cannot but be actuated, though perhaps unconsciously, by the same feelings. A man placed under the superintendence of a superior officer, to whom he is accountable, can never regard himself in the same light as another who is superintended by a court, of which he himself is a constituent member, and all whose members have the same legal standing, and the same powers. It may be true that the Presbyterial superintendence has, in some cases, not proved itself efficient; the same may be said of the Episcopal; but this is beyond doubt, that the Presbyterian system places the minister in a highly advantageous position in relation to the members of his congregation, and secures for him, if he be not unworthy, an independence and authority which, it is believed, no other clergy, either Congregationalist or Episcopalian, enjoy in an equal degree.

It appears natural that he, as the bishop of his own flock, should arrange and order everything in its public worship, without much direction or interference from those impersonal bodies in which theoretically the oversight is vested, and which, though they may lay down some general rules upon the subject, cannot be strict in the interpretation of these, or rigorous in the execution of them, without destroy-

ing that freedom of action which the system implies. The cry which is sometimes heard—that because we are an Established Church, therefore we should have uniformity in our worship—is raised by persons who forget that a uniformity which has any reality or meaning can be secured only by a ritual, with *rubrics*, universally applicable and rigidly enforced upon all and sundry; that is, by a public and authorised liturgy, departure from which is a penal offence.

But there is no real uniformity of public worship secured by only providing that the different acts of worship shall succeed one another in the same order; the acts themselves remaining as different and as unlike as the genius or caprice of different men may chance to make them, or by requiring that prayers or sermons shall in no case be read from a book or a manuscript. Against that real uniformity the Church of Scotland has, rightly or wrongly, always contended and protested. In doing so, she has undoubtedly been true to the fundamental idea of Presbytery, and has exemplified its genuine spirit.

To the eyes of her opponents our Church has appeared a scene of systematic irregularity, disorder, and confusion; and her defenders cannot deny that her only traditions are those of liberty on the part of her clergy, producing endless variety and ceaseless innovation.

"Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum."—*Hor.*

CHAPTER III.

THE GUILT OF INNOVATION.

'Αλλ' οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν μὲν ἰδίων ἁμαρτημάτων συνήγοροι γίνονται, τῶν δὲ ἀλλοτρίων κατήγοροι.—CHRYSOST.

Aliis severissimi sumus, nobis indulgentissimi, aliis austeri, nobis remissi. In eodem crimine punimus alios, nos absolvimus.—SALVIAN.

Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.—ROM. ii.

IN a pamphlet which appeared last year, we find the *argumentum ad hominem* thus delicately handled :—

While the laity possess full powers to consider all ecclesiastical questions, "the ministers of the Church are differently situated. They are precluded from considering the question at all. Whether it be right or wrong, whether it is more or less for edification, whether it would promote the interests of religion if any different practice were adopted; these points may be freely canvassed by the laity, though not by the clergy. They are bound by their ordination vows; they have given their assent in the most solemn manner that men can, to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church, as subsisting at the time when such vows or obligations were prescribed by the Church to be taken by all intrants to the ministry. These vows were deliberately sanctioned by the Church, and voluntarily homologated by them. And though they may come to think that some change is advisable in accordance with the spirit of the age and with the pro-

gressive improvement of society, and that vital religion would be promoted, and the Church be enlarged, consolidated, and strengthened by their adoption; yet, so long as they are bound by their ordination vows, they cannot attempt their introduction without perjury."—(*Innovations in Public Worship, etc.*, pp. 7, 8.)

Without attempting a formal reply at present to these charges, it may be permitted us to ask the following questions:—

1. Where shall we find described and enjoined those customs, rites, forms of worship, etc., departure from which in any particular constitutes perjury? Also, When and where the ministers of this church bound themselves on oath never to depart from or change any of these?

2. It being admitted that we have all at ordination solemnly vowed and engaged to maintain "the purity of worship authorised and practised" in the year 1707 (when an Act against innovation was passed) and before,—Where are we told that that purity consists in standing, and not kneeling to pray, or that it would be polluted by standing, instead of sitting to sing? Also, on what occasion any of us vowed or declared that the *reading of our prayers* was a departure from either pure or Presbyterian worship?

3. Since ministers at their ordination own the "purity of worship *authorised* and *practised* in this Church," if the worship "authorised" happen to differ in any respect from that "practised" in it, either now or any time before, how shall we escape falling into either Scylla or Charybdis? which shall we comply with? with statute against custom, or with custom against

statute? shall we keep our consciences clean by obeying that which has or had the sanction of law, or that which has the sanction only of the multitude, who transgress the law?

4. What words in their ordination vows bind the clergy of the Church of Scotland never to make any alterations whatever in those modes of public worship which happen to prevail in their own times, and in "those parts of the country where Providence may order their lot?" And shall a minister, *salvâ conscientiâ*, "read two chapters of the Bible, or more when the coherence of the matter requireth," and use the Lord's Prayer, within the bounds of one Presbytery; and dispense with both on his being translated to another, in compliance with what is "presently practised" in either?

5. It seems the laity enjoy full power to inquire, discuss, and judge in such matters; but as for the ministers of the church, "they are precluded from considering the question at all—whether it be right or wrong, whether it is more or less for edification, whether it would promote the interests of religion, if any different practice were adopted," etc. If this be a correct account of our position, I ask whether we be not the most degraded clergy in the world? and whether the Church be not only Erastianised and enslaved beyond all example, and beyond even the representations of its enemies? Also, Who took from us our proper and peculiar functions, and transferred them whole and entire to the laity? Moreover, How it happens that the clergy in former times claimed to do, and also did, all the things, none of which we may do, or attempt, without perjury?

6. Whether it be not the duty of every minister to render

the public worship in his Church as perfect as possible, to remove from it all defects and blemishes as far as he can, within the limits of the laws ecclesiastical? and Whether it be not incumbent upon those who denounce him as a transgressor for so doing, to quote the law or laws he transgresses?

7. Whether any one should be denounced as an innovator, or rebellious against the Church, because he does not comply with customs which have no authority of law, which are unseemly, inexpedient, distasteful to his flock, and which are themselves innovations?

8. Whether those should be censured as "divisive courses," which create no divisions, but satisfy the people, unite and multiply the flock, and strengthen the Church?

9. Whether the most solemn of all our vows be not to defend, uphold, and extend the Church, for the glory of God and the good of the people; and Whether these ends should not take precedence in our minds of any customs, rites, or regulations whatever, which have no utility or value except as they conduce to these ends?

But perhaps I should apologise for alluding to so paltry a production. The *argumentum ad hominem*, the most vulgar, mean, and ineffectual of all controversial weapons, is resorted to only by those who are conscious that they have no legitimate argument to advance. The same uncharitable reflections have been expressed by many in private; and one or two have assayed, with little success, to put them forth in Church Courts. The author of this pamphlet has been so left to himself as to print and publish the malignant nonsense. He

will be comforted—if himself a minister, as I have no doubt he is—to know that he is included in his own denunciations. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art (of the ministers of the Church of Scotland) that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou that judgest, doest the same things." If it be our duty to maintain and observe all the customs which prevailed in our Church in 1707 and 1711, none of us is innocent: "in many of these things we all of us offend."

It has been frequently said that "the innovations," however excellent or expedient in themselves, and however proper to be adopted, *if they had received the sanction of the General Assembly*, are utterly unlawful without that sanction.

But, according to the above argument, they would be equally unlawful though they had the sanction of all the Church Courts, inasmuch as they are a departure from "the discipline and worship of the Church, as subsisting at the time when the vows and obligations, imposed at ordination, were prescribed by the Church to be taken by all intrants into the holy ministry." The only effect of such sanction being accorded by the General Assembly would be to involve that venerable Court in the same perjury which the writer imputes to those who innovate on their own responsibility; since the General Assembly is made up of ministers and elders, all of whom have subjected themselves to the same or like vows and obligations; and who, "so long as they are thus bound, cannot attempt the introduction (of any innovation) without perjury;" nay, are "precluded from considering such questions at all;"—"these points may be freely canvassed by the laity, though not by the clergy"—"they are bound by their ordination vows," as the elders no less are.

According to this doctrine, any member who should move

the General Assembly to approve or allow any innovation would be guilty of perjury; as would also any one who supported such motion; and, by adopting it, the venerable Assembly would only make itself *particeps criminis;* so that this favourite suggestion, instead of preventing, would only multiply and aggravate the transgression.

We had not hitherto imagined that the General Assembly of 1707, or of 1711, had any powers or privileges which did not belong in an equal degree to every Assembly holden before or since; so that anything whatever which either of those Assemblies saw fit to do, any of these had power to undo, if they pleased.

A minister or elder of the present day, we supposed, had just the same right, and even the same duty, to consider and weigh the terms of admission of ministers to benefices, and the declarations that should be required of them, as any of the ministers or elders who framed and proposed the Act of 1711, which imposed the declarations now exacted; and the man who should propose that that Act be repealed or modified would be no more guilty of perjury, or any other sin, or impropriety, than he was on whose motion it was at first adopted. On the contrary, it is not only possible, but very likely, that this is the very thing which that person would be found doing, if he had lived in our day—for the Act of 1711 was an *innovation* then; a new law dictated by the apprehension of new dangers.

But, it seems, "all these points may be freely canvassed by the laity." The laity are no doubt much obliged for this ample concession to them of those rights and powers of which the ministers and elders are denuded.

I hope the laity will always jealously guard their privileges; and, for my part, I should feel no regret if these were in some

respects much enlarged. One might suppose this writer meant that the laity should reform the Church, when it needs reformation; the clergy standing by, not presuming to do anything, or even to utter a word, or indicate a feeling, lest they should make themselves guilty of breaking their vows. If such be the privileges and duties of the laity, it is time they knew it.

All Scotchmen, however, must be aware that the laity have no direct power, whatever indirect influence they may have, in the legislation of the Church of Scotland. With the small exception of the representatives of the Universities and Royal Burghs, all the members of the General Assembly are either ministers or representatives of Church Courts, *i.e.*, virtually of ministers. And all the laymen in Scotland, however unanimous or resolved, could not alter any one law or regulation of the Church against the clergy, who are always a majority in the General Assembly, and in all Church Courts—except the Parochial Kirk Sessions, which have nothing to do with legislation.

But this writer proposes nothing so revolutionary as that the laity should either exercise or possess any power in reforming the Kirk. Not at all; all he asserts for them is—*the sacred liberty of dissent.* "They can," he says, "with a clear conscience, canvass the merits of any changes that are proposed," and "adopt the course which they think most likely to promote their spiritual improvement; and it is plainly their duty to join themselves to that branch of the Church which they think most in accordance with Scripture," etc., *i.e.*, separate themselves from the Church,—"dissent." This zealous friend and advocate of the Kirk has no remedy to propose but that which must in the end ruin the institution—*depletion:* the loss of more blood is the only medicine his wisdom can prescribe for the already emaciated body ecclesiastical. The people do not need to be informed that they enjoy liberty to

go out of the Church—a privilege they have fully understood and abundantly used for a long while, but one which it is strange that a zealous advocate of the Church should suggest to them: whereas what we should desire and seek for them is, *liberty to remain in the Church*, by considering "what is best adapted to promote the glory of God, the good of mankind, and the advancement of pure and undefiled religion," and what is most decorous and suitable in the times in which we live.

According to the notions of this writer and of those whose views he expresses, though all the clergy and all the lay-members of the Church of Scotland should come to a unanimous opinion that instrumental music, for example, or reading of prayers were desirable, it would still remain the duty of the clergy to resist these innovations, because the General Assembly 150 years ago passed a certain Act, in totally different circumstances, and with the view of preventing quite different dangers. And the laity must all in duty dissent, and the clergy, for conscience' sake, denude themselves of their flocks, and submit to receive and consume their stipends, out of a sacred regard to their vows! But the good of the Church, and the edification of the people, are the supreme laws in the case—all other considerations should and must give place to these.

Is it possible, after all, that this writer can be some enemy of the Church, under the mask of a friend, alarmed at the prospect of a reformed worship in the Establishment, which may already shew symptoms of drawing back some of those who had freely used that sacred privilege of dissent, which he so officiously suggests to the members of the Church of Scotland, and so zealously asserts for them! I hope, however, experience has taught us to seek other methods of reformation, more effectual and also more legitimate.

CHAPTER IV.

TO WHOM IT PERTAINS TO MAKE CHANGES IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes.—JUDG. xxii. 6.

From this Act (1690) it would appear that while the State has fixed the Church's faith, it has not fixed the Church's worship. The Church may adopt any form of worship she pleases without violating any Act of Parliament. She must ever believe as the Westminster Divines believed; but she may worship in a surplice or without a surplice; with a liturgy or without a liturgy: in this she is free.—CUNNINGHAM'S *Church History of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 286.

IT is remarkable in our late controversies that few of those who attempted to raise an outcry against certain changes in the mode of conducting public worship, ventured to deny that the changes themselves were, on the whole, for the better; and that several of them were unquestionable improvements. Some opponents went so far as to acknowledge that, "if the thing were to be done over again, it might properly be done as the innovating members of the Church desired." "But," it was added, "we were not now constituting the Church for the first time: it had been otherwise ordered; and we, as dutiful sons of the Church, should respectfully submit, and conform to general and long established usage."

This, however, evidently begs the whole question at issue. It takes for granted that the practices, now general, are parts of the constitution of the Church, and that a mere custom has acquired the force of law. Both these assumptions I deny;

and the absurdity of the latter is shown by this, that some of the customs thus sought to be made obligatory, are not only in opposition to the Spirit, but to the letter of the law. I shall assume here that the Directory, sanctioned by the General Assembly in 1645, is the law of the Church of Scotland relating to the ordering of public worship, except in so far as any of its provisions may have been repealed by subsequent laws of the Church regularly enacted; and that it never was, nor is now, competent for any Church Court, supreme or subordinate, to issue any order, or to grant any permission, to contravene that Statute, in whole or in part. This can be done only by an Act of the Church, passed in a constitutional manner. For no one, whose opinion is worthy of regard, will contend that a body like the General Assembly, which exercises administrative and judicial as well as legislative functions, has authority to repeal in the former capacity what it had established in the latter, any more than one of our Courts of law has authority to set aside an Act of Parliament.

I have often been told, both in public and in private, that such novelties as standing to sing, kneeling to pray, reading of prayers, or the use of an organ, would be quite in order, *if the sanction of the Church Courts were first obtained.* But these things are either forbidden by the constitution and laws of the Church, or they are not. If they be not so forbidden, they are permitted, and lawful for those to adopt who judge them expedient—unless we will exalt the private feelings and prejudices of individuals into ecclesiastical statutes. If, on the other hand, those novelties be really contrary to the law or constitution of the Church, no Church Court whatever has right to grant to any of its ministers or congregations liberty to practise them. In such case, they can return but one or other of the following answers: "The matters in

question are prohibited by the law which we administer, and we have no power to grant a dispensation;" or, "They are not so prohibited, and we have no authority to enforce or to issue a prohibition."

An exception may be pleaded in cases where discord had arisen, or was certain or likely to arise in a congregation from changes in the public services. The Presbytery may be presumed to have authority to take summary action, with a view to prevent disunion, confusion, or other scandals tending to obstruct edification, disperse the flock, or otherwise injure the Church; but such intervention is only permissible until the Courts have had time to deal with the matter in a legislative way; and if the Supreme Court do not prohibit the matter in question, either by a new law, or by a judgment professedly founded upon a law already extant and binding, the matter remains unforbidden and lawful as before, notwithstanding any expression of opinion on the part of individual members of the Court, or any decision not professedly founded upon existing law. I hardly think that any lawyer will doubt the soundness of what is here said; proceeding, as it does, upon the evident principle that, under a constitution, men are to be governed by laws, not by private feelings, opinions, or judgments—well or ill-founded; and if any Society should attempt to punish any one of its members for doing what was not prohibited by any of its laws, the Society might be restrained and punished by the municipal law for breach of contract, whether that Society were of an ecclesiastical or of any other sort.

To pretend that no changes are permissible in our public worship, unless the formal sanction of the Church Courts shall first have been obtained, is virtually to contend that no changes should ever be made at all; because it has been

found practically impossible to obtain such sanction, even in cases where the need of some alteration was most apparent.

It was judged desirable, during the last century, to have additional hymns to be sung in Church, besides the psalms in metre. Accordingly, great pains were employed by some of the leading clergy of that time in preparing the "Paraphrases," which have long been in use in our churches. But that collection never received any express or public sanction; they are now employed in our churches without any authority but the good pleasure of individual ministers. The same is the case with the Collection of Hymns with which a committee of the General Assembly has been occupied many years past. These are now used in many churches, and may be in all, but the Assembly has not sanctioned them, and, if we may judge from precedents, it probably never will.

The same holds in regard to the Prayers for Social and Family Worship—a volume lately prepared by a committee of the General Assembly. The ordering such a work to be prepared was itself a striking innovation, and went far to commit the General Assembly as to the propriety of reading prayers. But what is here to be remarked is, that, though composed under its authority, the General Assembly has hitherto refrained, and probably may continue to refrain, from giving these Prayers the stamp of its sanction, so that they are only "published by authority of the Committee."

Many Overtures have been laid before the Assembly to allow the private dispensation of the Communion in certain cases; but the Venerable Court has hitherto declined to entertain them: though the tenor of the last discussion on the subject rendered it evident that no fault would be found with any minister who should do so—at least in urgent cases, as I myself have since done oftener than once. In regard to a

more frequent dispensation of this sacrament, the same may be said. On the other hand, many of our prevailing customs are only innovations, brought in by clergymen on their own responsibility, and propagated by others adopting them in like manner.

The reading of the Psalms line by line, and afterwards by two lines, during singing, which so long prevailed, was discontinued not by public authority, but by the private sense of the clergy, who judged that the custom was absurd after the people had learned to read.

The singing of Doxologies at the conclusion of the service, which is now general, has in like manner no public warrant.

The same may be said of *Bands* or *Choirs*, which are employed in a great proportion of those churches in which there is anything that deserves the name of music.

The practice of chanting prose psalms has come into use in many cases of late years. This is a striking and important innovation; but no Church Court has interponed its authority, either to permit or to prohibit, or has been asked so to do.

The *reading* of sermons, which so late as the year 1732 was reckoned "an offensive innovation" on the ancient and universal custom of the Kirk, gradually extended until it became rather the rule than the exception, as it probably still is—and yet the Courts of the Church never gave it any approval, nor did they ever condemn, or in any way censure it—though they knew well that it was most offensive to a large proportion of the people, and had been a fruitful cause of dissent.*

The most striking, perhaps, of our late ecclesiastical changes, is the introduction of stained-glass windows. Before

* "The Assembly, in 1726, remitted to its Commission an 'Overture

the rebuilding of the Greyfriars Church—so lately as the year 1856-7—none of our churches since the Reformation had been decorated in this way. If custom could in any case establish a law or rule, it must have done so in this case; for here the custom was ancient, inveterate, and virtually universal ever since the foundation of the Church itself; supported also by the presumed abhorrence of the people, and the emphatic testimony which their teachers had at all times borne against what they esteemed the idolatry of the Romish Church, and against everything which seemed to minister to that idolatry, or to be connected with it; as pictures in churches undoubtedly and even conspicuously were.

Yet neither the Supreme Court nor the Presbytery of Edinburgh felt called upon to interfere, or to notice this most startling invasion of Presbyterian notions and practices. This wise forbearance, however, was so little reckoned on, that I was earnestly and repeatedly counselled to obtain the consent of the Presbytery at least, before perpetrating so daring an outrage upon inveterate custom and feeling. Not choosing to ask liberty to do what was not prohibited by any law; and averse to put the Church Courts in a delicate position, we proceeded upon our own responsibility; thus setting an ex-

anent the Method of Preaching;' And in a representation and petition signed by twenty-four influential ministers, laid before the Assembly of 1732, reference is thus made to it—'There appeared more and more need for it every day, by reason of several innovations, both in the method and strain of preaching, introduced of late by some preachers and young ministers, very offensive to many of God's people, and no small obstruction of spiritual edification. Yea, a young minister appointed to preach before his Majesty's Commissioner to the last Assembly, had the assurance, even on that solemn occasion, to add to former innovations that of reading his sermon openly; though he could not but know that it would give great offence, both to ministers and people of this Church, and bring a reflection on the Assembly, as if they approved thereof.'" —*Cunningham's Church History of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 445.

ample which has been extensively followed—in some cases with great splendour, and at vast expense—and which the most timid and conservative Doctors among us do not now scruple to follow, by having their own churches ornamented in the same way.

They who have concurred in this novelty must not be startled at others of less moment, and less inconsistent with Scotch Presbyterian traditions and hereditary feelings.

In the foregoing cases, innovations on established practice have been introduced by individuals where no law existed on the subject; but in many other cases they have been brought about in the same manner, *against the express provisions* of laws, whose authority no one denied.

The Directory, as we saw in a former chapter, appoints that, at each diet of worship, two chapters of the Bible shall be read, one from each Testament; and also that the Lord's Prayer shall be used. But over the whole Church, which acknowledged this Directory, and passed Acts of Assembly to enforce it, it became the custom to substitute a lecture for the lessons; so that not a word of Scripture was ever heard in the churches, except, perhaps, the text of the sermon, or some quotations in the prayers or discourses; and the *Lord's Prayer* came to be regarded with suspicion, because it savoured, as they opined, of popery; but rather, perhaps, because the use of it was a virtual acknowledgment that set forms of prayer were not unlawful nor unbecoming in Christian worship. And it is notorious that even at the present day there is a considerable number of churches in Scotland, in which lessons from the Bible are not read nor the Lord's Prayer used. This scandalous proceeding, contrary to the laws of the Church, was begun, extended, and continued, solely because the body of the ministers, unworthily

yielding to the stupid prejudices of the people, which they should have resisted and removed, chose so to do. No Church Court gave them, or was asked to give them, permission thus to violate at once Christian propriety and the laws of the Church. And now the dreary service consisted of the minister's preachings, lecturings, and prayers (which often were as much preachings as either of the former), and of that exercise on the part of the people which is called *singing*, but of which melody and harmony are not component parts.

Even such innovations as these—at once illegal, irrational, and indecent—are the work of individuals, perpetuated by those who chose, and tolerated by the Church Courts. And yet some of the very men who are chargeable with acting in this manner have had the hardihood to raise an outcry against "innovation," because a minister, fearful of talking nonsense on so solemn an occasion; or of falling into confusion, or swelling into bombast, rant, or wild and offensive declamation; or of sinking into irreverence or mere drivel; thinks proper to read prayers which he has carefully written, that both himself and his flock may feel that prayer is not a less solemn or important exercise than preaching, and that it is not less indecorous to speak unadvisedly with our lips in our address to God, than in those sermons to our fellow-creatures, which we laboriously compose, and for the most part read or commit to memory.

A whole catalogue of other changes, now common or universal, has been brought in, contrary to the law of the Church, on the sole responsibility of individual clergymen.

When we consider these things—and many more could no doubt be added—we must confess that our present Church system is a great heap of customs which have been changed, according to times and seasons, by private influence and

authority, without any sanction being either obtained or sought from the Presbyteries, Synods, or General Assemblies. These Courts have systematically, and no doubt for what appeared to themselves good reasons, abstained from interfering with such changes as seemed to them unimportant, or to inflict no damage upon the Church. So far has this tolerance been carried in some instances, that, in the early part of the last century, a minister in Aberdeenshire actually introduced the Book of Common Prayer into the public service of the parish church, and continued regularly to read it for several years to the end of his life—no one apparently attempting to hinder him, or even censuring the *innovation.**

* The following curious extracts from the Minutes of the Kirk Session of Banchory Devenick have been kindly furnished me by the Rev. Dr. Paul, minister of the parish :—

" 28*th March* 1708.—The said day a proclamation from the councill was read, intimating a fast upon Thursday next, the first of Aprill. It was also intimated, that whereas Friday next was the anniversary day of the crucifixion of the Sone of God, the people were desired to observe that day religiously, by coming up to the Passion sermon in the forenoon, and to hear a preparation sermon in the afternoon, in order to the celebration of the Holy Communion on the next Lord's Day, the anniversary of the Resurrection of Christ."

" 19*th December* 1708.—The said day intimation was made, that whereas Saturday next was the anniversary day of the Incarnation of the Sone of God, the people were exhorted to come up at the ordinary time to divine worship on that day."

" 30*th January* 1709.—This being the dismal anniversary-day of the barbarous murder of the Royal Martyr King Charles 1st, of ever-blessed memory, preached Mr. Robert Jamieson (the minister's assistant) a sermon suitable to that sad occasion—text, 1st Sam. 26 c. 9 v."

" 28*th May* 1710.—This being the anniversary-day of the descent of the Holy Ghost, called Pentecost or Whitsunday, Mr. Robt. Jamieson preached a sermon suitable to this feastival—text, Acts 2 c. 1, 2, 3, 4 verses."

" 5*th Novr.* 1710.—This day being the anniversary-day of the mercifull deliverance from the Gun-powder plott by the detection thair-of, preached

This, then, is my answer to those who ask why I have presumed to read prayers, or to use instrumental music, to change the postures in public worship, etc., without the authority of the Church Courts first sought and obtained :—

> Mr. Robt. Jamieson a sermon suitable to the occasion—text, Ps. 126. v. 1, 2."
>
> " 27*th July* 1712.—Given out of the public money for the incident charges of sixty-two service books which were distribute amongst the parochiners in order to setting up the English Liturgy in this church—£3 : 5 : 6."
>
> " 19*th October* 1712.—The said day intimation was made to the congregation, that the next Lord's Day the excellent Liturgy of the Church of England was to be used in the publick worship of God in this congregation; and accordingly the people were seriously exhorted to perform this method of worship with a true spirit of devotion, and with that becoming gravity and decencie that was expected from those who had been so exemplary heretofore in the publick worship of God."
>
> " 26*th October* 1712.—The said day, according to the foresaid intimation, the Liturgy of the Church of England was first used in the publick worship of God in this parochial church, in order to the continuance thereof; for advancing of which excellent worship there were two hundred books of Common Prayer given to the minister out of the charity books sent from England to Scotland to be distribute gratis, charges of fraught excepted, which two hundred books were given and distribute some weeks before amongst such of the pariochiners as were capable to make use of them. As also a folio book for the minister and a quarto for the clerk.
>
> " Paid out of the publick money for charges of the foresaid 200 prayer books, at a penny per book, £10 ; for the folio and quarto, 4/ ; carriage thereof from Aberdeen at several times, 6/."

Dr. Paul adds—" You are aware, I suppose, that Mr. James Gordon, parson of Banchory Devenick (as he is usually called), was author of a work entitled the Reformed Bishop, for which he was deposed in 1680. On his expression of repentance for the offence given, he was reponed a few weeks after the sentence was passed. Mr. Gordon continued to hold his charge at Banchory after the Revolution ; and under the provisions of the Act of Parliament 1695, remained minister there till his death, which took place about the year 1714. Mr. Gordon's name does not appear in the sederunts of the Presbytery of Aberdeen from that period, nor is there any notice whatever taken

1. These things have not been regulated by any law of which I am aware, or which any one, who censured that proceeding, has been able to quote.

2. It has been the practice to make such innovations without any public authority to that effect; so that to have invoked it on the present occasion, in order to authorise alterations which are not unlawful, which are in themselves confessed improvements, which are agreeable to the people, and which tend manifestly not to divide or scatter, but to unite and increase congregations, and to strengthen the establishment, would itself be an *innovation* as contrary to precedent as it is to reason.

If others, during two hundred years, and indeed from the very foundation of the Presbyterian Church, had presumed, without the public or formal approbation of the "Ecclesiastical superiors," to practise novelties—many of which were contrary to existing regulations, and some of which were of doubtful, and worse than doubtful, character and tendency—we could not persuade ourselves that we should be censured if we ventured upon some reforms which no existing law had forbidden, and the necessity and advantage of which are generally admitted.

3. To ask permission in such cases, which was certainly unusual, and appeared unnecessary, was also the surest way to defeat the end in view; for experience has shewn that the permission would not be granted; while to proceed without obtaining it, if once asked, would be disrespectful and indecorous.

of him in the minutes of the Presbytery, excepting on one occasion that he was summoned before them and rebuked for allowing his son to officiate for him at Banchory after his deposition.

"I see no reference whatever in the Presbytery records to the service books referred to in the minutes of our Kirk Session, herewith sent."

4. Besides, we felt that we were not warranted to thrust the Church Courts into what might prove to be an embarrassing position, compelling them to give a decision which might appear either to violate old traditions, or to obstruct the present interests of the Church ; either to offend a great and increasing number of enlightened people by refusing the permission sought, or to give umbrage to a perhaps greater number of narrow-minded, but well-meaning people, by granting it.

CHAPTER V.

DANGERS OF THE CHURCH.

'Εκ Διὸς ἤδη πάντα πεφασμένα πάντοθι κεῖται.—ARAT.

Ye can discern the face of the sky, can ye not discern the signs of the times?—MATT. xvi. 3.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.—PROV. xxii. 3.

THAT the Church of Scotland needs some important changes may seem to be demonstrated by the undeniable fact that it has lost ground, and is continually losing ground, if not absolutely, yet relatively to other sects, and to the numbers of the people.

This unquestionable declension, which did not commence with the last Secession in 1843, but had been in progress long before, indicates that the National Church no longer satisfies the religious tastes and other demands of the population, and is gradually losing the character of a "National Church."

Those who consider how rapid has been that progress of comparative decay, and how active are still the causes which have produced it, may well feel anxiety for the Church; even for its existence as an establishment. We cannot disguise from ourselves the painful fact, that the Kirk even at this moment maintains its position, as the Church of the law, by the suffrance of the English Church; which, with the eager co-operation of the Dissenters, could at once disestablish it.

The Church of England indeed is restrained (as we generally suppose) from any such attempt by certain considerations of honour, and chiefly by an apprehension that the fall of the smaller Church Establishment might pave the way for the overthrow of the greater. The latter security is much the better of the two; for societies, like individuals, are most steadily swayed by those influences which affect their own interests, or what they consider such.

As to the point of honour, we should not rely too much upon that; because it does not appear that either the Church of England, or the Imperial Parliament, is bound to uphold our Church, except on the express condition on which it was established at the Revolution, namely, that "that Church Government was most agreeable to the inclinations of the people"—*Act abolishing Prelacie*, 1689.* And, accordingly, the Acts establishing our Church at the Revolution have since been repealed and altered in many particulars by the Imperial Parliament; it having been ascertained that "the inclinations of the generality of the people of Scotland" had so changed as to warrant such repeal or alteration.

Some persons, I am aware, have argued that the Imperial Parliament is, in morality and justice at least, precluded from changing in any way those solemn national compacts by which the Church was established at the Revolution. But a doctrine need not be seriously refuted which would oblige the Government to prohibit all dissent, and to persecute all Dissenters; and which would render unjust and sacrilegious all such reforms as have taken place within the last forty years, respecting the elective Franchise, the Burghs, the Universities, and the Parish Schools. Toleration of any Church but the Kirk, was, in particular, anxiously guarded

* Acts of Parliament of Scotland, ix. 104.

against at the Revolution; and the Kirkmen of 1712 were consistent, if not wise, in denouncing the toleration then enacted, as not only a ruinous encroachment upon their privileges, but as a flagrant violation of the Articles of Union. It cannot therefore be seriously doubted, that the Imperial Parliament—urged on as it would be by the Dissenters in both parts of the Kingdom, and not obstructed by the Church of England, which exercises an enormous influence in both Houses, especially in the House of Lords—would not feel restrained from disestablishing the Kirk, if it should become manifest to them that "the inclinations of the generality of the people" so required; as these "inclinations" extorted from a reluctant government its establishment in 1690.

As to the second supposed security—namely, the apprehensions of the Church of England, that the overthrow of the Kirk might pave the way for its own disestablishment—we can hardly doubt that among the calmer spirits, and those who attach more importance to the civil establishment of the Church than to its form of government, etc.—in short, among those who regard the Church rather from a social and political, than an Ecclesiastical point of view—this consideration will have great weight. But we cannot disguise from ourselves that this class among the English clergy has greatly diminished during the last half century. Controversy has tended powerfully to evoke the Church spirit. Episcopacy is now very generally regarded by the Anglican clergy as of divine authority; so that no society is indeed a Christian Church which repudiates or wants the three orders of the Priesthood, or at least the Episcopal order. They also resent the humiliating position, as they conceive it, which their Church holds in relation to the Law and the civil Government of the country: and "they champ upon the bit"—to use an expres-

sion of their own Hooker—which Parliament has put into their mouth ; so that they can neither add, omit, nor change a single sentence in a single prayer, or one anathema, however intolerant or uncharitable, in a creed, without the sanction of the Sovereign with the consent and authority of both Houses of Parliament.

These restraints are so keenly felt by a large and influential portion of the English clergy, that they make no secret of their opinion, that the advantages of the civil establishment are dearly purchased by their continuance. No doubt that fraction of the clergy who are so fortunate as to possess the loaves and fishes, will always, as a body, decline to carry these aspirations further than protests and declamation : but the great majority have no such temptations, for they are extremely poor ; and, as a necessary consequence, much dissatisfied with things as they are ; and all men are tempted to esteem institutions according as they affect their own present temporal interests, and large bodies of men always do so.

It therefore appears vain to expect from the great body, either of the clergy or of the more zealous members of the Anglican Church, zealous or effectual resistance to any attempts that may be made to suppress the Church of Scotland. A large number of them would rather exult over the putting down of "that form of schism which has contrived to get itself established north of the Tweed"—as a decisive victory over an old, obstinate, formidable, and once victorious rival.

Besides : might not the legal abrogation of the Kirk naturally introduce the establishment of *the Church* in Scotland? There is no denying that of late years the Church of England has largely gained in popular sympathy and support. Besides the conservatives, whose attachment to the institution is characteristic and hereditary, a large portion of the liberal

party of all religious persuasions have had their former prejudices softened, if not an attachment to it created, by the factiousness and intolerance of dissent upon one hand, and, upon the other, by the larger and more humane spirit which has begun of late years to characterise at least a number of the leading spirits in the Church. Such men persuade themselves that soon, if not already, the Anglican Church will afford the only refuge for those, whether laity or clergy, who are not prepared to give themselves up to absolute mental servitude, but are resolved to vindicate for themselves some freedom of inquiry and speech on theological doctrines; and who consider that a national Church should be comprehensive and liberal in its constitution; that it should brand nothing as *heresy* except a denial of some one of those very few points which constitute the foundation and essence of the Christian Religion, as taught in the New Testament. The late decisions of the Court of Arches have served greatly to extend and deepen such feelings—however the straiter churchmen may be scandalised by them; and since the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has not only confirmed, but even much extended those liberal interpretations of the law, there can be no doubt that the Church of England will gain an accession of strength in popular feeling, which will set it on a firmer ground than it has ever occupied. In such circumstances, no doubt, all those who feel that their orthodoxy requires, besides Scripture and reason, also the arguments of deposition and forfeiture, the ruin of families, the brand of "heresy," and other pains and penalties, will violently denounce such latitudinarianism, as polluting the Church and desecrating religion; but it is not likely that they will weaken it by seceding. Rather they may be expected to be satisfied with the privilege, still secured to them, of denouncing corruptions and the toler-

ation of them, and of charitably groaning over the infidei shepherds and their misled flocks. There cannot, however, be a doubt that any interpretation of the law which expands the institution from the condition of a *Sect* to that of a *Church*, will in the same degree contribute to render it *national*—in fact as it is in style—and to draw within its pale multitudes who are now hovering upon the borders of sects with which their spiritual ties are fairly broken; but from which they have not finally separated themselves, only because not well resolved whither they should betake themselves.

Many suppose that the interests of the Established Churches in Great Britain are so bound up together, that whatever strengthens or weakens one, tends also to strengthen or weaken the other. It would rather appear that the opposite of this is nearer the truth. These two churches, as now existing, are rather antagonists than allies, as indeed they have been at all times when care for the temporalities was not the only form of clerical zeal. This at least is certain and obvious, that every accession of strength and influence gained by the Southern Establishment brings the northern, while it continues in its present state, into greater peril; for, united and commingled as the populations of England and Scotland now are, the Scotch Presbyterians, at least of the higher and middle classes, stand nearly in the same relation to the Episcopal Church of England as the English Dissenters do; and the same influences which withdraw Methodists, Quakers, Independents, and others, from their respective Connections, tend to draw Scotch Presbyterians out of the Kirk to the Church of England. Now, also, when by a more liberal interpretation of the law, and other causes operating in the same direction, those influences are rendered more powerful, undoubtedly the result will be more and more unfavourable

to Scotch Presbyterianism, and particularly to that of the Established Church; unless it shall in good time look its position boldly in the face, acknowledge honestly the real sources of its weakness, and set itself to remove these with a courage and zeal proportioned to the gravity of the danger.

These dangers do not appear to me to have much or almost anything to do, directly at least, with Episcopacy or Presbytery as forms of Church government. But they arise from other causes, and chiefly the three following:—

First and chiefly, The form and manner of public worship.

Secondly, The extent, minuteness, and strictness of the Creed, and of the subscription required of office-bearers.

Thirdly, Some peculiarities in the discipline or government of the Church.

These causes have long been in operation, and they act with increasing force from year to year. So that, if things are permitted to go on much longer in the same course, the Kirk cannot but find itself so reduced as to lose all claim to be considered as in fact the National Church; and the loss of its establishment cannot in that case be a very distant event. I am well aware how obstinately men shut their eyes to such melancholy prospects, and what ridiculous nostrums they often rely on for redressing those evils which they cannot but admit. A venerable father of the Church, to whom I expressed my apprehensions many years ago, replied that he did not regard the danger of the Church so great as I considered it, and at all events, "it would last his day." And upon another occasion, after the Secession in 1843, the same individual, when the crisis had proved incomparably more serious than he would admit to be probable or possible before it happened, thought that the Church could still be saved "by a strict adherence to the forms of procedure!" There are people now, in like

manner, who insist that the Church of Scotland is in a better state in 1863 than it was in 1842. Certainly it is more at peace and more united—which are great blessings—but if we measure its strength by the power and position of its adversaries, such talk can only illustrate the saying of Holy Writ, that men may "have eyes and see not."

Such remedies as some men talk of are mere delusions; and that importance should be attached to them is a melancholy proof how imperfectly the real danger is understood or felt. A far deeper revolution is wanted.

On the eve of the Reformation, when matters began to look serious even in the eyes of ecclesiastics, many of the clergy were seen at last to bestir themselves a little, and to busy themselves with certain small repairs for upholding the edifice which time had undermined, and which the storm was ready to overthrow. But the remedy, besides being ridiculously inadequate to the occasion, was also too late. "Because wisdom called and they refused, because she stretched out her hand and none of them regarded, therefore she laughed at their calamity, and mocked when their fear came."

Even yet, if we were wise and courageous, we might be safe, and even prosperous. I feel persuaded that, without running any risks, or needing to go to Parliament, by virtue of the powers which we ourselves constitutionally possess, we have the means of reforming everything in the Church that obstructs its prosperity. Unlike the clergy of the English Establishment, we have virtually all our affairs in our own hands, and, if we use our powers temperately and wisely, we shall meet only with applause and encouragement from all those, at least, whose approbation is valuable in itself, or of consequence to us.

CHAPTER VI.

SECESSIONS TO THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, AND THE CAUSES.

Μηδεὶς πλανάσθω· ἐαν μή τις ᾖ ἐκτὸς τοῦ Θυσιαστηρίου, ὑστερεῖται τοῦ ἄρτου τοῦ Θεοῦ. Εἰ γὰρ ἑνὸς καὶ δευτέρου προσευχὴ τοσαύτην ἰσχὺν ἔχει, πόσῳ μᾶλλον ἡ τε τοῦ ἐπισκόπου καὶ πάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας; . . . σπουδάσωμεν οὖν, μὴ ἀντιτάσσεσθαι τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ, ἵνα ὦμεν Θεῷ ὑποτασσόμενοι . . . Τὸν οὖν ἐπίσκοπον δῆλον ὅτι ὡς αὐτὸν τὸν Κύριον δεῖ προσβλέπειν.—IGNAT. *Epis. ad Ephes.*

Quisquis ab Ecclesia segregatur adulteræ jungitur, a promissis Ecclesiæ separatur. Nec perveniet ad Christi præmia, qui relinquit Ecclesiam Christi. Alienus est, profanus est, hostis est. Habere jam non Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem . . . Qui pacem Christi et concordiam rumpit, adversus Christum facit. Qui alibi præter Ecclesiam colligit, Christi Ecclesiam spargit.—CYPRIAN, *De Unit. Eccles.*

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.—Ps. xcvi.

THAT some considerable alterations are indispensably needed in our modes of conducting public worship is so evident to every one who is capable of observation, that any attempt to render it more certain or clear may well be dispensed with. Even those who think that in many, or even in the generality of cases, the prayers and other services are what they should be, cannot deny that in many cases they are in almost every respect what they should not be. This admission settles the whole question: because it is the business of the Church to provide that everywhere, in even the remotest parishes, and among the humblest and most illiterate of the

population, the public worship shall be distinguished by good taste, decency, propriety, and solemnity, as well as by purity in doctrine and fervour of devotion; that it shall be comprehensive, and as far as possible complete in its several parts, omitting nothing that is essential to the idea of public Christian worship on one hand, while on the other it avoids redundancy and tediousness, doctrinal exaggeration, fanatical vehemence, and enthusiastic raptures, and everything else that is inconsistent with sober piety and godly wisdom. No Church is rightly constituted or well conducted in which the most educated and refined of its members may not worship in any of its congregations without meeting what shall disgust or offend him. It is one of the very functions of the Church to educate the people in solemnity of feeling, in reverence and decorum, as well as in the knowledge of Christian doctrine; and if this cannot be secured—as manifestly it cannot—by each minister being left to produce extempore, if he pleases, the whole service each Sunday, some reform is called for, by which the legitimate ends of public worship may be secured, and the grosser improprieties and defects at least may be corrected.

It may be objected that to secure these ends we must not only advocate the composition of a public liturgy, but its rigid and universal enforcement; and, even more than this, the preparation by some public authority of the *sermons* which the clergy shall be compelled to read to their flocks on Sundays; since good taste and pious feeling may be offended by the preaching no less than by the prayers. Even this latter notion has not wanted advocates. It has appeared to some very wise men a prodigious waste of labour, that many thousands of clergymen should expend every week a large portion of that time which is so much needed for pastoral

and other duties, in composing sermons each for himself, when some few men, eminently qualified, might be selected to produce discourses for the whole body, which would be incomparably superior, and which would tend far more to the edification, and even the satisfaction, of the hearers. This idea, however plausible it may appear, is not likely to find favour among any considerable portion of either clergy or laity in Presbyterian Churches.

There can be no doubt, in the mind of any judicious person accustomed to attend divine worship in Presbyterian churches, that the sermons are, as a general rule, very much superior to the prayers. This is easily accounted for; but the fact itself is, I apprehend, indisputable. There exists accordingly, at least among the more educated hearers in our churches, a general and deep dissatisfaction with *the worship*.

This is indicated by many circumstances.—

During the last five or six years innumerable Articles, Reviews, Letters, etc., have appeared in the Scotch newspapers. Excepting those few which are notoriously under clerical and sectarian influence, it is surprising how uniform the Scottish journals have been in the opinions they have expressed on this subject. The common complaint of almost all that expressed the popular *lay* mind, and of all without exception that expressed the mind of the educated and thinking lay mind, is, *the prayers*—their tedious length—their incoherence—their perpetual repetitions—their didactic and sermonizing character—their consisting of little but a string of unconnected quotations from Scripture—their want of solemnity, beauty, devotion, or some other quality or qualities which should especially distinguish prayer. Any one who has paid attention to these manifestations, which have been surprisingly numerous of late years—especially during

the controversy respecting innovations in 1858 and 1859, and since that time—must have been struck with the uniformity of their tenor. This seems to admit of but one explanation, viz., that something is much amiss in the matter complained of; and that if not wrong absolutely, or in itself, it is so at least in relation to the feelings and tastes of the present generation; and especially, unless I mistake, of the rising generation. This circumstance is highly significant; for it is in the minds not of the old but of the young, that we may read the sure prophecy of approaching revolutions.

Of late years a great number of persons have forsaken the Church of Scotland and Presbytery, to join the Scotch Episcopal Church. This deserves serious consideration; the more so as, besides the present loss, it may indicate a tendency which, if left unchecked, shall work the most disastrous consequences to the Church of Scotland. It cannot be doubted that *fashion* has much to do in this; some think it the chief influence. Not to mention that among the wealthier classes a large and increasing number of the youth of both sexes are now educated in England, where they become accustomed to the Episcopal worship, and are often zealously indoctrinated with High Church teaching—numbers who have been subjected to no such influences are as ambitious to belong to the fashionable Church as they are to obtain admission to fashionable society, and for the same reason. People who are resolved to be *genteel*, naturally aspire to be genteel in all things, and at all times—in religion as well as in dress, manners, and society; and on Sundays no less than at other times. Accordingly great numbers of people who have been trained up with no prepossessions favourable to Episcopacy, but the contrary, are found, on their "getting up in the world," as the phrase is, to join the Episcopal Church—

moved by nothing, so far as can be ascertained, but the ambition to go to heaven in fashionable company. As in the seventeenth century thousands of the Scottish people who had no mind to Presbytery were driven into the Kirk by civil and ecclesiastical persecution, so now many are induced to leave it for reasons equally worldly. It is not uncharitable to say so; because the fact is evident, and in many cases is hardly attempted to be concealed.

But we cannot believe that such reasons will explain the generality of those Secessions. Though the motives here alleged may have insensibly mingled with them, others, and these of a more respectable kind, have also been at work. The Seceders themselves commonly allege other motives; and as there is no reason to imagine that they deceive themselves more than other men do in like cases, it is worth while for us to mark and ponder their own account of the causes which moved them to withdraw from the Church in which they were baptized. I have never known any one of these persons who pretended that he was led to frequent the Episcopal Chapel because he found the *preaching* there better than in the Kirk; and I think we may affirm, without fear of contradiction from persons having considerable acquaintance with both, that the average *preaching* in the Church of Scotland, and in the Presbyterian Churches generally, is not *inferior* to that which we hear in Episcopal Churches either in Scotland or in England.

What is more remarkable is, that very few of those Scotch Christians who have revolted to the Episcopal Church during the last twenty years, have any preference for Episcopacy as a form of Church government, or any belief whatever that a Bishop has, in Scripture or reason, a higher right or better qualification to rule the churches than a Presbytery or a Synod. They commonly quite distrust the doctrines of the

Divine Right of Episcopacy, Apostolic Succession, and the efficacy of the Sacraments, dependent upon these claims. If infants be regenerated in Baptism, they do not doubt that this may take place through the instrumentality of the "minister" no less than of the "priest;" and if it be the body and blood of Christ which communicants receive, in the Lord's Supper, they have not yet been sufficiently instructed to see why the miracle may not be performed by the man who utters the words of consecration in a black gown, as effectually as by him who utters them in a white surplice. In short, a large proportion of these Christians are only half illuminated in their new creed, and not half converted to its peculiarities. Their children, however, who enjoy the advantages of early teaching and training, will no doubt embrace the whole—as those commonly do who are taught to believe before they can be expected to inquire and reason, or indeed are capable of forming a judgment upon such subjects for themselves.

What is more, not a few of those who of late years have withdrawn from the Presbyterian worship, have done so with regret, and are, I believe, even now, in many instances, not well resolved in their own consciences as to the rightness of the step they have taken in dissenting from the national worship.

Thoughtful men, among the aristocracy and great landed proprietors especially, cannot but feel that it is a most undesirable state of things that they, who are separated from other classes of their countrymen in so many other respects, should also voluntarily separate themselves from them in religious worship and church fellowship, which ought to be the bonds of society, and should knit the different orders and ranks of citizens together, helping them to forget and rise above worldly and temporal distinctions, in the conscious-

ness of a deeper interest which unites them all. We might conclude that it is unfortunate and even dangerous for the aristocracy of a country to profess one religion and the body of the people another, even had we not at our own doors a terrible proof of it in the turbulence, bloodshed, and miserable disorganization which are the chronic distempers of society in a neighbouring island. God grant that the Scotch aristocracy may not find out the grievous mistake they have committed, when it is too late.

It may indeed be said that Presbyterians and Episcopalians are not of two religions, but of one and the same religion, though differing in respect to forms of worship, Church government, and some few not essential doctrines. This, no doubt, is the opinion of a large number of the laity at least in the Episcopal communion; and it is, we presume, the general sentiment among Presbyterians, both clergy and laity. *But it is not the doctrine of the Scotch Episcopal Church.* Her clergy do not seem to regard her as a *Protestant* Church, and are disinclined so to speak of her; they claim for her the designation of *Catholic;* and it is that presumed character of Catholic which, in their opinion, makes her a Church, and "the Church in Scotland;" which title they deny to "the Presbyterian Kirk," established by law though she be, and national, as far as the state without persecution can constitute her such. They speak of her as a "communion," or "community," a "sect," a "form of schism"—with them she is "Samaria stript naked and cast out to the chill mountain air." According to them she has no right to be the National Church or to exist, because, as they teach, she has no divine commission; her ministers are not God's clergy; they want the Episcopate, Episcopal ordination, and Apostolic Succession, without which no "teacher" can legitimately or effectually

administer the sacraments, or "be certain that he has Christ's body and blood to give to the people." And their watchword is this—that they are "the Church in Scotland;" therefore the only Church, the other "bodies" being sects—different forms of "Schism."

Many private members of this communion, and some of the clergy, may repudiate such claims on the part of "the Church in Scotland;" but that they represent the views of those who speak for the body, is notorious and will not be disputed. No doubt the Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches agree in many doctrines, perhaps in almost all that are really of great moment; but in regard to the organization and constitution of the Church and its powers, offices, and sacraments, they differ irreconcilably: and what is of greatest importance in this connection is, that the one Church claims to be what it asserts the other is not, the Catholic Church, or a branch of it, in Scotland, and exclusively to have divine warrant and power legitimately and effectually to administer the Sacraments.

These, no doubt, are very old opinions; these claims can plead the authority of some of the most ancient doctors of the Church. "Let no man deceive himself," says one of the Apostolic Fathers, whose words are quoted as the motto to this chapter, "if any one be outside the altar, he is deprived of God's bread. And if the prayers of one or two have so much power with God, how much more those of the Bishop and the whole Church. He, therefore, that does not assemble himself with them is already lifted up with pride and is a schismatic, for it is written God resisteth the proud. Let us therefore study not to resist the Bishop, lest we resist God. For whomsoever the master of the house sends to rule his house, we should receive as we should the Master himself who sent him.

Clearly, therefore, we ought to regard the bishop as [we do] the Lord himself." And again: "Study, my brethren, to be subject to the Bishop, and the Presbyters, and the Deacons; for he that is subject to them obeys Christ, who appointed them; but he that disobeys these, disobeys Christ Jesus." If these doctrines appeared to us as true as they are *Catholic*, the controversy would on our part be at an end.

In the Church of England there is a great party as well of clergy as of laity, who reject such pretensions for themselves, and loudly assert the Protestant character of the Church of England. Whatever reason may support such views, this is certain, that the case is different with their brethren in Scotland. They belong, as a body, to the High Church party. High Church principles, which had long been dormant in England, underwent there some years ago a great revival; but it was otherwise in Scotland, for here those principles had been always alive, vigorous, predominant. For a Scottish Presbyterian to join himself to this Church seems, therefore, nothing less than to change his religion. From being a Protestant, a Presbyterian, and a schismatic, he becomes, according to the views of the Church he enters, a *Catholic*—not a *Roman* Catholic—for the Romanists also are schismatical in the judgment of that great Catholic Church in Scotland, which, to the eye of sense, is itself only one of the smallest of Scottish sects.

It may be that the *quondam* Presbyterians who have become Episcopalians did not mean this at all. They did not intend to change their religion, or to cease being Protestants: perhaps many of them would shudder at the very thought. This feeling may be so strong in some congregations, composed chiefly of such neophytes, that the clergy dare not speak out their mind on such doctrines as the Apostolic Succession,

the Divine Right of Episcopacy, Baptismal Regeneration, and such like, lest they should strain too much the still weak faith of their converts—who must still be fed, as babes, with milk, and not with that strong meat which is fit for "those that are of ripe age," and is even greedily swallowed by "those that are perfect." Still—however kept back, or but lightly touched upon—such are the opinions of the clergy who represent the "Church in Scotland," and speak in its name. When a Presbyterian joins that body, he unquestionably changes his religion, if he be consistent and know what he is doing. If, indeed, this be matter of conscience, all must give way to that paramount consideration: we must cut off a right hand, and pluck out a right eye, when we hear the divine voice requiring us to make even such painful sacrifices. If our present religion be not true nor right, if that in which we were born and have been reared be not the Church of Christ, or if we cannot be reasonably assured that it is, we must renounce it—though the renunciation should separate us not only from our countrymen, neighbours, and friends, but from father and mother, sister and brother, wife and child. But it becomes us to be sure that that which we would obtain is "the pearl of great price," before we "sell all that we have to buy it."

It being thus neither the peculiar doctrines of the Episcopal communion nor its form of Church government, neither the superiority of its teachings nor its claims to be in some high and peculiar sense *Catholic;* it being none of these that has attracted so many wealthy and genteel families, and so many more that only aspire to these distinctions; and if their separation from the communion of the great body of their countrymen cannot but be felt by those who have any reflection or seriousness of mind, to be, at least in many political and social respects, a course attended with some disadvan-

tages, and perhaps also with some dangers—there remain but two motives to account for those separations: the influence of fashion—already spoken of—and the character of the worship, especially the manner of praying, and the general want of solemnity, decorum, and refinement in the services. This latter is, undoubtedly, the reason generally assigned: "We go to the Episcopal chapel because we like *the worship there* better than that in the Kirk." This is what is alleged generally, almost universally; and, no doubt, it is really one of the reasons—I believe it is the chief reason. It surely becomes us, whose ministry is so often deserted for such reasons, to look carefully to the matter, so that we may either remove the offence, or at least take away all plausibility from the allegation. That the worship of the Church of Scotland wants reformation, any person of moderate intelligence might be expected to grant, even were there no dissatisfaction, no secession from the Church, or any other such mischief to quicken our perceptions. This is the general opinion of almost all the educated laity who remain in our Church, as well as the perhaps universal sentiment among those who have seceded to Episcopacy; and we shall greatly mistake if we persuade ourselves that it is confined to the laity. On the contrary, it is notoriously shared by a very large number of our ministers, and by the more intelligent and learned of them probably without exception. Among this class I have never heard an opposite opinion expressed, whatever difficulties they might apprehend in the way of a reform. It is time, therefore, that the "thoughts of so many hearts were revealed," and the subject discussed with a frankness which its own importance and the highest interests of the Church alike demand.

Perhaps some persons may imagine that that given above is a satire, a caricature, or at least a gross exaggeration, dictated by sectarian jealousy. But I do not apprehend that any one acquainted with the subject will charge me with misrepresenting or overstating the pretensions of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Probably hundreds of corroborations of its correctness could be furnished. In the absence, however, of any formal document sanctioned by the whole clergy, I will only refer to a publication which was put forth twenty years ago as a manifesto of the principles and claims of that Church in contradistinction to the Church of Scotland. It is entituled—

"Six Sermons preached at the Consecration of the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Jedburgh; with an Introduction." Edinb., Grant and Son.

At this ceremonial assisted four out of the seven Scotch Bishops, and a great number of clergy—several from England; and the sermons preached on the occasion were intended to bring out the distinctive peculiarities and claims of the Episcopal Church in contrast to the body "which had obtained a legal establishment;" but which the preachers carefully refrain from calling a Church. The work is a picture of High Church Episcopacy, and is worthy of study by those who desire to apprehend what this really is, and to see how the narrowest sectarianism may be paraded under the grand names of Church principles and Catholic doctrine. I will venture to assert that the most bigoted Presbyterian sects in this country are, in their tenets and feelings, tolerant, liberal, and *catholic*, in the true sense of this much-abused word, compared with these "Catholic" churchmen; who, however, exhibit the art of setting forth the most arrogant assumptions in the meekest language; and, being scholars and gentlemen,

employ the tenderest phrases to express the most intolerant doctrines.

The introduction, by the Rev. W. H. Teale, commences thus—"While," he says, "to some parts of Christendom the Reformation of the sixteenth century was a blessing for which we can never be too thankful, *in Scotland it was far otherwise. There the Church was not reformed, but destroyed,*" etc.; and so he goes on through the whole Introduction to talk, as if there had never been since the Reformation any Church in Scotland but his own small body, and that the new Chapel at Jedburgh was the first Christian Church that had adorned that beautiful region since the miserable days when masses, monks, and nuns, were superseded by Presbyterian Kirks and Parish Schools.

The first sermon is peculiarly important in this connection, as being not only preached by a man of great eminence in the Church—the Rev. Dr. Hook of Leeds—but because it was delivered in presence of the whole clergy assembled on the occasion, including "a large proportion of the Bishops of the Scottish Church," and was "*published by desire of the Bishop,*" *i.e.*, The late Rev. Dr. M. Russell, minister of an Episcopal Congregation at Leith, who was called "Bishop of Glasgow," and who presided on the interesting occasion of restoring Christian ordinances, after so long an extinction of them, among the benighted schismatics—or perhaps unbaptized and therefore heathen dwellers at Jedburgh; for Jedburgh, as the natives might learn with surprise, is "in the Diocese of Glasgow."

Throughout this sermon, entitled "The Church in Scotland aggressive," the author denies that the "Establishment" is a Church, or part, branch, or member of the Church of Christ; for it wants essential elements and powers of the Church: and

upon this ground he defends the Episcopal Church in Scotland from the charge of schism in its separation from "the Establishment"—that this is so radically defective, that its members want "the benefits and blessings of the Catholic Church" (p. 13). In the Kirk many true doctrines may be taught, but its members cannot be expected to reach Christian perfection "in the absence of sacraments and sacramental grace" (p. 6), which are possessed by "Catholics, whether Roman or Anglican" (p. 2). Accordingly, Presbyterian heathens, as many of them as are "illuminated," are offered, in the new Chapel at Jedburgh, and elsewhere, "an asylum where they may receive the blessings of sacramental grace" (p. 11).

And so he argues throughout—"If," he says, "the religion of the State (*i.e.* Presbytery) be *not in essential things in error*, it has a claim upon the allegiance of patriotic men" (p. 5). "Now, on these principles," he repeats, "it follows, that if we do not differ from the Establishment in *essentials*—if the Establishment be not deficient in some things which we know to be *essential*—we are Schismatics and Sectarians in holding a separate communion. If from the Establishment we do not differ in essentials, we are in duty bound to conform to it: but if we conform to the Establishment, we are guilty of schism, whenever, for the purposes of Divine worship, we cross the threshold of an Episcopal Chapel—as it is customary to designate our Churches," etc. (p. 9). "It is on this ground, and on this ground only, that we can defend our separation" (p. 10).

To the same purpose speak the other preachers whose sermons are contained in this volume. Among them the Venerable Archdeacon Wilberforce thus expresses himself: "It is not a slight thing that can authorise that departure

from the established usage of the land you inhabit. To separate yourselves from the national sentiment, to divorce yourselves from the creed and custom which public law commends to your choice, were a crime as plainly forbidden by natural piety as by God's revelation, were there not an audit more awful than any earthly assize," etc. "It is as the sworn adherent of that Church Catholic, whereof Christ himself was the founder . . . that I remind you of that duty which *your election as churchmen* especially demands. For yours it is to maintain the public order of God's service . . . this great duty of the Christian sacrifice. Who seeks to do it, who can do it, in this land but yourselves?" (pp. 48, 49). Episcopalians will no doubt hear with no less surprise than satisfaction this comfortable doctrine that they are "the elect," though the bowels of some of them may be moved when they think of the poor Presbyterians, without Priest, Church, or Sacraments, who must, on the same principle, be "reprobate," and whose fate is all the more cruel because many of them appear to bear upon their characters and upon their lives that seal of election supplied by an unerring authority (John xv. 14; 1 Thess. i. 4, 5).

All this naturally, and even necessarily, follows from the radical principle of the Catholic system, whether reformed or unreformed—that Christianity is a religion of Sacraments, by which grace is conveyed and the faithful are sanctified and saved. But the Sacraments have no efficacy—or we can have no assurance that they have any—without a priesthood, Episcopal ordination, Apostolical Succession, etc. Accordingly "in our churches the most conspicuous places should be assigned to the *font* and the *altar*" (p. 21);—quite naturally—for the faithful are regenerated by the one, and partake of Christ's body and blood, and so are incorporated into Him, nourished,

grow, and live, by the other. I cannot but suspect, however, that some of the members of "the Church in Scotland" may be rendered a little uncomfortable by hearing the legitimate deduction from the above doctrine. "A Christian *cannot be considered in a safe state who communicates only three times in a year*—nay, I do not see how any one can be considered in a safe state who determines only to communicate once in a month... Since receiving the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ is one of the appointed means, or we may say, when connected with the preparation for it, *the great mean* of grace, it is hard to suppose that those . . . who wilfully or negligently forsake this communion *at any time can be in the way to heaven.* . . If we hope to be saved, we must do all we can in using the means of grace ; but we can receive the Holy Communion very often ; some every Sunday—some every holiday besides. Then, if we deliberately neglect this duty" —of *communicating on all these occasions when we have the power*—"we can have no right to indulge the hope of salvation."—(*Sermon on Frequent Communion,* by the Rev. W. Dodsworth, M.A., pp. 75, 77.)

If this be so, I fear many pious and conscientious members of "the Church in Scotland" must be in a very precarious condition, and not much more certain of salvation, with all their privileges, than their unhappy neighbours of the "Presbyterian persuasion." "But," as the same rev. gentleman observes a little further on, "in such matters let us carefully avoid the undue exercise of private judgment" (p. 85)—a warning which is most needful for those who are expected to receive as gospel such utterances as the following : —"Our eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of Christ," in the Sacrament, "are *real* and *literal,* and yet not in any way *carnal*" (p. 87).

So long as Scotchmen in general are deficient in that capacity of believing contradictions, which Bayle ascribes to Asiatics, these Catholic doctrines are not likely to make much progress among us—among those of us, at least, who would prefer that their religion should be true, as well as Catholic and fashionable.

It may be said that those expressed above are the private opinions of individuals; and that some of these men have since seceded to the Church of Rome. But no man who had understanding enough to see whither his principles lead, or consistency enough to follow them, could go anywhere else but to the Church of Rome, or to the Greek Church, which is also "Catholic." As to their being private opinions, they are not so: they are the public teachings of eminent and leading clergymen—listened to with applause by others, approved and sanctioned by the Bishop of the Diocese, and apparently by the other Bishops, and sent forth to the world as expositions of the doctrines by which "the Church in Scotland" is distinguished from the "Establishment."

Were any of these clergymen called to account by their superiors for promulgating such tenets, or for representing them as doctrines of their Church?

Did any of the Episcopal clergy utter any dissent, or publish any protest against these dogmas, or any refutation of them?

It would be consolatory to those who desire to regard the Scotch Episcopal Church in a different light from that in which the foregoing expressions represent her, if they could find any good grounds to support them. I am not aware, however, of any such. Even the most liberal and tolerant of her clergy express themselves in a way which seems to favour her high and exclusive pretensions—exclusive, at least, so far as the Established Church and all other Protestant Churches

in Scotland are concerned—for she includes the Romish Communion as well as herself in the circumference of the true fold. The Rev. Dean Ramsay having been betrayed, in a popular work, into some slight expression of respect for the Church of Scotland, found it necessary to appease the indignation of many of his brethren by the following explanation of his sentiments :—

"I have no hesitation in saying that no (ministerial) authority can be pleaded without it (the Apostolic Succession), and therefore I do not hesitate one moment in affirming this proposition—To whatever extent Presbyterian baptism is available, it is not in consequence of Presbyterian ministers having received any ministerial authority from Christ to administer the Sacrament of the Font;" and "that it is the religious duty of Presbyterians to renounce their present schism, and be reconciled to the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, where the Episcopate exists, and where alone is to be found a divine right to minister in holy things." (Signed) "E. B. Ramsay."

After this, it is needless to search the pages of the Scottish Ecclesiastical Journal for proofs and illustrations. We shall find the writers in that organ of "the Church in Scotland" demonstrating to their own satisfaction that *Presbytery is worse than Popery;* the former being a schism or separation *from the Church,* whereas the latter is merely a *schism within the Church,* so that not only the unhappy Kirk, but "all the Protestant communities" are utterly condemned. They want everything, for they want the Apostolic Succession, whereas their dear, though slightly erring sister of Rome, is substantially right, sound and safe—she has the essential constitution, powers, and privileges of "the Church." The separations between the East and West, or between Armenians

and Nestorians, or between Anglicans and Romanists, are merely schism within the Church, but "the case of *Protestant communities*"—for we are all doomed together—is wholly different.

"The Church received its form and government from Christ himself; that form and government is under the threefold order of ministers, bishops, priests, and deacons; this your correspondent admits. Schism in the Church is when this form is preserved (by means of the Apostolic Succession), but when the various parts do not hold communion with each other. Thus in early times the Armenians and Nestorians, *e.g.*, ceased to hold communion with the rest of the Church, but preserved their divine order of ministers, and the administration of the Sacraments."

"The case of Protestant communities is wholly different; they separated from the Church, for they set up their own ministry of a wholly different nature from that of the Catholic Church and in opposition to it: in a word, the difference in this respect between the two is this, that the Catholic Church is a divine institution, the Protestant communities are human institution. This fact the Anglican Church has always acknowledged; for while she admits Roman and Greek priests and bishops to their proper status, on their conformity, she treats Protestant ministers as mere laymen, not permitting them to officiate till they have been canonically ordained. Thus the Protestant schismatic commits a far greater sin."—(*Scot. Eccles. Jour.*, Oct. 31, 1861.)

The Presbyterian body, of course, "has no spirituality; for its ministers are not Presbyters even, have no orders whatever."

The following passage, from the same Article, is worth quoting, because it fully expresses the theory which sanctifies and saves Rome and the "Church in Scotland," and sends all Protestant communities to "the uncovenanted mercies of God."

"It is not the name Episcopal that is of any value, but the Apostolic Succession of the Episcopate. It is the mystic sap welled up in the spiritual vine, perpetually flowing through the branches, which gives life and spirituality to every twig, however locally and temporarily

remote from the venerable vine planted in Jerusalem. It is the virtue which, emanating from apostolic hands, and which from generation to generation, and from hand to hand, has been transmitted through the Apostolic Episcopate, that alone can create the Christian priesthood. Thus is the Church of Christ propagated. It requires a larger amount of ingenuity than I possess to prove that any society not so constituted forms a part of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church ; a society especially which entered into a Solemn League and Covenant for the extirpation of church government by Archbishops and Bishops. To extirpate the entire Divine Episcopate is certainly more than to un-Church the universal Church. It has pleased God to suffer the existence of heresy and schism, and it does not become me to judge of the salvability of unhappy separatists."

We need not wonder that men who think and write in this way should consider it a very awful matter for a member of "the Church" *to fall away to Presbytery.* "The late discussions," says a writer in the same publication, "on the state of matters in the diocese of Argyll, must have drawn much attention to the fact that many of *the members of the Church*, and sometimes whole districts, *have been perverted to Presbyterianism.*" "Very large towns and villages exist which have *no churches,*" etc. And he recommends that laymen should read prayers in such places, "so that Episcopalians may *not fall so easy a prey to Presbyterianism.*" "Let us," he adds, "do anything in itself lawful sooner than allow the *children of the Church to be perverted.*"—(November 30, 1861.)

Such "utterances" may shock many Episcopalians, as they will all other Christians ;—if after this we may venture to call ourselves Christians ; but they should not surprise any one ; for they are the necessary consequences of that principle which the "Church in Scotland" professes and glories in.

If such were the authorised doctrines of the Church of England, or if we imagined they were generally held by her

clergy, how absurd—not to say how humiliating—for us ever to talk or think of such a union as has formed the subject of discussion in the newspapers of late. That there should be a united Church of England and Scotland is a fine idea, and may be recommended by many reasons, political and social, as well as religious; and perhaps—if each party only held that its own was "the more excellent way"—such a consummation might be hoped for, notwithstanding the obvious and formidable difficulties. But, as the Episcopal party in former centuries found that violence and persecution were not effectual means of reconciling Presbyterians to "the Church;" and that the sullen sectaries were not apt to be converted by such "booted and spurred apostles" as Dalzell and Claverhouse, so they might suspect that we are not likely to be conciliated now by arrogant and insulting pretensions on their part. I say nothing here of "the grounds and reasons" of those pretensions. Arguments are sometimes used to support them—of the same sort as those which establish Transubstantiation, though not quite so clear or strong; but as a general rule they are only asserted with a great air of infallibility. This is the safer course, and with some people the more effectual. For the multitude are apt to believe us according to the strength of our faith rather than of our arguments.

But to many Presbyterians it does not appear that the "Church in Scotland" should be considered as identical with the Church of England, however wishful she may be to appear so; and some of her own members are evidently of the same mind. "I do not think," says a writer in the same Journal, "that the Church is gradually winning over the more thoughtful and sober-minded of our countrymen. Too many Presbyterians learn to dislike us quite as rapidly as they learn to like the English Church. They see in the Scottish Episcopal

Church much mere resemblance to a narrow modern sect than to the broad old English Church."—(March 21, 1861.)

It is curious that though "the Church in Scotland" acknowledges the Church of Rome, the latter will not return the compliment, but pronounces her, as well as "the Protestant communities," *heretical* and *schismatical*, employing also much the same arguments which the Episcopal party use against us.

In the meantime, we consider the reasonings of both inconclusive and fallacious, and the spirit of both narrow and sectarian. We claim to be the "Church in Scotland," and "the Church of Scotland," by as good titles as any which the Episcopal Church south of the Tweed has to be considered the "Church of England," or the "Church in England;" and we can see no reason whatever to regard the Episcopal communion in Scotland as less a body of Dissenters and a sect, than the Methodists or the Baptists, the Cameronians or the Free Church. This last-named body, also, sets up similar pretensions; it calls itself "The Free Church of Scotland." So James the Second was "The Free King of Great Britain and Ireland," when being compelled—by the necessity of his conduct—to abdicate the throne, he lived at St. Germains, and employed himself in concocting alliances with the enemies of the country, whose constitution he had violated, and of which he still flattered himself that he was "King." We should pardon a little harmless arrogance in dethroned potentates, especially when their minds are not sustained by the consciousness that they have not suffered by their own fault.

πρίν ποτ' ἦμεν·

—— fuimus Troës; fuit Ilium, et ingens
Gloria Teucrorum.

Ah! to think what we have been;
Ah! the times that we have seen;
Our glory—sure 'tis not a dream!

CHAPTER VII.

EXTEMPORARY PRAYER.

Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou art upon the earth; therefore let thy words be few.

Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry with thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?—ECCLES. v. 2, 6.

Qui inter caetera salutaria monita et præcepta divina, quibus populo suo consuluit ad salutem, etiam orandi ipse formam dedit; ipse quid præcaremur, monuit et instruxit. Qui fecit vivere, docuit et orare; ut, dum prece et oratione, quam filius docuit, apud Patrem loquimur, facilius audiamur.—CYPRIAN, *De Orat. Domin.*

ALL manner of extravagances have been advanced on the subject of extemporary prayer. The following quotations may serve as specimens:—

"There is no doubt but that wholesome matter and good desires rightly conceived in the heart, wholesome words will follow of themselves. Neither can any true Christian find a reason why liturgy should be at all admitted, a prescription not imposed or practised by those first founders of the Church, who alone had that authority: without whose precept or example, how constantly the priest puts on his gown and surplice, so constantly doth his prayer put on a servile yoke of liturgy. This is evident, that they who use no set forms of prayer have words from their affections; while others are to seek affections

fit and proportionable to a certain dose of prepared words; which, as they are not rigourously forbid to any man's private infirmity, so to imprison and confine by force into a pinfold of set words those two most unimprisonable things, our prayers and that Divine Spirit of utterance that moves them, is a tyranny that would have longer hands than those giants who threatened bondage to heaven.

"But suppose them savoury words and unmixed, suppose them *manna* itself, yet if they shall be hoarded up and enjoined us, while God every morning rains new expressions into our hearts; instead of being fit to use, they will be found like reserved manna, rather to breed worms and stink."—(*Milton.*)

Let us hear the other side.—

"To conclude,—This extemporizing is merely carnal and formal worship, will-worship as much as the false and superstitious traditions of the elders among the Pharisees, though the votaries of it falsely call our worship by a settled form so. It is a carnal and will-worship, because a human (a novel invention too), to satisfy men's carnal lusts, tickle the itching ears of the wavering and unstable. To lead them into and ensnare them in the toil of error, having neither precept nor example in Scripture or antiquity. It is formal, because it is a form, and will not be called a form, and because it is an outward show without substance, without glory to God or benefit to the people, but great hurt. It is the cursed trumpet of schism and separation, the hunting hound of impostors and deceivers, the bedlam horn of fanaticism, the vehicle of the spirit of error, the mask of Jesuitism, the vizard of popery, the *fiocco* (alias, topknot) of hypocrisy, the ruin of unity, and the bane of peace. It is a profane and ungodly custom that quenches and destroys the true spirit of prayer, a cheat of Satan's invention to make and keep the dissenters prayerless,

and teach them to offer up in the drunken plight of enthusiasm, strange fire of fancy and stinking smoke of rash words and rude noise, and not sweet incense upon the clear coals of the altar of the heart, to the Almighty. It is a diabolical lie to and against the Holy Ghost. Hearken, O people, every one of you, as ye desire and hope for the silent ordinary graces of the blessed Spirit, to know and to do the will of God in Christ Jesus to the eternal salvation of your souls.—(*A Discourse of Praying in the Spirit, or against Extemporary Prayer*, by Thomas Edwards, M.A., late chaplain of Christ's Church, Oxon. 1703.)

Yet surely the question is not a difficult one if we look at it calmly. In the closet, prayer without a set form of words cannot be thought to be unnatural, and perhaps there is no one who engages in secret prayer at all, who does not sometimes or frequently so pray. For here, none or few of the objections apply, which have been advanced against this mode of praying in the Church, or even in the family. In the closet we furnish words only for own thoughts, feelings, desires, not for those of others, as is the case in all acts of worship in which others partake with us. In all cases of public and family worship, we must never forget that the speaker supplies a form of words for those who join with him in the exercise ; whether he extemporise, or repeat what he has prepared, or read from a manuscript or a book—in all these cases alike the spoken prayer is a form *to the congregation.* This is evident. The question is—and it is here the only question—whether the generality of ministers, or rather ministers universally, should be considered competent to produce, without writing them, without preparation, or, if they so please, without one moment's previous study or consideration, a whole public service for hundreds or thousands of people—

and that from week to week and from year to year? whether the stupidest, rawest, least learned and accomplished stripling whom any Presbytery may have licensed to preach, or on whose head they may have laid their hands, shall be esteemed qualified to produce six public prayers each Sunday out of his own mind on the spur of the moment; and also to extemporise, as the occasions recur, services for baptism, for marriage, and for the celebration of the most solemn rite of the Christian Church—the Lord's Supper? Those who expect that such services, produced in this way, should be what they ought, must at least have conceived a very low idea of what is required.

It is commonly said, in reply to these obvious objections, that no person should be ordained or licensed who wants qualification to conduct public worship in a satisfactory manner. To which the answer is—That numbers of such men *are actually* licensed and ordained; have been so at all periods in our Church history, and will always be, so long as present arrangements for conferring license and ordination continue: while new and better arrangements can only diminish, not remove the evil! We may go further, and assert that it cannot possibly be otherwise; because the average of such men as offer themselves for the Christian ministry in the Presbyterian Church, or in any church whatever, are incapable of performing, as it should be performed, what is requisite. We can only license those, or some of those, who choose to enter the ministry; and these, we may presume, neither fall below nor rise much above the general level of tolerably educated men. We are not in circumstances to select persons of rare or very superior endowments. Neither the emoluments nor the position of any of our clergy, nor any advantages, worldly or spiritual, which we can offer, are such as to draw to the

ministerial office in our Church men of high station in society, or distinguished by commanding talents. But though it were otherwise, the result would be still the same as respects the great body of the clergy. Under any circumstances, it would be unreasonable, and even preposterous, to expect they should do what every Presbyterian minister is now required to perform. To most men—of even good abilities and respectable accomplishments—the performance is simply impossible at any time, and to all men whomsoever it is impossible at some times.

The grand argument on the other side is, that by using extemporaneous prayer each minister stirs up the gift that is in him; whereas prayers which have been composed beforehand supersede this, and seem not to require or exercise those gifts which are promised to assist us in such duties. No doubt we are promised the aids of God's Spirit to assist us to pray; but not more than to preach, or to perform any other duty of our Christian calling. That promise does not prevent any Presbyterian minister studying his preaching—carefully writing his sermons—committing them laboriously to memory, or even reading them in the pulpit. Now, the promise of supernatural aid which was given to the Apostles for public preaching, is far more distinct and emphatic (Mark xiii. 11) than any which either they or their successors received in regard to the performance of public worship; respecting this, indeed, nothing is said at all—for there is no proof that the primitive churches used ordinarily any public prayers, except perhaps the Lord's Prayer and the Psalms.

There was some consistency in these views (which are still entertained by many on this subject), so long as it was imagined that they who could vociferate fluently without book, "prayed by the Spirit," as they phrased it—*i.e.*, were inspired

to address the Almighty. No wonder that persons supposed to possess such supernatural gifts were regarded with a peculiar admiration, and were preferred by the people to those whose inspiration seemed to come from a printed book, and that of other men's composition. God seemed to teach the one, but men the other, to offer prayer. But now, when such delusions are exploded among all people, except those who, by reason of gross ignorance or wild enthusiasm, are incapable of judging, it is indeed amazing that fluency of speech in extemporary prayer should still be so admired. For what is commonly styled "the gift of prayer," is nothing else but fluency of speech—a faculty which implies neither special intellectual endowments nor spiritual graces, nor even moral virtue, but is often found to distinguish the shallow, the ignorant, the conceited, and the presumptuous; men who are conspicuously deficient in the higher elements of human character, and particularly in wisdom and humility.

Of the examples of bad taste, irreverence, and even indecency and profanity, contained in two well-known books—"The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence; or the Foolishness of their Teaching Discovered from their Books, Sermons, and Prayers, third edition, with additions, London 1719;" and "English Presbyterian Eloquence; or Dissenters' Sayings, Antient and Modern: Collected from the Books and Sermons of the Presbyterians, etc., from the Reign of Queen Elizabeth to the Present Time, London 1720"—many are probably spurious, and many others caricatured or exaggerated; but making all reasonable allowances, what a frightful mass will remain of expressions and illustrations which offend equally against piety and decorum! We may imagine how those men would express themselves under the excitement of public speaking, and among crowds of rude enthusiasts, who in

private letters—and these addressed to ladies—could so often write in a manner which neither reverence nor decency, according to our notions, can tolerate.

It may be said, and truly, that the times were rude, and men's minds were not so sensitive to proprieties as they now are: but surely it is not proper that public prayer should descend to the lowest level that the sense of propriety among the people will endure. It should do something at least to elevate their minds, and to purify and refine their tastes as well as their affections: the language of the pastor addressed to the Almighty in his own name and in theirs should not tempt them to forget that "He is in heaven, and they upon the earth," or embolden them to lay aside "reverence and godly fear" in approaching the throne of grace. It is commonly admitted, and generally deplored, that these becoming dispositions are too little manifested in our public worship. Some of the causes, at least, are not obscure. It has been frequently alleged that our congregations have less the appearance of devotion in public worship, and particularly in prayer, than is to be observed anywhere else. Even if the statement so made should appear to be exaggerated, few impartial witnesses will deny that there is at least some truth in it. Two causes are obvious—first, The general custom of praying extempore; and second, the practice of standing at prayer, which will be considered afterwards. From long experience the people have learned that the minister bestows whatever pains and thought he does bestow, upon *the sermon;* that this is the *work* of the week, and expresses whatever thoughts he has to express; on the other hand, that the prayers are the result of no pains or thought either by himself or any one else; but are often loose and unconnected harangues, wandering up and down, no person can guess whither; or consist

of such accidental outpourings, gradually petrified into a fixed form. Accordingly, the people attend to that discourse —the sermon—which is in some measure worthy of attention, and pay very little regard to those other discourses—the prayers—whose demerits and defects they are too well assured of. If the *prayers* were as good in their kind as the *sermons* are in theirs, they would excite not less interest; on the contrary, they would fix the minds and touch the hearts of the people even more.

It may be true that the extravagances and indecorums which were once so frequent, and which are still so prevalent in some quarters, are no longer heard, or very seldom, in the Church of Scotland, or among the Presbyterian sects. Still prayers are often uttered which no person who has good sense and moderate education can hear throughout with full concurrence and sympathy; and I feel persuaded that a *verbatim* report of all the public prayers uttered in Scotland any one Sunday in the year, would settle the question for ever in the mind of every person who was capable of forming a rational judgment upon such a matter.

Such report would prove (I apprehend) these propositions among others—That the preacher might generally, by a different method, offer much better prayers; and that a large number of preachers, at least, should have some assistance in this work from the Church.

As to the first proposition, it can hardly need proof. For, to pray extempore in a congregation demands qualifications which few men possess. It requires an intimate familiarity with the Scripture, a perfect command of language, suitable for such exercises—*i.e.*, of the simplest language which yet must never degenerate into vulgarity, familiarity, or even commonplace; the most solemn and sublime language, which yet must

not swell into turgidity or bombast, or savour of rhetorical exaggeration, or wear any appearance of labour or artifice. And this reaches deeper than a mere literary accomplishment; it implies a highly cultivated mind, a refinement of character, and a pitch of spirituality, which never have been found, and cannot be expected, in any body of clergy whatever. I do not say that this attainment is impossible; but experience demonstrates that it is difficult and uncommon.

Look round the General Assembly, or any other assembly, lay or clerical. How rare is the appearance of a really finished master of speech—one who can, on all occasions, express himself with accuracy and propriety, with elegance and force—who is found always ready to say, on the spur of the moment, what ought to be said, and as it ought! This is confessedly a rare, as it is assuredly an admirable gift, or rather it is a combination of many rare and admirable gifts.

Why, then, should we fancy that extemporary prayer should be the common gift of every minister, when the faculty of extemporary speech on other subjects is confessedly so exceptional?

If we will look at the matter dispassionately we shall perceive that to blunder, or become confused—to hesitate, or repeat over and over the same thing—or to fall into undignified or inappropriate expressions — or to talk without method, order, or connection, and so without the possibility of impressing or edifying our fellow-worshippers—is far less indecorous and much less pernicious in preaching than in prayer; for the former, though a solemn address, is still only an address to men; whereas the other is an address in the name of a whole congregation to the majesty of heaven and earth, before whose glory angels veil their faces.

"The Church of Scotland," says Principal Hill, "in adopt-

ing a Directory instead of a liturgy, considers its ministers as men of understanding, of taste, of sentiment, capable of thinking for themselves; who, without being confined to the repetition of a lesson that has been composed for them, may be permitted to exercise their talents with a becoming dependence upon divine aid, in the sacred and important office of leading the devotions of Christian worshippers."—(*Counsels respecting the Duties of the Pastoral Office,* p. 3.)

It is unfortunate that the Church should proceed upon a supposition which is notoriously contrary to fact; for neither the whole nor the generality of the ministers of our Church, or of any church in the world, are men of "understanding, taste, sentiment, and capable of thinking for themselves;" as, indeed, the Rev. Principal himself very well knew and proceeds to show. "In our Church," he says, "a minister is at liberty to follow the impression made by 'those special occasions, which afford matter for special petitions and thanksgivings,' and may thus avail himself of the aid which providence often administers to the sentiments of devotion. *But much good sense and sound discretion are here required; and the gross instances of irreverence and absurdity which have occurred in prayers suggested by the occasion, form one of the most popular and plausible objections to our mode of worship*" (p. 7). And again, "We certainly do not imitate this manner of praying," that of the Lord's Prayer, "when we exhaust ourselves and fatigue our hearers by much loose speaking, in which the same idea is perpetually recurring" (p. 5). Are they "men of understanding, of taste, of sentiment," etc., who thus "exhaust themselves and fatigue their hearers by much loose speaking" in prayer; and who furnish those "gross instances of irreverence and absurdity!" "The Church," says Dr. Hill, "considers them so." Surely it is time she should consider things and

men as they are; not as a theory, contradicted by unquestionable facts, requires her to consider them.

Even if nothing more were needful to be attempted, ministers should at least be encouraged to compose and write their prayers, bestowing not less pains upon these than they now almost all bestow upon their sermons—or rather a great deal more; because, in addition to what has just been advanced, while a sermon after delivery is laid aside and perhaps never used again, or at least not till after a long interval, *prayers* may and should recur much more frequently, as being more limited in their subject-matter, and considerable repetition at least being here attended with some evident advantages. By this means alone a great amelioration might be easily accomplished in the character of our worship. Besides, copying or borrowing, which in sermon-making is regarded by the people in Scotland as a sin hardly less heinous than theft, might, without reproach from any quarter, be practised to almost any extent in composing prayers; and, if these were found to be unquestionably excellent, it is not likely that any congregation would be so foolish, or any Church Court so inquisitorial and absurd, as to find fault, though it was notorious they were not altogether or chiefly the composition of the minister who used them.

For promoting this most desirable end, the *reading* of prayers in public worship should by all means be encouraged. The greatest difficulty at present arises from the practice of *reciting* prayers. This practice, if they be written, necessitates committing to memory, of which many men, and some of the ablest, are utterly incapable, and which the generality find very difficult. They are accordingly driven to trust on each occasion to their powers of extemporaneous speaking; or they compose and learn off *one* prayer or two which are constantly

repeated; or, what is more common, they fall gradually into a routine which is virtually the same thing—a fixed unvarying liturgy of their own, put together by chance, stereotyped by custom—wanting both the care, finish, completeness of a systematically formed service, and also the warmth and freshness of really earnest, unpremeditated speech—uniting the faults of both methods with the virtues of neither.

Many suppose that the people would not tolerate the reading of prayers. This I do not believe; and I could add some strong reasons for this incredulity. The aversion of the common people, particularly in the country, to the reading of sermons is indeed strong, and in some districts apparently invincible; but this is, in my opinion, much less unreasonable than the other aversion; for as I cannot but think it more unnatural to read sermons than to read prayers, so probably the latter prejudice would be found to be far more easily overcome—especially when it was discovered, as it would very soon be, that the *read* prayers were very much superior to the others. It will be found that the people judge in such cases pretty correctly, whenever they have the means of comparison; the want of which is commonly the chief cause of their prejudices and errors. It is one of many reasons for changing the common attitudes in our public worship; for when the congregation stand at prayer they generally gaze at the minister, as if in praying, no less than in preaching, he were addressing them; whereas, where *kneeling* is the attitude, the eyes of the people are otherwise directed, and it becomes a matter of indifference to them whether the minister recites or reads from a manuscript or a book—provided only the matter, language, and manner be fitted to express and excite Christian thought and feeling.

That miserable enactment, called Lord Aberdeen's Act,

which has wrought and is still working so many mischiefs, will incidentally have produced some benefit, if it shall help to open the eyes of our ministers and people to the monstrous absurdity of our present modes of proceeding and judging in the matter of public prayer. Under this Act the people or any of them are permitted to offer "any objection to a presentee in respect to his ministerial gifts and qualities;" and the Church Courts have decided, as was natural they should, that this includes the right of objecting to the *prayers* as well as the preaching of the presentee. What a strange position for the members of the congregation to stand in! to come forward and be recognised by the body of their pastors and rulers, as *critics* of those acts of devotion, of humiliation, supplication, thanksgiving, intercession, which, according to the supposition, they have themselves joined in offering up before the throne of the heavenly grace! But indeed their proceedings shew clearly that they consider the public prayers as truly the presentee's, and not in any sense *theirs;* for they inform the reverend court that "*his prayers* are affected, cold, insipid, and unedifying, as well as unsuitable to the great body of the people;"* and the Presbytery are appointed to hear the presentee at one diet of public worship, that they also—who assume the attitude of persons praying with the presentee—may, instead of that, play the critics so as to "cognosce and determine upon" the people's criticisms—the subject of both being the prayers in which they should have joined, and which (according to every reasonable supposition) should have been their own.

According to the truth of things there is no praying at all on such occasions, on the part either of presentee, congregation, or Presbytery. The first goes through, and knows that he

* Case of Duthil, Dec. 1863.

goes through, an exhibition of which the people are there assembled to form an opinion and pronounce a judgment, not to pray ; and the Presbytery no less are placed in a critical attitude—to *judge* and *determine* whether or not, as may be alleged, the prayers of the presentee are or are not "affected, cold, insipid, unedifying, and unsuitable to the people." What a position for those who, in offering those prayers, themselves have assumed the attitude of worshippers ! What reduces the whole proceeding to absurdity, in a judicial point of view, is this—that while all the Church Courts, lower and higher, have admitted the relevancy of objections to the presentee's prayers, they have never demanded any manuscript record of these "exercises;" while, on the other hand, they require the presentee to furnish to the Presbytery a manuscript copy of the sermon or sermons he has preached by appointment of the Presbytery ; thus compelling him to write, and, contrary to all the traditions of the Church, requiring him *to read* his sermons, or to submit to the miserable drudgery of reciting them word for word from memory. But the absurdity and contradiction do not end even here. The members of the Presbytery may at least have been present when the presentee went through one of those exhibitions called *prayers*, and so have had some grounds of judgment in dealing with objections to the same. But these objections go by appeal to the superior Church Courts, and they are called upon to affirm or reverse them *without one line of record* on which to proceed. For the Synod and General Assembly neither require the presentee to perform an exhibition of praying in their presence, nor have they any manuscript of the prayers, nor do they require that these should be written, nor are they supposed to know or to care whether they are or not. In point of fact, the matter of prayers is studiously slurred over in these proceedings. No-

body seems to think it worth any notice; it is considered quite a subordinate affair—a decent introduction to the great fact of the *sermon*, which is the first, second, and third thing, and indeed very nearly everything in our public worship. In an Edinburgh church, much frequented by strangers, especially from England, a gentleman was compelled to stand in the lobby till the devotional services were terminated, when he was promised a seat. To encourage his perseverance, the old woman who kept the door assured him thus—"Dinna weary, sir, ye'll no hae lang to wait; the Doctor's no lang in gettin' through the preleeminaries."

Do I insinuate that those devotional compositions—if indeed they ever were composed—which our Church Courts thus treat as if they were not worthy of a record, may not be open to criticism, or may not merit condemnation and rejection? I am far from alleging that the parishioners may not be justified in branding them with even stronger epithets than "affected, cold, insipid, unedifying, and unsuitable" for any parish or congregation whatever. In almost every case in which a presentee's discourses were justly liable to objection, it will, I believe, be found that his prayers were much more so. It would be deeply interesting, and also very instructive, to see how the Church Courts would proceed if the people of any parish had sense enough to object to the presentee's *prayers*, without urging any other objection. Would the superior Courts still proceed without a record, acquit or condemn the prayers without either hearing or reading them? It would be curious, and might perhaps open some eyes. May we hope that a time will come when those which each congregation offers up to the common Father shall no longer be the presentee's prayers nor the minister's prayers, but the Church's prayers—common prayers, in which the whole Church

is already agreed; in which all congregations, in all corners of the land, from generation to generation, shall unite with one harmonious voice!

Upon the whole, as all our practical abuses and all the defects of our system, in respect to public worship, seem to proceed from a mistake regarding the importance of the devotional element, and particularly of prayer in public worship, so any reform which shall be of much value, or shall go to the root of the evil, must proceed from a reform of our notions in this respect; and as all imaginations of a special or miraculous agency of the Holy Ghost in this exercise have long ago been dissipated (except among the most ignorant) by accumulated and distressing experience, it is time we should seriously consider what should be done for reforming whatever is amiss in this respect, and so at least retaining what remains to us of the intelligence and piety of the people. The following may appear safe expedients for the present—

1. We should endeavour to impress upon the minds of all—both ministers and people—the great importance of this part of public worship; without depreciating sermons, expositions, catechisings, and other forms of Christian instruction.

Particularly, by frequent admonitions and explanations the people should be made to apprehend, and, if possible, to feel, that the public prayers are to be considered as their prayers, and not the minister's prayers—as the prayers *of the congregation*, and not of any one person, whether speaker or hearer. Principal Hill, in his book already quoted, betrays the same notions substantially on the subject of public prayer, which notoriously prevail among the body of the Scotch people. After using the following argument, which indeed sufficiently refutes the system he defends (though evidently with no good-will or real conviction)—"As the greatest and most interesting

subjects of prayer are always the same, you cannot, without affectation, avoid frequent repetition of what you have once expressed well"—he adds this strange and indecorous suggestion: "Yet, in a Church where no set forms are prescribed by authority, it is desirable *that you should appear capable of clothing the same sentiments with equal facility and propriety in expressions somewhat varied*" (p. 7). This is addressed by a Professor of Divinity to the future ministers of the Church; who are informed that the reason why they should not adhere to the same words in prayer is, not that they may impress or edify the congregation, or attain any legitimate end of public worship, but may make such an exhibition as may lead the people to admire them, their gifts and talents, in the way of extemporary speaking! Might not some better opportunity be found for making such display, and exciting such admiration?

2. Presbyteries should require *written prayers* from candidates for the ministry, as well as written discourses. The practice of *reading* trial discourses is an innovation, like all reading of discourses, and probably not of very old date; but being recommended by evident propriety and convenience, it has been universally adopted. The same convenience and propriety require that the prayers should be written and *read*. The same, as to *writing* at least, should be observed in proceedings under Lord Aberdeen's Act. The Presbytery should be put in possession of the manuscript of the prayers, as well as of the discourses of the presentee.

3. Those ministers who are so happy as to be placed over intelligent congregations, should begin the practice of *reading* prayers. Such congregations will be found to be favourable to the innovation; sometimes almost unanimously so. And the reason of the thing is so manifest and strong, that a minister who enjoys the confidence of the people will easily

succeed in satisfying almost any congregation, however illiterate or prejudiced, of the advantage of this practice. Of course, no man of discretion will attempt this, or any such like change, however evident its advantages may be, until he has convinced the great majority of the people that it is desirable.

4. All pastors, especially in the country, and in congregations composed principally of the common people, should endeavour, as a general rule, to deliver their sermons, etc., without reading, and in all cases without close and slavish reading. It cannot be denied, I think, that the prejudice which has prevailed so obstinately on this subject, has been perpetuated and strengthened (if it was based originally on other grounds) by the bad reading, the utter inability to read in a clear, fluent, and impressive manner, which has been so general among those who adopted the practice. Perhaps it might be found, if the experiment were made, that there is no congregation whatever in the Church of Scotland, which would not prefer, if they must choose between the two, to have the sermon spoken and the prayers read, rather than to have the sermon read and the prayers spoken. But the practice of kneeling at prayer will immediately render the manner of delivering the prayers, whether by reading them or otherwise, a matter of perfect indifference in the minds of the people.

5. Upon the whole, as an immediate improvement, and palliative at least—*διὰ τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην*—till something more effectual can be accomplished, it would seem to be the duty of those who are zealous for the edification of the people and the prosperity of the Church, to take a great deal more pains in preparing prayers than has generally been thought necessary—not offering to the Lord our God that which is

unbecoming his divine majesty and our dependent and sinful condition, but studying so to express thoughts and desires that the hearts of the people and our own may be elevated and purified, that so our prayers may prove acceptable to God and profitable to ourselves—through our great High Priest and Intercessor Jesus Christ, who hath taught us when we pray, thus to say—"Our Father," etc.

This has been generally thought to settle the question of the lawfulness at least of prepared and prescribed forms of prayer. And those who denied, no less than those who maintained, the lawfulness of liturgies, would appear to be of this opinion. For there can be no doubt that the real reason why the use of the Lord's Prayer was discouraged, and finally laid aside by the former, was the inconsistency in which it seemed to involve them. How could they absolutely condemn all prepared forms, when they themselves habitually employed such a form? That our Lord was the author of this form and enjoined its use, only made the matter worse; and therefore their natural subterfuge was to deny that it was intended to be a form, or that the injunction to employ it extended to them. Milton, accordingly, argues against the obligation to use the Lord's Prayer, perceiving clearly enough that this involved the whole question, as between those who denied and those who maintained the lawfulness and expediency of set forms.

But it is difficult to be consistent in an error:—

The same men who say it is unlawful to use prepared forms of prayer, or to read prayers, themselves do the very things which they condemn. Even those of them who will not repeat the Lord's Prayer in public worship, yet *read the prose psalms*, and by so doing they have settled the question. For not only do most of these psalms contain petitions,

confessions of sin, and other elements of prayer, but a large proportion of them *are throughout prayers in every respect*—not only in substance and spirit, but in form, and even according to the *titles* in some instances. It is true that these psalms are read in Presbyterian churches *as lessons;* but this does not alter the case; it is only an incongruity to use, as if it were an exhortation or instruction to men, what is indeed an address to God. The minister, in reading such psalms, is praying and *reading prayers*, and every devout worshipper is also praying in hearing these prayers read.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness:

" *According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out all my transgressions.*

" Wash me throughly from mine iniquity,

" *And cleanse me from my sin:*

" For I acknowledge my transgression;

" *And my sin is ever before me.*

" Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

" *Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

" Make me to hear joy and gladness;

" *That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*"

Are these prayers or sermons? *i.e.*, are they addresses to men or to God?

But the way in which we commonly employ them would shew, that in prose they are sermons, but become prayers or psalms by being turned into metre. We all read prayers, and use prepared forms of prayer, when we read the prose psalms; and so, indeed, we have long ago, without knowing it, determined the controversy against our own prejudices.

Many persons appear to think that the *reading* or *reciting* of prayers is the grand and decisive distinction between

Episcopacy and Presbytery; and even in our Church Courts some speakers have displayed such incredible ignorance as to talk of a minister who read prayers in the church as "playing at Episcopacy." But if so, John Knox and John Calvin played at Episcopacy, and so did the Church of Geneva and all the Reformed or Presbyterian Churches on the Continent, and also our own beloved Church—the Church of Scotland—with her sisters. The Episcopal Church in Scotland also must have "played at Presbytery" when her clergy used the same manner of praying as their Presbyterian contemporaries, till, on their attempting to do otherwise, the redoubtable Jenny Geddes—herself probably an Episcopalian—by means of her *lignum infaustum*, produced that *hiatus valde lachrymabilis* in the history of "the Church in Scotland," of which the consequences, proximate and remote, have been so many and so important. The use of liturgies, and the consequent reading of prayers, may indeed be considered an attribute of the Christian Church in all its branches, and at all times; but the disuse of a liturgy, and the practice of praying extempore, or at least without book, is in no sense characteristic of Presbytery or of Presbyterian Churches. It arose from accidental causes—the chief of which were ignorant prejudices and blind enthusiasm, excited and fomented by the same, or worse, among the English Puritans and Sectaries, but which we hope are now either extinct or rapidly in course of extinction. And yet we are content to wear still the livery of deceased superstitions. It is time surely we should strip off these badges, which never were honourable, but which now doubly degrade us.

CHAPTER VIII.

POSTURES IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

O come let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.—Ps. xcv.

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Eph. iii.

Λόγος ἔχει . . στρατιώτας ἐν τῇ πρὸς τοὺς πολεμίους παρατάξει γόνυ θέντας ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἡμῖν τῶν εὐχῶν ἔθος, ἐπὶ τὰς πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν ἱκεσίας τραπέσθαι.—Euseb. *Hist.* v. 5.

Omnes ex more prosternimur.—Arnob. Lib. I.

I love to use the civility of my knee, my hat, and hand, with all those outward and sensible motions which may express or promote my invisible devotion.—Relig. Medic. iii.

It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that the postures of our bodies when we engage in acts of divine worship are, in themselves, of no consequence: for he that worships in spirit and truth is accepted with the Father of spirits whether he stand, sit, or kneel; whether he walk by the way, or offer up his supplications from his bed in the darkness of night. Unlike many others, the Church of Scotland has always treated these as matters of indifference; for though, as we shall see, kneeling at prayer be recognised in the Book of Common Order, no law or regulation appears ever to have been made on this subject by the Church since the Reformation. There seems good reason to believe that the present customs of standing at

prayer and sitting to sing were innovations, introduced about the middle of the seventeenth century, in imitation of the forms, or in compliance with the feelings, of the English Puritans, whose zeal affected as many departures as possible from the customs of the Episcopal Church. There is no reason (so far as I am aware) to doubt that, till then, the Scotch followed the universal custom of the Catholic Church—at least in the West—of kneeling to pray and standing to praise. This innovation, however, had no sanction from the General Assembly, nor did any inferior Court interfere, either to recommend or forbid. Such matters were never, I believe, in our whole Church history made subjects of censure or remark till the year 1858, when a committee of the Presbytery of Edinburgh reported that in the Greyfriars Church the innovation had been introduced of standing to sing and kneeling at prayer. The General Assembly, however, when the subject came before it in 1859—neither pronounced any decision nor indicated any opinion respecting the matter of postures in public worship; it *ignored* the subject, thus adhering faithfully to the uniform traditions of the Church.

But sometimes things which in themselves are indifferent, may become accidentally of some, yea of great importance. It was in and of itself not sinful to frequent heathen feasts, because the idol was no god, the house no temple, the meat no sacrifice; but, from other considerations, the act may become so pernicious, and therefore relatively so sinful, that the enlightened Christian man (ὁ τέλειος) shall resolve "to eat no such meat while the world stands" (1 Cor. viii. and x.) There being, admittedly, no command or authoritative example in the case before us, and this not being a question of true or false, nor yet of right or wrong, but only of better and worse, we must here appeal to considerations of expediency,

good order, decency, and edification, according to the *dictum* of the Westminster Confession, "There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered according to the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed."—Ch. i.

These principles had in view, it follows, that those postures or attitudes are most suitable in the worship of God which correspond best to the mental acts of prayer and praise respectively, and which are most likely to excite the proper acts or states of mind in ourselves and others; and all such postures are unsuitable and improper as are not, according to the common feelings and associations of the people, expressive of humiliation, reverence, and the other dispositions which worship is understood to express and is designed to strengthen.

Few probably will dispute this proposition in the general form in which it is here set down; and a dispassionate application of it would afford a very easy reconcilement of any differences of opinion or of practice which may now exist among members of the Church of Scotland.

Standing and *kneeling* are recognised attitudes of reverence and respect *universally*. Among the Jews, whether under the Old Testament or the New, in the universal Christian Church of the early ages, and, indeed, of all ages and everywhere—in the customs and notions of modern times, and among ourselves universally, *standing* and *kneeling* are regarded as proper and significant attitudes of respect and reverence; and *sitting* has been and is now, everywhere, among all ranks and conditions of men, regarded as not expressive of any such emotion or state of mind. The Lord *sits* upon his throne, "and the hosts of heaven *stand* before

him." "Every other priest *stands* ministering in the temple, but Christ *sits down* at the right hand of God" (Heb. x. 11, 12). *To sit* is to assume the position of the superior, to assert the rights of the master or lord; *to stand* is to take the place of the inferior, to occupy for the time the servant's room; to show deference; to give honour to another: and the attitude of *kneeling*, by universal consent, expresses the same, only in a greater degree and in a more striking manner—Ἐν πλήθει πρεσβυτέρων στῆθι (Ecclus. vi.)

It would seem to follow from this that *sitting* is improper and unsuitable in at least direct acts of worship, such as praise and prayer, because, according to the sentiment of all men, it asserts a condition, and is expressive of a state of mind not consistent with that which we profess in drawing near to God, either in praise or in prayer. In short, if we may speak freely, the practice of sitting while God's praise is sung, is an innovation in our worship and a solecism in itself, and at the same time an indecorum and an irreverence, condemned by the whole voice of Scripture, and by the authority of nearly the whole Christian Church in every age, as well as contrary to the universal feeling of propriety, and not having even the argument of *convenience* to support it; for, as every one knows, *standing* is the natural attitude for singing, and prompted by well-known physical reasons.

Now, this practically settles the whole matter in so far as attitudes in public worship are concerned. For it being admitted that both *standing* and *kneeling* have sanction in Scripture and in Christian antiquity, and both being postures of reverence, and therefore suitable for acts of worship; if we stand to sing praise, we must kneel at prayer—both to secure some variety, and because it would impose an intolerable burden upon the people to continue standing during both

acts. I shall endeavour afterwards to prove that *kneeling* is the proper posture for prayer; but apart from this, we must, as matter of expediency, or rather of necessity, adopt it in the arrangements of our public service, if we reject the custom of sitting, and stand while we praise the Lord our Maker.

Apart from arguments derived from Scripture or authority, there are several obvious reasons for standing to sing in church and kneeling to pray, instead of sitting to sing and standing to pray, as, till lately, all Presbyterians have done in Scotland for two centuries, except in the Northern Isles.

The act of singing, as practised in our churches, generally occupies from *three to five minutes;* the tunes in general use, most of them, requiring not more than about forty-five seconds for each verse, and few so much as sixty seconds, if they be sung in proper time. Now, the bulk of every congregation, including the weak and the aged, can commonly stand four or five minutes without fatigue or inconvenience; whereas it is fatiguing and even distressing to a large portion of persons to stand fifteen, twenty, twenty-five minutes, or as much longer as the minister may chance to pray; and accordingly in every congregation where they stand at prayer, some do not attempt to stand at all, and others drop down upon their seats in increasing numbers as the prayer is protracted, till, in some cases, a considerable proportion of the people have resumed their seats before the tedious supplication comes to an end.

It may be replied that the natural remedy is the shortening of the prayers. This may be desirable on many accounts, but is impracticable so long as it continues the custom for ministers to pray extempore. For one who proceeds according to this method can hardly be expected to judge whether he speaks long or shortly; and the real explanation of those

insufferably tedious prayers of which we often hear is, not that the speaker intended to make them so lengthy, but that he could not tell, and was not aware how long he had spoken.

If these be matters of indifference, we may at least plead that they should be arranged so as not to tax the strength or destroy the comfort of the people in public worship; remembering that this goes further; because whatever occasions physical uneasiness, also distracts attention, disturbs the mind, and so tends to prevent salutary impressions and edification.

It is generally admitted that in those churches in which kneeling at prayer is practised, greater decorum and solemnity are observable than where the people stand. This can hardly be questioned, and will not be by any one who has had considerable means of observation. And such a fact goes very far to settle the whole matter.

Accordingly, in private, in our own families, and, I presume, in our closets—that is, in every situation in which we carry out our own sense of fitness and propriety without control—we kneel at prayer. This is the unbiassed sentence of the whole Christian community, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, Protestants and Catholics, Dissenters and Churchmen —the spontaneous suffrage of all men among us. Whenever we follow the unbiassed promptings of our own Christian feelings, we assume that attitude in prayer which expresses with most emphasis humility, reverence, and godly fear; and, like St. Paul, "bow our knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Kneeling being thus associated in our minds with prayer in all other circumstances, we commit an error, and deprive ourselves of an advantage, in assuming, in our Church service, another posture which has no such associations. This is not a small matter, though it may appear small to those who have

not considered how much our minds are affected by association of ideas, how powerfully this controls our thoughts and feelings, and how largely it enters into those influences which draw us towards both good and evil. Nothing seems plainer than this—that we should adopt in church the same bodily posture in prayer, which we use habitually on other occasions, and should not disturb the hallowed feelings which are inseparably entwined with that posture by introducing another, less fitting and expressive in itself, and unassociated with those emotions.

Nor is it unworthy of consideration that Christians of other communions find this exceptional custom of ours so disturbing and disagreeable that, as they often express it, they can hardly bring themselves to feel as if they were in Church or engaged in prayer at all. Many reasons, which need not be here insisted on, shew that this is worthy of some regard, especially in an Established Church, which should be *national* in fact, as it is in theory and in law.

The only arguments that have been used against all this are these two—That such has not been the custom; and, That our churches are not constructed so as to admit of kneeling. The former is sufficiently answered when it is shewn that the custom which prevails is neither ancient nor good; that it is inconvenient, unsuitable, exceptional, and modern; not truly distinctive of the Church of Scotland, but the fruit of an alliance of questionable expediency, and for doubtful objects, with the English Puritans.

As to the architectural objection, I rather apprehend that wherever pews are wide enough to sit in with comfort, there is room also to kneel; and if any one will take the trouble to make the experiment, he will find that such is the fact; and a very small expense will render almost any pew available

for kneeling. But if it were otherwise, I beg to ask those who state such objections—Whether they think the churches are for the worshippers, or the worshippers for the churches; in other words, Whether the worship should be made to suit the pews, or the pews to suit the worship?

This may appear all that is necessary to be said upon this subject. But as most Presbyterian writers, and even some very learned Episcopalians, have held that the weight of examples, both Scriptural and Patristic, is in favour of *standing* at prayer, it may be proper to add a few words on this question.

That *standing* was regarded as the only proper attitude in singing psalms, both among the ancient Jews and in the early Christian Church, is undoubted and evident. (Augustine, *Serm.* 3, *in Ps.* 36; Jo. Capian., *De Instit. Ren.*, Lib. ii., c. 12—quoted by Riddle, *Man.* iv. 1.

"The custom," says Riddle, "of standing at prayer in general is peculiar to the East. No rule respecting posture is laid down in Scripture; but the examples recorded in Gen. xviii. 22, xix. 27; 2 Chron. xx. 13, etc.; comp. with Luke xviii. 11, 13, and Matt. vi. 5, shew that the Jews for the most part prayed standing—a fact which is illustrated by the modern practice of that people, and the testimony of Rabbinical writers. Such is indeed the custom of the Oriental nations also. Our Saviour recognised it at least in saying to his disciples, when ye *stand* praying (Mark xi. 25); and hence Cyprian observes that we comply with the will of our Lord 'quando stamus ad orationem.' And from the liturgy in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, as well as from those of Basil and Chrysostom, it plainly appears that, during the early centuries of Christianity, *standing at prayer was the rule, and kneeling the exception*" (ut sup.) The same view is supported by the

high authority of Grotius (*Com. on Matt.* vi. 5), and quite recently by the learned Dean Stanley in his *Lectures on the Eastern Church*, p. 195.

"One regulation alone," says Dean Stanley, speaking of the Council of Nicæa, "the twentieth Canon, related to worship: that which enjoins that on every Sunday, and in daily worship between Easter and Pentecost, the devotions of the people shall be performed standing. Kneeling is forbidden. The almost universal violation of this Canon in Western churches, at the present day, illustrates our remoteness from the time and country of the Nicene Fathers. To pray standing was, in public worship, believed to have been an apostolical usage. It is still the universal practice in the Eastern Church, not only on Sundays, but week days. But in the West kneeling has gradually taken its place; and the Presbyterians of Scotland, and at times the Lutherans of Germany, are probably the only occidental Christians who now observe the one only rubric laid down for Christian worship by the First Œcumenical Council."

It may appear presumptuous to differ from such authorities; yet—*tantorum virorum pace*—I venture to think that their conclusion in this case may well be questioned; for—

Kneeling is also recognised in the Bible as a posture in prayer; and, what is yet more significant, "to kneel" is again and again used (συνεκδοχικῶς), both in the Old and New Testament, as a synonym for "to pray;" shewing that in the minds of the writers the two ideas were inseparably associated. "Let us worship and bow down; let us *kneel* before the Lord our Maker" (Ps. 95); "For this cause *I bow my knees* to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. iii. 14). This appears, if possible, yet more clearly from Phil. ii. 10—"That at the name of Jesus *every knee should bow*," comp.

with Is. xlv. 23, "I have sworn by myself, that unto me shall *every knee bow*, every tongue shall swear." Accordingly, on all occasions of peculiar solemnity, as when sin was confessed and bewailed, when God's judgments were experienced or apprehended—in short, in all those acts of worship in which *humiliation* was a prominent element, it would appear that not standing but *kneeling* was used, or even deeper prostration, such as casting themselves down with their faces toward the ground (Gen. xvii. 3, 17; Num. xv. 22).

Of course praise and prayer cannot be entirely separated; they run into each other. We praise God even in our prayers, and our psalms and hymns of praise often contain confessions of sin, and petitions for mercy and grace. It will probably be found, however, on an accurate inquiry, that whenever the prominent feature of the particular act of devotion was *praise* or *blessing*, the ancient Jews were accustomed to *stand;* but when it was confession or humiliation, or even petition, they generally knelt or threw themselves prostrate. Thus "when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house . . . *and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed*, and gave thanks before his God, *as he did aforetime*" (Dan. vi. 10).

This is curiously illustrated in the account of the dedication of the temple. From the narrative in 1 Kings viii., it might appear that both king and people *stood* throughout the solemn act of praise and prayer there recorded, for the *standing* of both is particularly mentioned (ver. 14, 22), not without design. But when we come to the end of the account, we are informed that the prayer, or part of it, had been uttered by the king *upon his knees* (ver. 54). The parallel passage (2 Chron. vi.) furnishes an explanation; for we are there told distinctly that the king, who had *stood* while he *blessed* the Lord (ver. 1-12,)

assumed a different attitude the moment he began the prayer—he then "kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven" (ver. 13). Thus we are told that Daniel, on the solemn occasion referred to, used that attitude in prayer *which he had before been accustomed to use;* and is it credible that this was any other than that which was common among his Jewish compatriots and their ancestors? And surely it is not conceivable that King Solomon, on an occasion of such peculiar solemnity, should have assumed any attitude but that which was established and recognised as the most emphatic expression of devotion among the Jews of his time.

In the New Testament we never, so far as I remember, read of standing to pray *in connection with Christianity or the Christian Church.* Our blessed Lord never prays standing—"He fell on his face and prayed" (Matt. xxvi. 39); "he fell on the ground and prayed" (Mark xiv. 35); "he kneeled down and prayed" (Luke xxii. 41).

Stephen, at his martyrdom, "kneeled down and prayed" (Acts vii. 59, 60); Peter "kneeled down and prayed" (ix. 40); Paul "kneeled down and prayed with all the brethren" (xx. 36); and again he and his companions (xxi. 5) at Tyre did the same, in circumstances rather inconvenient, as we might think, and where this attitude might have been dispensed with, had it been deemed quite indifferent; but no—for, says the writer, "They all brought us on our way with wives and children, till we were out of the city, *and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed.*" And what is of even more significance, St. Paul uses language (Eph. iii. 14) which implies not only that he himself habitually prayed kneeling, but that this was so generally practised among the Christians,

that the *attitude* might be named, instead of the act of prayer. "For this cause I bow my knees (Κάμπτω τὰ γόνατά μου) to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is indeed true that "the Pharisees loved to pray *standing* in the Synagogues" (Matt. vi. 5); and that in the parable "the Pharisee *stood* and prayed," and so did the publican (Luke xviii. 11, 13). But I do not see why we should consider these examples better worthy of our imitation than those of our Lord and his Apostles. That the Jews were accustomed to repeat certain devotions, called in a general way *prayers*, standing, is, of course, not to be questioned; but these devotions were probably rather of the nature of *blessing* or *praise*, than *prayer*, in the strict sense. The example of the Pharisee's prayer (Luke xviii. 11) confirms this: "God, I thank thee," etc. It contains not a word of humiliation, petition, or confession—*i.e.*, it is a prayer only in that general sense in which all addresses to God may be, and apparently were, so styled.

No doubt the Jews were accustomed to recite the Psalms standing—as the Christians afterwards did, following their example. And these Psalms constituted the principal part, if not almost the whole, of the devotions used in the Synagogues in the early times. But these, though in a general way called *prayers*, were recited or cantillated in that posture, because they were in their general character acts of praise, rather than of confession or supplication.

A curious confirmation of this view is afforded incidentally by the language employed by St. Luke (Acts xvi. 25) in describing what took place in the prison at Philippi—"And at midnight," says the English version, "Paul and Silas *prayed and sang praises* unto God, and the prisoners heard them;" as if the Apostles performed *two* distinct acts of devotion. But

that is not at all what the original says; but προσευχόμενοι ὕμνουν τὸν Θεόν, *i.e. praying, they sang praises*, or their *prayers were praises or psalms*. So the Latin Vulgate correctly renders, "adorantes laudabant Deum"—they *worshipped God by praises*. The note of Alford on this passage (who has no theory on the subject we are now speaking of) is quite to our purpose. "Not as the English version, '*prayed and sang praises*,' but *praying, sang praises*. The distinction of modern times between prayer and praise, arising from our attention being directed to the shape rather than to the essence of devotion, was unknown in those days (see Col. iv. 2)," where the expression favours the same conclusion,—τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτερεῖτε—ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ.

According to this distinction we are certain that the practice of the Christian Church was regulated in this matter. The Church of England follows the custom which, I suppose, was universal both in the East and West, of singing or reciting the whole psalter *standing*—though many portions of it be rather *prayer* than *praise*. But that the general posture for *prayer*, in the strict and limited sense, was universally and always not standing, but *kneeling*, appears to me highly probable, or quite certain, from the following considerations:—

1. *Kneeling* appears to have always been recognised *in the West* as the appropriate attitude for prayer. We find it universal there, and no mention is made (so far as I know) of any controversy having arisen regarding its introduction, nor any mention of it at any time as a novelty or innovation.

2. In the Apostolical Constitutions, which work is believed to contain the most ancient liturgical forms now extant, the exhortation, *Let us pray* (δεηθῶμεν), is commonly followed by another, *Let us kneel!* and by *Let us rise!* at the end of the prayer; as exemplified in that very ancient prayer, which has evidently been the basis of the Litanies in the Greek and

Latin Churches, and which was confined to the faithful, and was strictly a *prayer*.

3. Persons under ecclesiastical discipline *always knelt, and were not permitted to do otherwise.* St. Ambrose thought that catechumens should do so also. This clearly proves that *kneeling* was esteemed the proper posture for confession of sin, and humiliation, and like.

4. The great council of Nicæa, A.D. 325, ordained (Can. xx.) that the faithful, *i.e.*, persons "in full communion with the Church," according to our phraseology, should stand at prayer *upon the Lord's Day.* A Presbyterian divine lately quoted this Canon to show that standing at prayer was the general or universal custom in the Christian Church of the fourth century. It is curious that those who pay so little deference to the Patristic Church in general, or its councils in particular, should think its authority worth invoking in this solitary instance; showing how apt we are to favour arguments and authorities which appear to be upon our side in a dispute. The Canon is as follows:—"Since there are some who kneel on the Lord's Day and in the days of the Pentecost, in order that all things may be observed in the same manner in every parish (or Diocese), the holy Synod has decreed that all the faithful should at those times offer up their prayers to God standing."

It does not appear that this ordinance produced any effect in the West, whatever influence it might have in the East; for we find that the common posture in prayer among the Latins continued afterwards to be what, no doubt, it had always been before, and is still to the present day—namely, *kneeling.*

Instead of favouring the view in support of which it is adduced, this famous Canon may be held almost to demonstrate that standing had not hitherto been, and was not then, the general attitude in prayer in the Christian Church. For

not to mention (what the Council itself acknowledges) that the practice of standing on the Lord's Day was not universal, it would evidently have been absurd to ordain that "*on Sundays*, and *in the days of Pentecost*," all Christians should offer up their prayers to God standing, if it had been the practice, or was designed, that *at all times* they should stand at prayer. The words of this very Canon, therefore, plainly recognise *kneeling* as the general and ordinary posture.

5. The custom of standing at prayer *on the Lord's Day*, and during the interval between Easter and Whitsuntide, is mentioned by many of the Fathers, who also allege, as they are accustomed to do in favour of old observances, that it was derived from the Apostles. But the writer of the treatise *Quæstiones et Responsiones ad Orthodoxos*, printed in the works of Justin Martyr (though not written by that Father), furnishes a clear confirmation of what has now been said. The question (No. 115) is—

"If kneeling at prayer be more pleasing to God, and more apt to draw down the divine compassion than standing, why Christians do not kneel at prayer on Lord's Days, and from Easter to Whitsunday?

The very form of this interrogation shews that it was a settled point among the faithful of that time, that *kneeling* was a more solemn, decorous, and even *efficacious* (πλεῖον ἐφέλκεται τὴν θείαν συμπάθειαν) manner of prayer then standing.

The answer is—"Since it becomes us to keep in mind both our fall into sins and the grace of our Christ, by which we rise again from our fall, therefore *we pray kneeling six days*, as a symbol of our fall into sins; but our not kneeling on the Lord's Day is a symbol of the Resurrection, by which, through the grace of Christ, we are liberated from our sins, and from death on account of them—which is destroyed.

And this custom had its origin from the times of the Apostles, as says St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, and Martyr, in his book on Easter, in which he also mentions our not kneeling during Pentecost, because the same reason holds respecting it as regarding the Lord's Day, as has been explained."—Just. Martyr, *Opera*, t. iii. p. 179, Ed. *Otto.*

Not to quote Tertullian, Clement, and other Fathers, who speak to the same purpose, Epiphanius and Hilarius both say it was the custom neither to fast nor kneel at prayer on the Lord's Day, or during the time between Easter and Pentecost. St. Jerome affirms that this was a universal custom; but St. Augustine confesses he did not know whether the custom was universal—"*utrum ubique servetur ignoro*"—though it prevailed in Africa.

6. People who hear of the early Christians standing in their public worship *on the Lord's Day* at prayer, are apt to conclude that this determines the whole matter; for in the mind of a Presbyterian, public worship is associated only with Sundays—he knows virtually nothing of public worship at any other time. But the early Church did not make Sunday exclusively a day of public worship, or even celebrate then alone the most solemn of its rites. "In the primitive Church it was a universal custom to administer the Lord's Supper on Thursday in Easter week, and a *daily celebration* appears to have been recommended, and to a certain extent practised." Probably following Tertullian, several of the Fathers—particularly Cyprian, Augustine, and Jerome—explained that petition in the Lord's Prayer, "Give us each day our daily bread," of the Eucharist—"Eucharistiam," says Cyprian, "quotidie ad cibum salutis accipimus" (*De Orat. Dom.*); and under this notion they judged it necessary to have public worship and the Sacrament of the Supper (an essential and the

chief part of it) every day: and this custom, as the learned Pamelius has shewn in his Note upon the words now quoted, continued in the chief cities of the empire at least down to the times of Jerome and Augustine (*Cyprian.*, pp. 268, 274; Edit. Paris, 1632)—so that *the ordinary custom* or attitude in prayer was that which obtained *upon other days*, not that which prevailed upon the first day of the week. The practice of kneeling, accordingly, was so common that—as the learned Bingham has noted—the author of the Acts of Thecla calls prayer κλίσις γονάτων, "bending of knees," as Paul the Apostle had done before; and Arnobius, when he would describe to the heathen the manner in which the Christians performed their worship, says, "they all fell down upon the earth, *according to their custom—omnes ex more prosternimur*—to offer their common prayers to God."—*See Bingham*, Bk. xiii., c. xiii., sec. 4.

7. I cannot omit to notice the words of Eusebius, in which he relates the well-known story of "the thundering legion," composed of Christian soldiers, who, by their prayers, according to the theory of their co-religionists, saved from destruction the Roman army under Marcus Aurelius. These Christian soldiers, says the historian, fell down upon their knees, *as is the familiar custom of us* (Christians) *when we pray*, γόνυ θέντας ἐπὶ τὴν γὴν κατὰ τὸ οἰκεῖον ἡμῖν τῶν εὐχῶν ἔθος—*ut nostris orantibus mos est*, as Valesius renders the words.—*Euseb.*, Lib. v., c. v. See also Eusebii *De Vit. Constant.*, Lib. iv., c. lxi.

8. It is evident from their frequent attempts to explain the custom *of standing at prayer on Sundays*, and the ingenious reasons they allege for this purpose, that this attitude in prayer presented itself to the Fathers of the Greek Church, no less than to those of the West, as *an exception* and *an anomaly*. Neither does it appear, from the language of Augustine and

Jerome, from the decree of the Council of Nicæa, or (so far as I have observed) from any other authority, that, in the fourth century, there existed any difference between the custom of the Latin and that of the Greek Church in this matter. It may therefore be fairly concluded that while the whole Church admitted that *kneeling* was the appropriate and general attitude for prayer, they deviated from this on Sundays and certain other days, simply in compliance with a custom which was ancient, but of which they knew neither the origin nor the reason. Accordingly, they hit upon that symbolical explanation which was so much in the taste of those times, and so favourite, because so easy, a solution of difficulties, with the Fathers of the Church, and which also, as is well known, was the reason of many rites and ceremonies, such as, in Baptism, the chrism and the three immersions, the sign of the cross and other ceremonies.

Upon the whole, we may perhaps conclude that the custom of standing to pray, which prevailed so much in the Greek Church, arose from a very different cause from that ingeniously devised by the Fathers.

Probably the true reason why standing was so much practised in the public worship of the Christian Church, particularly in the East, is the same which prevailed in the Jewish synagogues—that originally no prayers, or almost none, were spoken aloud or offered up in common, except the Psalms of David, when the people naturally and properly stood. It has been rendered exceedingly probable that the *prayers*, in the proper sense, were made silently or in a low voice by each individual for himself, and then doubtless they knelt. Of this silent prayer, προσευχὴ διὰ σιωπῆς, there are many traces, not only in the Apostolical Constitutions, but in most of the ancient liturgies, including the Missale Romanum.

And accordingly when prayers, in the strict sense, came to be said aloud, the same attitude of standing was not unnaturally used, though improperly. In the West, where custom has always had a less absolute authority, a more reasonable practice was gradually adopted.

Commenting upon the famous letter of Pliny containing an account of the Christians of the second century and their worship, an author already quoted says:—"Here is a true representation of the Christian Assemblies at that time: their open worship was nothing but *Cantatus*, chanting the Psalms of David, etc. . . . Singing was their liturgy in the modern sense of the word, that is, their open divine service, and the chanting still retained in our cathedrals is a venerable relic of the primitive Christian worship. Here is no mention of prayer of any sort, because that was secret worship," etc.—(J. Edward's *Dis.*, p. 56.)

Certainly it is strange to find extreme Presbyterians seeking to draw an argument for one or two of their own customs from the practice of a Church which, in worship, discipline, and doctrine, may appear a continual protest against ours. But if the authority of the Greek Church have any weight in regard to postures in prayer, or the absence of instrumental music, why not in respect to Episcopacy, Liturgies, a Calendar, Saints' days, Prayers for the dead, and a hundred other observances?

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRAISE OF GOD—INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

And Hezekiah set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad, the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.—2 CHRON. xxix.

As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.—PSALM lxxxvii.

Ring out ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears
(If ye have power to touch our senses so),
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time,
And let the base of heaven's deep organ blow,
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full concert to the angelic symphony.

MILTON.

To enlightened Christians it may appear incredible that in the year of grace 1864, persons, and even sects, should still be found, that consider it not only inexpedient, but even sinful, to employ an organ, or any other musical instrument of man's invention, in the worship of God. It is conceivable that some particular instrument might be so associated in the people's minds with vulgar, ludicrous, or unhallowed ideas, that it could not be used in the service of God without suggesting these, and so obstructing the ends of divine worship; but in regard to the *organ*, at least (and the same may be said

of the excellent substitute for it, recently invented—I mean the harmonium), the reverse of all this is the case; for that noblest of instruments is not only specially adapted for sacred music, but it may be said always to have been consecrated to the service of the Church, and so to be associated in the mind of all Christendom with the solemnities of religion.

Those prejudices put forth in their support such objections as the following:—

I. That all human inventions in the worship of God are forbidden and unlawful, and instrumental music among them.

II. The use of instrumental music is inconsistent with the simplicity and the spirituality of Christian worship.

III. The ancient Christians had no instrumental music in their public worship, nor has the Greek Church to the present day.

IV. Instruments of music belong to the weak and beggarly elements of the Levitical dispensation.

V. The argument from the Old Testament which sanctions such instruments would equally sanction *dancing* in public worship.

VI. The human voice is God's own instrument, and it is superior to any of man's invention, and we should serve our Maker with the best that we have.

VII. The beautiful in nature or art can never make man holy.

These are all the objections which I remember to have met with, or which appear to have any plausibility; and of these the first is esteemed the most weighty of all.

I. No doubt it is in an important sense true, that human inventions should have no place in the worship of God. That our public worship should consist of certain acts, such as

praise and prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and partaking of the Sacraments; and that it should be conducted with order, decorum, and solemnity—everything being done to edification—these seem the chief circumstances in the worship of the Christian Church for which we can plead the express authority of the New Testament; all of which, indeed, may be summed up in these general rules—"Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. xiv. 40); and "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. xiv. 26). If we will insist on some Scriptural warrant more particular than these, in order to render our worship lawful, it may probably follow that we neither have, nor can have, any warrantable worship at all.

Preaching is considered the prominent part of public worship among the sects which urge the above objection, as their actions and their language distinctly shew. They go to their places of worship "to hear sermon," or "to hear the minister preach." But the Church in apostolic times met together "*to break bread;*" and St. Paul makes it evident that this was the formal object and principal purpose of Christian assemblies (1 Cor. xi. 20). Among those sects, therefore, the sermon has plainly taken the place of the sacrament. Is not this an invention of men in the worship of God? It may be hardly necessary to add that the sermon itself, as we now understand the word, is a human invention, contrived apparently by the schoolmen of the Middle Ages. There are many *speeches* recorded in the New Testament; but any such thing as a formal discourse, founded upon a text of Scripture, and divided and subdivided after the manner of modern, and especially Presbyterian sermons, is unknown to the New Testament, or to Apostolic or ancient times. Neither should we forget that all prayers and sermons, and all compositions whatever that

are not dictated by inspiration, are in some sense human inventions.

It may also surprise many devout Christians who go to church Sunday after Sunday "to hear the Gospel preached," to be told that none of the saints in the primitive times frequented Christian assemblies for such a purpose; and that, so far as we can learn, *the Gospel was never preached in any Christian Church, or to any company of believers*, by any of the Apostles, or of their assistants or successors. "To preach the Gospel," εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, is a word that very frequently occurs in the New Testament. In the Acts and Epistles alone, it is found between forty and fifty times, and it never means an address to Christians for their instruction, edification, and growth in grace, but always an address *to Jews, Greeks*, or other unbelievers, for their conversion to the Christian faith. I speak, of course, of the original Greek of the New Testament; for our translators, with their usual want of exactness, introduce "preaching" where no such thing is mentioned in the text; as, for example, in Acts xx. 7-9.

Can anything resembling the modern Presbyterian Sacrament of the Supper—for example, its Preaching days, Table services, and other tedious accompaniments—find authority in the New Testament?

They who think instrumental music unlawful because no passages from the New Testament can be adduced to authorise it, cannot adduce any such authority for their practice of standing at prayer; and certainly their custom of sitting to sing is contrary to all ancient precept and example whatever.

But this question of singing includes two points—first, *the matter*—what should be sung in public worship? and second, *the manner*—how it should be sung?

As to the first—Where is the Scriptural authority regulat-

ing *what compositions* we should sing in our worship? I am not aware either of any rubric directing us *what* we should so use; or *how*—whether reciting, intoning, chanting, or singing in plain tune, according to our old custom. St. Paul, indeed, exhorts the Ephesian Christians to "speak to themselves (λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς, Eph. v. 19) in or with psalms and hymns and spiritual odes;"—but this seems to refer to their silent meditations or private devotions, rather than to public worship —"singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

But suppose it to be a rule for public worship:—What psalms are meant? The psalms in our present Psalter? The whole of these? All the parts of each? These and no other? Are all the noble psalms in Isaiah and the prophets to be excluded, not to mention some in the New Testament? And where are those "hymns and spiritual songs" in which we are to speak to ourselves? We must either ourselves compose such, and then they will be human inventions, or we must want them, and so fail to do what is prescribed.

The hymn which, as Pliny informs Trajan, the Christians met early in the morning to sing to Christ as to a god, was probably a human invention, for it is not preserved in the New Testament. Our Saviour sang an hymn with his disciples; but it has not been recorded, and we cannot tell what it was.

But even though we had been particularly informed what psalms or hymns had the divine sanction for use in the Christian Church, we should be no nearer our aim of excluding all human inventions from the worship of God, unless we had also transmitted to us *music communicated by inspiration.* This was possible, and probably not very difficult. But no such inspirations were ever vouchsafed, so far as we know; none such, at least, have been preserved or mentioned; so

that at the present day, and ever since the commencement of Christianity, all the music sung in all Christian Churches throughout the world has been a purely human invention. For the same reason, singing *in harmony* must be forbidden, for the ancient Jews were not acquainted with harmony nor could sing in parts—nor yet the ancient Christians. Even the *precentor*, on this plea, would need to be extruded, for he also and his office are unknown to the authoritative records of our religion. The most true-blue Presbyterian congregation that refuses to sing "paraphrases," and insists on having the psalm read line by line during singing (if such still exist), however loudly it may feel constrained to testify against them, is compelled to employ a multitude of "inventions in the worship of God" of which the New Testament and the primitive Church know nothing. The Old Hundred, Bangor and St. Paul's, French and Dundee, and London New, are noble airs, grand, solemn, soul-stirring, as they come to us laden with sanctified associations, with hallowed and tender memories; but they can plead no higher character than "inventions of men in the worship of God."

The English Cathedral service may have more human inventions than are found in our Presbyterian worship; but it is only a difference of *degree;* the latter can no more plead the absence of human inventions than the other. It is somewhat remarkable, that the very sects which insist most on the necessity of divine authority for the several parts and acts of public worship, should in their own practice show the greatest disregard of all that we know of Christian public worship in the earliest times. That worship consisted—

1. Chiefly in reading the Scriptures; whereas in a large portion of the Presbyterian churches in this country the Scriptures have been always less used, whether in the way of

lessons or otherwise, than perhaps in any Church whatever, and for a long period (as has been already stated) they were generally unused altogether in the Church of Scotland.

2. The psalms were a prominent part of the earliest Christian worship; that is, whole psalms, and probably several of them, were *said*, *chanted*, or *sung*, as the prayers, praises, etc., of the Church; whereas they are only used, in the common Presbyterian worship, in miserable fragments of a few verses in metre, itself a human and modern invention.

3. In the ancient Church, the Lord's Prayer seems to have been always said, and apparently aloud by the whole Church; whereas not only was it not used by the more zealous Presbyterians in Scotland, but it was commonly regarded, and sometimes preached against, as not a Christian prayer, and was even abjured as a rag of popery.

4. We know certainly that *the whole congregation* in the earliest times of Christianity joined loudly in the response, *Amen;* as appears to have been the universal custom among God's ancient people in all acts of public worship: but no Presbyterian congregation, so far as I have heard, makes any such response; they leave the minister to say *that* like all the rest of the worship. Perhaps they consider the *Amen*, like organs and psalteries and harps, typical of better things to come.

5. Another inconsistency, yet more gross, may be added;—we do not fast upon occasions of solemn supplication and the like, though the ancients, both Jews and Christians, generally, perhaps uniformly, did, and though our Saviour has prescribed rules for the manner of fasting no less than for almsgiving and prayer (Matt. vi.); yea, though our own standards expressly include solemn fastings among "religious duties to be used in their several times and occasions" (*Confession of*

Faith, c. xxi. v., and *Larger Catechism*, Q. 108), and have even taken care to instruct us what constitutes a fast. "A religious fast," they say, "requires total abstinence not only from all food, unless bodily weakness do manifestly disable from holding out; in which case something may be taken, yet very sparingly, to support nature when ready to faint."—(*Directory.*)

So that in these several particulars, which comprehend among them all or nearly all that we know of the most ancient Christian worship, the declaimers against "inventions of men in the worship of God" follow their own inventions, as much in opposition to Christian antiquity as to propriety, decorum, and, in some cases, to their own doctrines.—The pulpit itself is a human invention: borrowed from the theatre.

II. I have not observed that any of those who objected to the use of instrumental music on the ground that it destroyed "the simplicity of worship, and interfered with its spirituality," have explained what they meant by "simplicity" or "spirituality" in this connection. *Spirituality* would appear to be an attribute rather of the worshipper than of the service or ritual in which he engages, so that the same outward form or manner of worship may be spiritual to one man, which to another is outward and carnal. The sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jewish law were a spiritual worship, or rather the vehicles of spiritual worship, to those devout Israelites who were enlightened as to their inner meaning; while to those who penetrated no farther than the surface, they were "carnal ordinances." We cannot render any worship spiritual apart from the dispositions and characters of those who engage in it; the most that can be done is so to order the form and manner of worship that it shall tend as much as possible to foster spirituality in those that use it, and shall present as few temp-

tations and lures as may be to superstition and carnality in their various forms. A simple air, sung in the rudest fashion, without harmony, and with no approximation to correctness in time or tune, is no more a spiritual act of worship than an anthem sung by a cultivated quoir, accompanied with an organ; indeed it is less so, if it be less apt to generate and heighten those emotions and sentiments the production of which is the only purpose or use of music in worship at all.

Simplicity should be a characteristic of all Church music, and indeed of all Church services whatever. But this, again, is relative to the knowledge and cultivation of different congregations. To one that music may be quite intelligible and easy, which would appear intricate, difficult, and even inexplicable, to another. But whatever our idea of simplicity may be, or whatever the standard of it, this is certain, and indeed obvious to any one who will reflect for a moment, that the "organ question" has nothing to do with it; unless it be in helping to attain simplicity, and all other essential qualities of good Church music. All persons who have paid attention to this or to any other form of art, will acknowledge that real simplicity is attainable only through cultivation; and that the bawlings and screamings of untutored ignorance, inaccurate in time and tune, deformed by bad taste, and confounded with discords meant for harmony, exhibit not a genuine simplicity, but only a rude vulgarity. Such praise may indeed proceed from sincere and earnest hearts; those uncouth sounds may express profound religious emotions; but it must be confessed that the emotions owe nothing to the music; the vehicle is rather an obstruction than a help—and indeed, when we remember the words which are sung, such singing can only be considered a kind of desecration.

If the use of the organ be a help toward correctness and good taste, it will so far conduce to simplicity and every other desirable quality. The simplest psalmody in the world is to be heard in that country where music is most generally and profoundly studied.

According to that German method, which Carl Engel has so ably and learnedly expounded in his excellent work on Church music, the whole people *sing in unison*, with the accompaniment of the organ, which supplies the harmony. I once heard a hymn sung in this manner in the cathedral at Cologne, and it appeared to me for solemnity, sweetness, and *simplicity*, the perfection of congregational music.

Music should be reckoned an essential part of clerical education, so that the minister may be qualified to judge what kind of airs, and what arrangements of them, etc., are proper to be used in Church, and so prevent the use of what is trashy and unsuitable. A great deal of our pretended *simplicity* consists in singing very miserable music in a wretched manner. In this respect we have degenerated since the Reformation, when a severe but true taste existed in church music.

III. That the early Christians had no musical instruments in their churches is certainly true, for they had no churches. Accordingly, the word ἐκκλησία is never in the New Testament applied to a building or house, but always to the congregation or society. And, so far as I can find, it was not till the times of Constantine and Eusebius, that the word came to be generally employed in the former sense. Indeed, the ancient Church authors (Eusebius, Chrysostom, Theodoret, etc.) all speak of the general erection of churches as characteristic of the period when persecution had ceased, and the Christians had liberty and encouragement openly to profess

their religion, and publicly to celebrate its rites. It may be true, that in private houses or other places where they were accustomed to assemble for worship, those early saints used no instrument but their own voices. The persecutions which they often suffered, and the insecurity from which till the reign of Constantine they were never fairly relieved, render it probable that such was the case; but this, even if ascertained, would form no good argument against the use of such instruments by us, for whom God has provided in this world some better thing than fell to their lot. Else we might raise a scruple even against the building of churches, because they had none. The great mass of Christians at the present day who approve and employ musical instruments in public worship, use none in their private and domestic worship; because, in the latter, it may not be had, or may not be had without inconvenience. So, if it could be proved that the disciples of Christ in the first three centuries made no use, in their public assemblies, of the psaltery and the harp and the loud sounding cymbals, which are so familiarly named in those Psalms which they constantly repeated, it would establish nothing more than this, that it was not convenient or suitable *in their circumstances* to employ such aids. It is a rash inference to conclude, that because something was not judged expedient in the infancy of the Church, and in times of persecution and danger, it must therefore be held unlawful at all other times, and under all circumstances, however different. The Old Testament furnishes an unquestionable refutation of such argument, plausible as it may appear.

In the Pentateuch is contained an account of the public worship of the Israelites as enacted and regulated, down to the minutest details, under the immediate authority of Jehovah. No mention is made of musical instruments; and

doubtless none such were then used. How plausibly might it be argued that, as none such were appointed by him who ordered "all things according to the pattern showed to him in the mount," therefore all such were forbidden; and were thus forbidden because not according to the divine will; for musical instruments had been *invented* long before, and were in those times familiarly known and employed (Exod. xv. 20). And yet, at a subsequent period, under the same dispensation of religion, and the same ritual and worship continuing, we find an elaborate system of choral singing instituted, and musical instruments of various kinds freely employed; and this is expressly said to have been done under the sanction of men divinely commissioned and instructed to that effect—"for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets: and when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began with the trumpets, and with the instruments appointed by David, king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpets sounded" (2 Chron. xxix. 26, etc.)

IV. That instrumental music had a divine sanction under the former dispensation cannot, of course, be denied; but the inference deducible from it is attempted to be set aside by alleging that this was part of that ceremonial and typical system which was abolished by the coming of our Lord, in whom all types were abolished by their fulfilment. "Will any one attempt to show," asks a writer on this subject, "that such instruments were not part of that economy whose meagre types and dim shadows were for ever abrogated by God in the flesh, to make way for the spiritual glories of the New Testament dispensation?" I certainly will attempt to show

this—and, unless I much mistake, it will be very easy to succeed in the attempt.

In the first place, the use of instrumental music, or of any music at all, *is no part* or *element* of that Levitical institution which was established by Moses, and which was "a shadow of good things to come." Neither instruments of music, nor any thing connected with music of any kind, were among those "things seen in the mount, according to the pattern" of which the tabernacle and its furniture, its rites and ordinances, were to be ordered and fashioned. So far from it, they are never heard of till the times of the kings, when the people having attained some measure of civilization, and the cultivation of their minds having now qualified them to use and appreciate, and even demand a more refined and perfect method of offering up the spiritual sacrifices of praise and prayer, choral singing and musical instruments, both alike unknown to the Levitical law, were introduced; and, as being suitable to then existing circumstances, and conducive to the great ends of divine worship, these innovations received the approbation of the Almighty King—though no such inventions or regulations had formed any parts of the "statutes and judgments which the Lord gave by the hand of Moses."

Secondly, Several regulations and some institutions, suggested by new circumstances, are mentioned in the Old Testament as having been introduced after the times of Moses; but I am not aware that any of these have ever been regarded as parts of the *ceremonial* or *typical* system of the Old Testament; and, accordingly, the Epistle to the Hebrews, from which we derive almost all our knowledge of the typical meaning of the Old Testament rites, makes no allusion to any such. The writer expounds, "as shadows of good things to come," the Tabernacle and its furniture, its servants and their

offerings and services; but it never occurs to him that anything is typical, or indeed belongs properly to the Levitical dispensation, except what had been ordained and established by the great prophet "who saw God face to face;" and therefore he never hints or imagines that any thing else was fulfilled in Christ, or is abrogated by his coming.

Thirdly, It is not easy to understand what may be meant by those who talk of the timbrel, the harp, the trumpet, the psaltery, or the pipe (Ps. cxlix., cl.), as types, or as parts of a typical system. By a type we commonly understand some institution or action which shall exhibit, in a lower form, the resemblance or image of something else to be exhibited in a higher form, and of which it is intended to suggest the conception, the desire, and the hope—thus "going," like John the Baptist, "before the face of the Lord to prepare his way." Thus the lustrations and washings, the offerings of bulls and goats, etc., were all premonitory of that spiritual sacrifice to be presented in the fulness of time by him "who put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and who, being holy, harmless, undefiled, entered once for all into the holiest places, whither we are commanded to follow him, "presenting our bodies living sacrifices in the power of the Eternal Spirit." The type is thus merely a lower form of the antitype, which latter exhibits the same thing, accomplished in the Spirit, which before was set forth in the flesh. But how the musical instruments employed in the Temple should be types, or what they may have stood related to as their antitypes or fulfilments, I neither know nor can imagine, nor has any word been written by those who were bound to do so, to cast light upon this strange conception.

We are taught in the New Testament that the sacrifices, offerings, priests, etc., of the Old Testament were typical and

"shadows of good things to come;" but no hint is given that the choruses of singers, or the instruments they used, were typical or shadows of anything under the New Testament. This seems evident, that if their *harps* and *psalteries* were typical, so must their *voices* have been; for both were used for the same purposes, and in the same exercise.

That the Christian Church was modelled not after the Temple but after the Synagogue, may be true, and yet it is nothing to our present purpose; for—

1. It cannot (I believe) be proved that so early as the beginning of the New Testament period *singing was* used in the Synagogues at all.

2. Singing can hardly be said to be used now, or to have been at any time in the Synagogues. Their *cantillating* much more resembles *intoning* than singing, as we understand and practise it.

3. The Synagogue (so far as we know) was altogether a human invention, though undoubtedly a very useful one, and in the most ancient times was intended chiefly, if not exclusively, for reading the *Parashioth*, and afterwards the *Haphtaroth*—the Sections of the Law and of the Prophets. If so—

The *Synagogue* and its *usages* can have no authority in the Christian Church, except in so far as we may think fit to copy them: they themselves, from all we can learn, had no authority except their utility. And—

The Synagogue was only, in the first instance at least, a help to those who had not a temple. So that upon the whole—

The fact remains undeniable that *the only worship which is said to have had an express divine authority, employed all the instruments of music then known.*

The absence of instrumental music in the primitive Christian Churches no more proves that it was in itself un-

lawful, or should remain always inexpedient, than the absence of it in the Tabernacle shews that it was in itself prohibited at a later period; for we know that it was actually introduced and sanctioned, under the Old Testament dispensation, "according to the commandment of the Lord by his prophets."

We have in the Old Testament the names of various instruments of music; for example, the *Kinnur* and the *Nebel*, the *Ugab* or Symphonia, the *Chalil*, and several more; and we know very little of them except this, that some were stringed and others wind instruments, and that they were, and must have been, very rude and imperfect. Had any mystery lurked under their construction or use, some explanation, or at least some hint, of the fact would doubtless have been supplied by some one, at least, of the sacred writers either of the Old Testament or of the New; but none such is found.

Prayer to God, and *praise*, were the same things in the Jewish as they are in the Christian Church. We sing the very same Psalms which Asaph and David composed for, and sung with, the *harp*, the *psaltery*, and the *organ*, and which are frequently directed to be so sung, not only in the titles, but sometimes in the body of the Psalms themselves (Pss. cxlix. and cl.) Why we should think it wrong to comply with these directions, while yet we say or sing the directions themselves, seems difficult to explain; except on this principle, that all churches and sects have their superstitions, and that among the silliest superstitions is to be reckoned the fear of superstition; while one of the commonest forms of fanaticism is hatred of those superstitions which happen to be contrary to our own.

Here I must note a singular unfairness with which those men are chargeable of whose views I am now speaking. When the question is respecting the Christian Sabbath, the

baptism of infants, a Church establishment, or any of those things which they advocate, but of which the New Testament says nothing, or even appears, by silence, to discredit them, they eagerly fly to the Old Testament. *Now* it is enough for them that infants were circumcised under the law; that the fourth commandment was inscribed upon the tables of stone by the finger of God; that among the Jews a Church establishment had divine sanction, etc. etc. But when, with much plainer reason, we quote the Old Testament to justify our employing musical instruments in our Church service, we are told that the Old Testament is a heap of ceremonies and symbols, and, in short, that it can prove nothing in such matters. It is not decent thus to bring in the Law and the Prophets when we need them against our adversaries, and to throw them out the moment our adversaries may employ them against ourselves.

But we must not take it for granted that the New Testament contains no allusion to instruments of music in the worship of God. Not to mention that the word *psalm*, both in the Greek of the New Testament and in the Hebrew of the Old, means something to be sung to the harp or other instrument (ψαλμός, and מִזְמוֹר, from זָמַר, to touch or twang the chords), John the Theologos saw, in the Apocalypse, the four and twenty elders "having every one of them harps; and he beheld them that had gotten the victory, standing upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and they sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb" (ch. v. and xv.) Whether these descriptions apply to the Church triumphant in heaven, or victorious over its enemies upon earth, the conclusion is the same—that in the mind of the *Theologos*, instruments of music were inseparably associated with the worship of God under the Christian dispensation, in its highest

glory and most spiritual exercises. Indeed, such prohibitions as some men dream of are alien from the spirit of the New Testament, as they are not to be found in the letter of the Christian Scriptures. They are the offspring of those narrow bigotries which have often been mistaken for purity or zeal—a shallow purity of that ancient type—"touch not, taste not, handle not," and a zeal, though often great, never "according to knowledge."

V. If we may judge by the frequency with which it is repeated, the following argument appears much to please those who would prove from Scripture that instruments of music should not be employed in the worship of God. "The same reasons," they say, "which are adduced from the Old Testament to justify the use of musical instruments in the Christian Church, would also sanction *dancing;* because the Jews praised God 'with the timbrel and *dance,*' as well as 'with stringed instruments and organs' (Ps. cl.)" "And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances" (Exod. xv. 20). Many similar examples are found in the Old Testament, generally of women—though David also "danced before the Lord with all his might," when the Ark was brought to Zion; though we may gather from the disgust of his wife that such exhibition was considered indecorous in *men,* at least in men of station (2 Sam. vi. 14, 20).

This objection, though much relied on, will be found on examination to be very weak; for—(1.) We are only informed that the ancient Jews, in the excitement of their joy, actually danced on certain special occasions, such as after some great victory or some wonderful deliverance (Exod. xv.; Judg. xi. and xxi.; 1 Sam. xviii.); but we never read that

dancing was any regular or ordinary part of their religious worship. (2.) Accordingly, while we are told expressly that the use of "cymbals, psalteries, and harps" in the temple-worship was "according to the commandment of the Lord by his prophets" (2 Chron. xxix.), we have not a word to shew that *dancing* enjoyed any divine sanction, or that any such thing was ever admitted or thought of *as part of that ritual.* Also, while "singers and players on instruments" are repeatedly spoken of in connection with the temple-service, no mention is ever made of *dancers.* "And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be singers with instruments of music, psalteries, and harps, and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy" (1 Chron. xv. 16). "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee" (Ps. lxxxvii.)—but no hint that any of the Levites were appointed to occupy the place of "dancers before the Lord." The Seer of the Apocalypse also beholds "the elders," and "them that had gotten the victory," with "the harps of God" (chap. v. and xv.); but he says nothing of dancing; for no such thing was known in the temple-worship, which forms the basis of his imagery. It is in vain, therefore, to pretend that *dancing* holds the same position in the Old Testament ritual as the use of musical instruments. It would be much more just to reason that instrumental has the very same authority, in the Old Testament, as vocal music; and if playing on instruments be not sanctioned there, neither is singing. This is the argument of the Quakers against singing; and it is far better founded than the other. "As to their artificial music," says Robert Barclay, "either by organs, or other instruments, *or voice,* we have neither example nor precept for it the New Testament."—(*Apology for the True Christian Divinity,* Prop. xi. sec. 26.)

It will be quite evident to any one who looks at the passages in which dancing is mentioned, that it was confined to those religious *processions* which were common among the Jews, as they were among all other ancient nations, and which have been perpetuated in the worship of all those Christian churches—both in the East and West—which have derived their rites from antiquity. As we know nothing of *processions* in our worship, we want not only the occasion but the possibility of any such manifestation of that religious emotion—to which only the *Jumpers* and *Shakers* among Protestants appear to have made any approximation.

But even though *dancing* had possessed for the ancient people that sanction which it thus plainly appears to want—this would not prove that we must adopt that custom as part of our worship. It does not follow that we must imitate their religious customs in every particular, however inconvenient or unsuitable to our circumstances, or however repugnant to our ideas, feelings, and habits, because we follow them in those particulars which appear to us convenient, comely, and decorous, and so conducive to the great ends of worship. We *kneel* and *stand* in our public devotions, as the ancient Jews did, not simply, however, because they did so, but because these postures express respect and reverence among us, as they did among them; but we do not, in our humiliation, cast ourselves down with our faces upon the ground, or rend our garments in our affliction, or scatter dust upon our heads, or wallow in the ashes, or walk barefoot with our heads covered.

In all these cases, and in others which might be named, we not only consider what was practised by the ancient Jews, even under the sanction of Divine authority, but what may be decent and reverent in us, in our different climate, with our different institutions, customs, manners, and associations,

and national character; lest what was calculated to excite reverence and promote piety among a simple Oriental people, three thousand years ago, should be found to produce not the same, but rather opposite effects among us. And being now both qualified to judge of all such matters (1 Cor. x. 15), and commanded (Phil. iv. 8) to consider and determine for ourselves what things are proper and decorous in our circumstances (ὅσα σεμνὰ ταῦτα λογίζεσθε), we must not make ourselves the slaves of Jewish customs or institutions, either in the way of imitation or of avoidance: remembering that these things belong not to the essence of religion, but are merely means towards an end, and are therefore to be judged of, in all cases and at all times, according to their fitness for promoting that end. So that, even if dancing had an express divine sanction, as instrumental music had, under the old economy, we should feel quite at liberty to reject the one and adopt the other, on the ground of suitableness and propriety, according to our circumstances, customs, and ideas; such freedom being no presumption, but rather the privilege and duty of the spiritual man whom (1 Cor. ii. 15) the Son hath made free, so that he is free indeed—*ὁ δὲ πνευματικὸς ἀνακρίνει μὲν πάντα, αὐτὸς δὲ ὑπ' οὐδενὸς ἀνακρίνεται.*

VI. The next argument, that "the human voice is God's own instrument, and it is superior to any of man's invention; and we should serve our Maker with the best that we have;" is founded upon so gross a mistake, or rather, it involves so many gross mistakes, that it perhaps hardly deserves notice or refutation—

1. It assumes that the use of instrumental music implies and necessitates the banishment or disuse of *vocal* music in the worship of God, so that, *because* we have an organ or other

instrument, we must therefore cease to sing; as if the Psalmist had uttered a contradiction, or recommended an absurdity, when he said—"Let them *sing* praises unto him *with the timbrel and harp.*" (Ps. cxlix.) Whereas, every one knows that the most perfect music, or all but the most perfect, and certainly the best for public worship, is the result of a combination of instruments with the human voice; and that the very purpose for which instruments are advocated is to aid the human voice, and enable it better to perform its part in praising the Lord, instead of superseding it; as says the sweet singer of Israel—"Awake up, my glory (tongue); awake, psaltery and harp." (Ps. lvii.)

2. What is meant by the assertion that "the human voice, being God's own instrument, is superior to any of man's invention?" Does it mean that any and every human voice is superior to any or every musical instrument which human ingenuity has ever contrived?—that, for example, any single human voice whatever is superior to any violin, or that a number of human voices of any sort, singing, or attempting to sing together, are superior to the organ in York Minster, or to that which reigns in silent majesty in the Music Classroom of the University of Edinburgh?

Some one voice indeed—that of Lablache, Formes, Pasta, or Catalani—may excel any single instrument of man's device; but that is a rare exception—one in a hundred millions—and it reaches its perfection only through a life-long cultivation. The *capacity* is a gift of Providence; the actual power and perfection, a work of art, and the result of man's skill and labour. As wolves can howl, lions roar, asses bray, serpents hiss, and monkeys chatter, so man can make noises by nature; but he can no more *sing* than he can speak without education—imitation and training.

The Creator has conferred upon some men and women—not upon all—the gifts of musical ear and voice; but the power to sing is as truly a matter of science and art, as is the construction of a piano, or of a harmonium, or the ability to play upon such instruments. If *singing* were a divine inspiration, and *playing* a work of the flesh, such objections as we are considering would be intelligible; but they appear simple absurdities, if we remember that the two operations are indeed two *arts*, both of which owe their origin and perfection to human skill; and that the one art is just as divine or human—just as spiritual or carnal—as the other.

3. It is not denied that the human voice—that is, some exceptional human voices—may reach a perfection unattainable by any other instrument that has yet been produced by man's ingenuity; and that there may be combinations of voices which shall produce effects surpassing any that are otherwise attainable. But, as was said above, such results can never be hoped for—are indeed impossible—in ordinary circumstances. His holiness the Pope has the perfection of music in his private chapel, and employs no organ—not because he is oppressed with the miserable superstitions which still possess some people among us on this point, but because his choristers are so well selected, so elaborately educated, and so constantly exercised, that they can dispense with any assistance. If each of our congregations could afford to spend prodigious sums of money, they might no doubt procure very fine vocal music, as the Pope does by this means.

Our musical deficiencies, our general ignorance, want of education, training, and taste, in this department of knowledge, are the very circumstances which render the aid of an organ or harmonium peculiarly necessary for us; and it is in vain to hope for any decided or solid improvement by other means,

in the vast majority of cases. Even the Cathedral choirs in England find it necessary or advantageous to use the organ accompaniment in the whole, or nearly the whole, of their service.

An objection has often been made to the use of the organ —that it tends to make music too prominent and important an element in religious worship—to exalt a means into an end—to silence the congregation—and in some cases to turn the Church into an opera-house. These are great evils—and they have often been committed both in the old world and the new. Such scandals, however, have seldom, I believe, resulted from the predominant or exclusive use of instrumental, as distinguished from vocal music. On the contrary, it will be found that choirs may accomplish all the mischiefs complained of, quite as effectually as organs—or perhaps even more so. But this is only to say, that the most useful things and the best may be, and often are, abused. But as we do not propose to banish learning and eloquence because some men have perverted them to unhallowed ends; or to dispense with prayer, preaching, and sacraments, because these ordinances have frequently been abused to purposes of superstition; so we shall display only ignorance and folly if we shall deprive ourselves of a great aid in our religious worship because some of our brethren may have employed it injudiciously and unwarrantably, so as to defeat rather than further the great object in view. To this danger man is constantly exposed in all religious matters, and in many other things besides religion. But the possibility of exciting the vanity of clothing should not tempt us to strip either our persons or our worship naked; for clothing, which is conducive to decency and health, may also be made subservient to grace and beauty.

The purpose of music in the worship of God is to solemnize our minds, and to give a loftier and more intense expression to the thoughts and emotions which the words express. The words, therefore, or rather that which is signified by the words, must be considered the chief matter. Unless the music secure that more perfect expression, it fails of its only end and purpose, as a great deal of the singing heard in our churches undoubtedly does; so that it is worse than useless, it is in some sort profane, as obstructing the very end for which it is introduced. It does in one way what too elaborate and artificial music may do in another—obscure or nullify the sense of what is sung. It would be better in every point of view to *recite* the Psalms than to sing them in that manner; and if it be wrong to sacrifice the words to even the sweetest and grandest music, how much worse to sounds that can produce neither pleasure nor solemnity, nor anything but pain.

It is too evident that, in a large number of our churches, we have no music that deserves the name, or that accomplishes, in any tolerable degree, the legitimate purposes of music. For this only pretends to be a better, that is, a sweeter, more solemn, more impressive, way of uttering certain words—clothing the naked words in a garb of *feeling;* for music is the language of emotion: but when it is such as to form a worse way, it should be disused; for it is not an end but a means, in itself not obligatory or desirable. We should therefore resolve either to have such music as shall attain the legitimate object aimed at, or to banish music as an obstacle to devotion, a nuisance, and an indecorum.

I see no means of reaching our aim but by judiciously employing instruments, if not to accompany the singing in public worship, at least, in the first instance, to train choirs, and through them (or with them) congregations, to bear a part in

this exercise. It so happens that in this country a knowledge of music is not common *among men*, but is almost universal among women of the higher and middle classes. So that while it is often impossible to find in a country parish a competent male precentor and teacher—for to be anything he must be both—there is, perhaps, hardly any parish or congregation which does not contain some female thoroughly qualified to instruct the people to sing, and who would be not only willing but delighted to make herself useful in thus contributing to the comfort and solemnity and beauty of the Church service. But to do this she must use a harmonium. This delightful instrument is admirably adapted for the purpose; and it is so cheap as to be within the reach of almost any congregation. It is quite capable of rendering effectively any music that can ever with propriety be introduced into presbyterian worship, and is, when well played, a good precentor, and an excellent substitute for that most noble and perfect of instruments—the organ. By means of it a lady may train first a few female voices to sing correctly and with good taste, *the melody* of some few psalm tunes; and—with her instrument to accompany them, to regulate the time, to *keep them up*, and to supply the harmony—may produce *real music* where such a thing never was heard before. Thus the minister's wife or his daughter, or some other pious and accomplished lady, may turn her laboriously acquired skill to the most valuable use—may diffuse among the young a pleasing and refining taste, and hallow it by association with the worship of God and the comfort and edification of his people.

By this means the general want of musical taste and knowledge which is characteristic of so many of our congregations may be compensated, and many persons be made to feel an interest in the worship of God who either despise or

neglect it, or at least have too much temptation to exclaim, "What a weariness it is!"

> "Blest pair of sirens, pledges of heaven's joy,
> Sphere-born harmonious sisters, voice and verse,
> Wed your divine sounds, and mix'd power employ
> Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce,
> And to our high-raised phantasy present
> That undisturbed song of pure concent,
> Aye sung before the sapphire-colour'd throne,
> To him that sits thereon,
> With saintly shout, and solemn jubilee;
> Where the bright seraphim in burning row
> Their loud up-lifted angel-trumpets blow,
> And the cherubic host in thousand quires
> Touch their immortal harps of golden wires,
> With those just spirits that wear victorious palms,
> Hymns devout and holy psalms,
> Singing everlastingly;
> That we on earth with undiscording voice
> May rightly answer that melodious noise.
> O may we soon again renew that song,
> And keep in tune with heaven, till God ere long
> To his celestial concert us unite,
> To live with him, and sing in endless morn of light."

After all, the great difficulty consists in the apathy and the prejudices of many of the clergy, or in their weak timidity. I am sorry to say this, but it had best be said; for, though it may be offensive to some of them, it is true. "They fear the people," whom they fancy such innovations might offend and drive out of the Church. No doubt it is possible to make the greatest improvements in so injudicious a manner as to occasion evils for which their accomplishment could never compensate; but my experience of the Scotch people has taught me to conceive a very different idea of their intelligence and

good sense from that which dictates such apprehensions. It is, I suspect, very much with us at present as it was among the Jews eighteen hundred years ago—the people "feared the rulers," and "the rulers feared the people," and so they neutralised and paralysed each other. I am strongly inclined to think that any congregation in Scotland would be very soon persuaded to tolerate, and presently to welcome, instrumental music, or any other of the changes advocated in this essay, if only the minister himself have a clear conviction, be a person whom they respect, and have courage to state plainly his opinion and the grounds of it; and if he, at the same time, show no disposition to thrust anything upon them contrary to their wishes. The case is so clear that it wants only a little good-tempered explanation to convince all those who are not impenetrable to reason, that the feeling against the use of an organ or harmonium in church has no foundation but custom and senseless prejudice. A man must indeed be a thorough simpleton, who, having the ear of the people from week to week, and opportunity to reason with them, without reply, fifty or a hundred times in the year, does not soon succeed in persuading them of anything that is in itself right, reasonable, expedient, and necessary. Those who fail while possessing such advantages should not blame the people, but themselves.

In short, we shall never succeed in raising the Church of Scotland above her present depressed condition by succumbing to ignorant prejudice, or fostering and flattering the narrow-minded bigotries which have descended to us from rude, illiterate, and fanatical times. We have tried this too long; but we shall only fail more and more the longer we persevere in it. Others will beat us in this wretched competition, do what we can.

Not to speak of duty, it is our evident policy, as an Established Church, to throw aside such antiquated scrupulosities, and rise above that miserable purity—"Touch not, taste not, handle not." We must lean upon the people's growing knowledge and increasing liberality; and we must, by all fair means, study to promote these—for "knowledge is power:" and "the wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength" (Prov. xxiv. 5).

The following passage is from Dr. Bushnell's Essay on Religious Music, which has just been republished in this country:—

"Some persons have a very decided prejudice against instruments of music, and even fancy that, on that account, they are more spiritual and more strictly Christian in their views of religion. Such a prejudice is greatly hurtful to themselves, because it takes them off in a kind of schism from this part of the worship, and a share in its benefits. Can they imagine that they are borne out in their prejudice by the Scripture? Or have they never read the Psalms of David? What instrument was there which he did not bring into the temple, and command to open its voice unto God? Even the trumpets, after a week's battle, must come and change their note to an anthem of victory. Imagine this great singer of Israel, and the vast company of the Levites, hearing, for the first time, in the temple of God, a newly invented organ, such as the instrument now perfected by modern art. What emotions roll over his soul and the souls of his great choir of performers! No breath will blow! No hand will strike the strings! All the instruments and voices are dumb! He rises, when the experiment is over, and goes forth, saying in himself, 'I will alter now my Psalms, I will say no more of trumpets and cornets, I will call no more for psalteries and instruments of ten strings. Profane all these, and trivial! But this is the instrument of God!' And so, in fact, it now is. The grandest of all instruments, it is, as it should be, the instrument of religion. Profane uses cannot handle it. It will not go to the battle, nor the dance, nor the serenade; for it is the holy Nazarite, and cannot leave the courts of the Lord. What room is there for a reasonable prejudice against such an instrument? And if it be true,

as I have been showing, that God has voiced the dead substances of the world to sing his praise, if he has made the round earth and all things in it to be an organ of sound about us, what should more delight us than to bring into concert with our voices an instrument that is the type of an appointment so sublime? A true Christian feeling, it seems to me, will ever turn thus to things without life giving sound, and hail their assistance in the praise of God; finding half the sublimity of praise in the concert of the inanimate works of the Almighty Creator. It will even cry with David, to the fire and the hail, snow and vapours, stormy wind fulfilling his word, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, to join their voice with his and praise the Lord. And what harm will it be if they join him in the shape of an organ?

"Let me also suggest, in this connection, the very great importance of the cultivation of religious music. Every family should be trained in it; every Sunday or common school should have it as one of its exercises. The Moravians have it as a kind of ordinance of grace for the children; not without reason, for the powers of feeling and imagination, and the sense of spiritual realities, are developed as much by a training of childhood in religious music, as by any other means. We complain that choirs and organs take the music to themselves in our churches, and that nothing is left to the people but to hear their undistinguishable piping, which no one else can join, or follow, or interpret. This must always be the complaint, till the congregations themselves have exercise enough in singing to make the performance theirs. As soon as they are able to throw in masses of sound that are not barbarous but Christian, and have a right enjoyment of their feeling in it, they will have the tunes and the style of the exercise in their own way, not before. Entering, one day, the great church of Jesus, in Rome, when all the vast area of the pavement was covered with worshippers on their knees, chanting in full voice, led by the organ, their confession and penitence and praise to God, I was impressed, as never before, with the essential sublimity of this rite of worship, and I could not but wish that our people were trained to a similar exercise. The more sorrowful is it that, in our present defect of culture, there are so many voices which are more incapable of the right distinctions of sound, than things without life, and which, when they attempt to sing, contribute more to the feeling of woe than of praise."

VII. The last objection, "that the beautiful in nature and art can never make man holy," is in a certain sense true; but, as applied to the present subject, it is so false, and even so absurd, that I believe it is quite unnecessary to say a word upon it in this place. This objection, though not so intended, appears to me also to carry a deep reflection upon the wisdom of God, as displayed in the constitution of the world, as this is related to the capacities of the human mind; and also upon those arrangements for "glory and beauty" which were made at the divine command under the Law. "But all these were ceremonial and typical!" Typical of what? Was the "glory" typical of *meanness*, and the beauty of *deformity* and *ugliness?* Surely *glory* and *beauty* should be esteemed as possessing in themselves some excellence, and we should believe that the lower forms of these are designed to raise our souls to higher forms and loftier manifestations of the same—even to the beauty that is ineffable, and "the glory that excelleth."

But if "the beautiful in nature and art can never make man holy," are ugliness and meanness endowed with the power of making him so? The ignorance and rudeness of barbarism have not hitherto been found conducive to that end; they have not anywhere proved "effectual means" or conditions "of grace and salvation." On the contrary, it has passed into a maxim that Christianity must "either find men civilized or it must make them so." Mean, filthy, and uncomfortable churches — such as were general in this country not long ago — are not understood to have produced any salutary effects upon the people's souls any more than upon their bodies; and the wild screaming, which was miscalled music, did nothing towards bringing them into harmony with God, their neighbour, or themselves; and the general absence

of external beauty in everything connected with the worship had no influence in checking the deformity of sin and the ugliness of vice. Art, which is the perception of the beautiful in God's workmanship, and the attempt to copy it, indicates and promotes civilization. It is a result and a cause of refined perceptions, a proof that man is rising above mere animalism, and soaring into the region of Ideas ; and it is also a help towards his further elevation. Not only, therefore, should it be esteemed a means towards those results which Christianity contemplates, and which it alone can effectually secure, but without such refining influences Christianity never has produced its proper effects, and never can. This is, indeed, the old question of the advantage and lawfulness of human learning in one of its branches ; as if men would be better Christians by knowing nothing but the Bible, than by being made acquainted also with all those other works of God which lie within our ken. This question is for ever settled in all those minds, at least, which are capable of comprehending it. Art may doubtless be used as the handmaid of religion, as all our knowledge and acquisitions should be. We must make our wealth and our possessions of every sort pay tribute to the Heavenly King, under whose beneficent providence they are enjoyed, and whose gifts and property they truly are. Like the Jews, we must tithe all our riches and our spoils for the service of the Tabernacle : "they all are thine ; and with thine own serve we thee."

"But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.

There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

I have endeavoured to argue this matter entirely upon its own merits, and not at all as a question of authority.

A host of quotations, however, not only from Protestant Reformers, but from Fathers and even Schoolmen, have been collected to show that the above practice is not allowable or expedient in the Christian Church.* Whether those passages really prove what they are designed to establish, I shall not at present inquire; I will only ask why the opinions of Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Basil, and even Thomas Aquinas, should be allowed to have weight on this particular, by those who attach no importance to them upon other circumstances of Christian worship? As to Luther, Calvin, and the rest, whose judgments are quoted against the use of an organ, it is sufficient to reply that all the Churches which they founded, with one small and not very influential exception, have continued to employ musical instruments in worshipping God; so that the Protestant churches have treated those scruples of the Reformers as *superstitions;* and so have shown that they were, like the psalmist, "wiser than their teachers."

To quote the opinions of the Fathers on this point is little less absurd than it would be to appeal to their authority respecting the merits of Mozart's Masses, or Handel's Orato-

* See "Statement of the Proceedings of the Presbytery of Glasgow relative to the use of an Organ in St. Andrew's Church," Glasgow, 1808; and "Letters in reply on the Subject of the Organ, etc." (said to be by Rev. Dr. Fleming of Neilston), Glasgow, 1808.

rios. The *organ* did not exist, and they could not judge or anticipate what its character or effects or suitability, as an aid to church singing, would be.

As to the authority of those doctors—whether Patristic, Mediæval, or Protestant—it is requisite we should understand what it is worth, and how far it shall go. Shall it determine the question of liturgies, and the other matters here discussed, or shall it be pleaded on that one point only wherein their opinion or superstition chances to coincide, if really it does coincide, with ours? The Greek Church shall have authority with us *in standing at prayer*, and Basil and Jerome in disliking instrumental music—but why should their authority be restricted to these points? If it be good for any thing, it must be good for a great deal more. Unhappily, however, we take those Fathers as our guides and teachers only where they happen to be wrong, being oppressed with the same weak scruples as ourselves.

This shows, however, that we should be just as ready as our adversaries to make the Fathers our oracles, if we found them upon our side; but we depreciate them, "and embase their authority," as Lord Bacon phrases it, because in general they are against us.

CHAPTER X.

PSALMS AND HYMNS.

> And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also with trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpets sounded. . . . Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.—2 CHRON. xxix.

THE other question, indicated at the beginning of the last chapter, remains to be considered—What should be sung in church? What words, or what compositions should be used as *Psalms* or *Hymns* in the worship of God?

This is a point of great importance, and one respecting which there are so great differences of opinion, that it would require a much fuller consideration than can be given it in this place.

There is a great demand in most churches, in recent times, for *Hymns*. This feeling has manifested itself in various ways; and many attempts have been made to satisfy it, though I may venture to say that few of these can be reckoned successful. Our "Paraphrases" may be mentioned among these attempts—and they show how ill the authors and compilers understood what was required. Perhaps the greater part of the Hymns which have been introduced at a later period in different churches prove, in like manner,

that the nature and purpose of this kind of composition were only imperfectly apprehended.

Those who call for a great number and variety of Hymns, seem to be moved by a desire that the Church should have the means of expressing all the varieties of Christian doctrine and duty *in verse*—of singing the substance, at least, of each sermon at the end of it. This is thought to be an appropriate conclusion to the discourse. It implies, however, two conditions—first, a very extensive collection of Hymns; and second, that the Hymns be didactic, historical, instructive—in short, themselves little *sermons*, differing from the long ones chiefly in being composed in rhyme. It is surely obvious that this view is quite a mistake; and yet it has been very generally entertained, and frequently acted on. For example—

It cannot be denied that many of our Paraphrases are beautiful; but they are in general quite unsuitable for worship. Several of them are *history* turned into metre (i. xxxv. xxxvii. xxxviii. etc.) Many others are moral discourses—reasonings of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come (x. xii. xvii. xxi. etc.) Some are doctrinal discussions (xlvi. xlvii.); or prophetical warnings and denunciations (lxii.); one at least is a poetical version of a parable (xl.); and very few, indeed, are what everything that is sung in Church should be—*acts of worship, i.e.*, of adoration, praise, blessing, dependence, humiliation, and the like—*addressed to God.* Of these few, however, two (ii. lx., and perhaps also lxi.) may be reckoned perfect Hymns. Two-thirds of the Paraphrases should never be sung in Church, and an accurate appreciation of the nature and means of worship would exclude more than three-fourths of them. However good, or even excellent, they may be, in some regards, a great majority of them do not possess the qualities of *Christian Psalms.*

The Psalter contains, by universal consent, the noblest poetry, the sublimest devotion: nothing equal to it in these respects ever has been written, or ever will be; and no language can be found so proper to be employed in praising and blessing the Lord, who is our Shepherd. Its long consecration also to this use—not only in the Christian Church, but many centuries before—among the ancient people, whose inspired bards and prophets composed those odes, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, gives to the Psalms a solemnity and a power to touch our hearts and raise our souls to heaven which no other compositions can pretend to equal. Our own version in metre, though sometimes rugged, and occasionally sinking to doggrel, is, upon the whole, faithful, vigorous, and good—equal, if not superior (I believe), to any other; while it almost never fails to render well those psalms which in themselves are of the highest character as compositions, and best adapted for the service of song in the Church of the New Testament.

It ought, however, to be very evident, that as all portions of this collection are not of one character, so all are not equally suitable for Christian psalmody, as, indeed, there is no proof or likelihood that all of them were intended to be sung, or ever were sung, in the Temple, or elsewhere, among the Jews themselves. As some things were "said to them of old time" which have been superseded by higher things said to us; so many words may have been spoken by them of old time, even in their most solemn addresses to the Almighty, which are no longer appropriate in our mouths, who are grown "to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus." "When I was a child I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I reasoned as a child; but when I became a man, I put away the things of the child."

Not for this reason only—that many of these divine odes breathe rather the spirit of the law than of the Gospel—but because a considerable number of them are historical, moral, and didactic, it seems evidently proper that a selection should be made, from which all those psalms and portions of psalms should be excluded, which, either for the reasons now mentioned, or for other good reasons, shall appear less suitable as vehicles of Christian worship. A rich abundance and an ample variety will remain. These portions should be carefully arranged in lengths proper for singing, and care should be taken that an appropriate tune should be sung to each, and that the same tune should be always sung to the same words. In this way hallowed associations are created and intensified in the minds of the worshippers.

On the other hand, those psalms which are of a moral and didactic character should be employed accordingly—*i. e.*, instead of being *sung*, as if they were addresses by us to God, they should be *read* as lessons, *i. e.*, as words of warning, reproof, encouragement, instruction, addressed by God to us, which they are. When we use them otherwise, we do indeed abuse them.

But we should serve ourselves of the *prose* Psalms also in our public worship; selections from which, on the principle stated above, should be made and carefully arranged according to the *parallelism*, or rather the *responsive* construction of the composition. The real characteristic of Hebrew poetry, I am persuaded, is not *parallelism*, but *response*. These Psalms should be chanted, where it can be done, which is not easy or even very practicable without the help of an instrument. Where they cannot as yet be chanted they may be *said*—if this be judged not too great a departure from established custom—the minister repeating the former or *initial* clause

of the verse, and the people answering in the parallel or responsive clause. The structure of the Psalms appears clearly to indicate that they were intended to be used in this manner; and unless we advert to this we always lose somewhat, and often a great deal, of their beauty. For example—

Vers.—God be merciful unto us and bless us ;
Resp.—*And cause his face to shine upon us.*
That thy way may be known upon earth ;
Thy saving health among all nations.
Let the people praise thee, O God ;
Let all the people praise thee.
O let the nations be glad and sing for joy ;
For thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth.
Let the people praise thee, O God ;
Let all the people praise thee.
The earth shall yield her increase ;
God, our own God, shall bless us.
God shall bless us ;
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Ps. lxvii.

We cannot account for this peculiar mode of poetical composition, according to which the second clause or verse of the distich uniformly repeats the first, except by supposing that it is a *response* on the part of another person, or number of persons, possessed with the same feelings, and re-echoing, yet with variety, generally in the way of climax, the same sentiments.

If we will listen to two persons earnestly talking together upon some subject in which both are deeply interested, and

respecting which they agree, we shall (I imagine) find not only an illustration but an explanation of that peculiar mode of composition which not only distinguishes the Psalms, but characterises in some degree all Hebrew composition. The first speaker utters a sentence, to which the second responds in substantially the same sense, but always labouring to express it with some variety of phrase, some amplification, some circumstance additional or transcending that expressed by the former interlocutor. By this natural device the ancient prophets and psalmists "stirred up their souls, and all that was within them, to praise and bless God's holy name." Upon this, too, is founded that *antiphonal* method of singing or saying the Psalms introduced first, it is said, by St. Basil, and generally practised in the ancient Church, whence it has been derived to the Church of England: by all of whom, however, it is imperfectly, because *uncritically* done; no account being taken of the sense or composition of the Psalm, except so far as one verse may happen to be the response of the former, which it seldom is, and only accidentally.

Their mode of chanting the Psalms also appears to be censurable; because, however beautiful it may be, it frequently sacrifices the words to the necessities of the music. According to the theory, I am aware, the first or *chanting note* should always be so prolonged as to allow time for all the syllables belonging to it to be distinctly pronounced, yet, according to their custom of dividing every verse, however long it may be, into two lines, so many words sometimes require to be included under that note, that they are run together in such a way as to confound them, and to render them inaudible, or at least unintelligible; while prepositions, conjunctions, and other less important words are sung fully, and even sometimes divided and prolonged into two notes. Now, no system of

singing should be tolerated in the worship of God, which does not make music completely subservient to the sense of that which is sung; its legitimate end being only this—to give to the language a more intense, noble, impressive, and affecting expression. I add nothing here respecting their custom of singing or reciting *all the* psalms, and *all parts* of each indiscriminately; which, surely, is a very grave error; and was one of the objections which the Puritans, in the time of Elizabeth, made, and with obvious reason, to the Psalter as employed in the Episcopal Church. In both these respects we may much improve upon the practice of the Catholic Church.

But there is no reason why we should seek our hymns and psalms only in that collection which is styled the Psalter, or "The Psalms." Many of the noblest specimens of Hebrew poetry, and those best adapted in every respect for Christian worship, are to be found in other parts of the Old Testament, especially in the prophets; and some also, besides the Benedictus, the Nunc Dimittis, and the Magnificat, in the New Testament. For example—

O Lord, I will praise thee, though thou wast angry with me:
Thine anger is turned away, and thou didst comfort me.
Behold, God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid;
The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song;
He also is become my salvation.
Therefore with joy shall ye draw water—
Out of the wells of salvation.
Praise ye the Lord,
Call upon his name:

Declare his doings among the people,
Make mention that his name is exalted.
Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things ;
This is known in all the earth.
Cry aloud and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion ;
For great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.
Is. xii.

In the same book are several others, equally lofty in matter and tone, and equally suitable, from the truly Christian spirit which pervades them, for the service of the New Testament Church : such are ch. ix. 2-7 ; ch. xxv. 1-9; ch. xxvi. 1-8; ch. li. 9-11 ; ch. lii. 1-8 ; ch. lxi. 10, 11 ; ch. lxiii. 7, 8, 9, 15, 16 ; ch. lxiv. 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 12.

In Daniel and Nehemiah, also, are some solemn and noble prayers and psalms. What can be more perfect as an act of praise than the following :—

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone :
Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts :
The earth and all that is therein,
The seas and all that is therein.
And thou preservest them all ;
And the host of heaven worshippeth thee."
Neh. ix. 6.

Surely it is a strange blindness that we have overlooked such words as these, furnished to us by the Spirit of God, or have dressed them up in the gaudy tinsel of our paltry rhymes, and deformed them with our vulgar paraphrases and additions. Such proceeding betrays, if not a great want of reverence, at least a deplorable absence of taste.

Perhaps the grandest Psalm in the whole Bible is that

glorious passage which concludes the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and which, though in outward form it may appear didactic, is truly and eminently poetical, and even intensely lyrical in its spirit, so that it may be considered not only a Psalm, but the *Psalmus Psalmorum* of the Gospel dispensation.

If God be for us,
Who can be against us?
He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all,
How shall he not with him also freely give us all things!
Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?
It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?
It is Christ that died,
Yea, rather, that is risen again;
Who is even at the right hand of God,
Who also maketh intercession for us, etc. etc.

Rom. viii. 31-39.

May we not exclaim, with the great Doctor and Preacher of the Eastern Church, "What lips of Seraphim ever spake such words as these?" and we leave them all unsung, and betake ourselves to modern, sentimental, puling hymns! We have, it is true, a *Paraphrase* upon this sublime lyric; but it requires neither paraphrase nor metaphrase, nor does it admit such without being destroyed; it is polluted by tawdry ornament and vulgar finery, such as "days of darkness fall;" "time's destroying sway;" "the sacred chain that binds the earth to heaven above;" and such miserable stuff.

A hardly less noble ode is that contained in Heb. xii. 18, 19, 22, 23, 24. We have only to change the second person into the first, to render this a perfect Psalm, even in form, as

it already is in all but form; and like all the poetry of both Testaments, it falls naturally into the *responsive* form of composition.

We are come unto Mount Zion,
And unto the city of the living God,—
The heavenly Jerusalem;
And to an innumerable company of angels,
To the General Assembly and Church of the first-born,
Which are written in heaven,
And to God the judge of all,
And to the spirits of just men made perfect;
And to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant,
And to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Not to mention several passages of similar character in the Apocalypse, the 15th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians contains more than one example of the same; for instance, ver. 20 to 26 inclusive, and especially, ver. 51 to the end.

"We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;" ending with these solemn strains, which should thrill every Christian heart.

O Death, where is thy sting?
O Grave, where is thy victory?
The sting of death is sin,
And the strength of sin is the law,—
But thanks be unto God,
That giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

No doubt these passages are parts of epistles which deal with matters explanatory, hortatory, didactic, and practical.

But they are not the less true poetry and real psalms. For intense emotion always rises into poetry, at least in essence; and such is the fashion of Hebrew composition, which largely influences the New Testament also, that the divine fervour of the apostolic Spirit utters its oracles in the very form of psalmody; as the sermons of Isaiah and the ancient prophets also do: their prophecies, or rather *sermons*, are indeed poems; as much *lyrics*, even in form, as any of those comprehended in the Psalter.

To express my own opinion freely, I do not see any necessity or much advantage in going beyond the Scriptures themselves for our psalms and hymns. If we only know how to adapt and use them, the contents of the Old and New Testament are abundantly sufficient for expressing every feeling of faith, hope, love, patience, submission, and every holy aspiration which we should seek to express and cherish in our songs of praise. No words are so appropriate, so solemn, so beautiful or so touching as the words of Holy Writ. Even if other expressions, equally good and suitable in themselves, could be found, none other can ever possess the same power to move our hearts, for none other can ever come to us charged with the same associations.

Many of the hymns which are current among different churches appear to me good, and some beautiful in themselves, and in a certain point of view. *For some uses* they may be well adapted; but for the use of public worship, I doubt if the most diligent search could discover a score of really excellent modern hymns in the English language. A committee of the General Assembly has sat many years, and has collected a considerable number of hymns—the best they could find after diligent and extensive inquiries. As a member of that committee, I so far approve of the collection

as to think that most of the compositions included in it are good *in some points of view*, and some are excellent in every point of view; such as the metrical version of the Te Deum (xlii.), which is by a minister of the Church of Scotland, and is really admirable, with the small exception of one very feeble line.

But the *prose* psalms contain the best materials for worship: they furnish the true basis of the Christian Liturgy, both for prayer and singing. Those portions of the collection which are didactic, being addresses from God to his people, should be separated from the rest, and employed according to their true intent, *i.e.—read as lessons.* Those portions again which are properly or predominantly *prayers* should be arranged by themselves, and used *as prayers*, either separately or mingled with the other prayers; and lastly, those psalms which are properly acts of praise should be set apart to be chanted, or, if that be inconvenient, to be *recited responsively* as psalms, or acts of adoration, blessing, and praise to God. With these should be classed all those portions of Scripture, whether of the Old or the New Testament, which partake of the same character, and are therefore appropriate for the same sacred use.

These passages should be all carefully arranged according to the parallelism, or rather, as I consider it, the *response* in each case; so that, whether the hymn were *said* or *sung*, the sense and spirit of the composition might always be preserved; and they should be carefully set to appropriate chants, which the people would, with a little trouble, soon learn to sing, with the aids formerly suggested.

This has indeed been, in a good degree, accomplished already by Mr. Geikie, in his "Songs of the Sanctuary," a judicious and useful little book, which is employed in the

Greyfriars Church and in some others in which chanting is practised. A new and more complete edition of this book will soon be published by Messrs. Nelson and Sons, Edinburgh, which will contain not only the Psalms, but those other portions of Scripture of which I have spoken, also judiciously arranged for chanting.

I should add, that some of the sacred odes, both in the Psalter and elsewhere, are less fit to be *chanted* than to be sung as anthems or doxologies—*i.e.*, not to have the same air repeated from verse to verse, but with the higher aim of following the sense through all its modifications, descending with it into the depths, and rising with it up to heaven, so as to interpret the successive emotions as they rise in the mind of the Psalmist. Upon this principle the Chevalier Neukomm composed music for twenty Psalms, at the instance of the Association in Scotland for the Revival of Sacred Music. These are noble—indeed wonderful—compositions, though for the most part rather difficult. The organ or the harmonium, which, we may hope, will soon be generally used in our places of worship, will enable us to hear in our worship such music as this, which is indeed worthy of the glorious words which have been furnished us for the praise of God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DIRECTORY, THE BOOK OF COMMON ORDER, AND THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

And what is said of Liturgy is said also of Directory, if it be imposed; although, to forbid the Service Book there be much more reason, as being of itself superstitious, offensive, and, indeed, though *Englished*, yet still the Mass Book.—MILTON.

The Kirk of Geneva keepeth Pasche and Yule—what have they for them? They have no institution. As for our neighbour Kirk of England, it is an evil said mass in English, wanting nothing but the liftings. I charge you, my good people, stand to your purity; and I, forsooth, so long as I brook life and crown, shall maintain the same against all deadly.—*King James to General Assembly*, 1590.—CALDERWOOD.

IT is to be expected that great differences of opinion as to what should be substituted may prevail even among those who are agreed that some changes in our public worship are necessary and even inevitable. Some seem to think that the Westminster Directory should be revived and enforced; others have mooted the opinion that it may be advisable to recur to Knox's Book of Common Order; and there are not wanting those who favour a more daring innovation, and advise the adoption of the Book of Common Prayer itself. In the debates regarding innovations, which took place in 1859, two Fathers of the Church, conspicuous for their zeal against novelties, went so far as to declare that, "if the Church of Scotland ever adopted a Liturgy at all, it would adopt the venerable Liturgy of the Church of England." This surprising

notion seems to have been adopted by some few of the younger clergy whose letters have appeared lately in the newspapers, but whose zeal outruns that of the two doctors alluded to. Perhaps the most general opinion is, that all that can be done, or should be attempted, is to endeavour to make the clergy more careful in regard to their prayers—*i.e.*, virtually to leave matters in their present state. Others, again, urge the plausible objection that it is vain to exhort men to do more carefully what many of them want the qualification to do as it ought to be done, who have always been accustomed to follow bad models, and who have not conceived a true idea of the work they are called upon to perform. The last General Assembly appointed a committee to inquire into the manner in which public worship is conducted over the Church. They will find no difficulty in ascertaining *in what order* the different acts of public worship succeed each other in the different churches. This, however, is nearly all the information they can lay before the Assembly: what are the matter and manner, the tone and style of the prayers, they will not discover, and cannot report. The labours of this committee, however, will lead to a discussion, and this may probably issue in some resolution on the subject of public worship, especially of the public prayers. In view of such discussion, it may be prudent to consider some of those proposals which may possibly be submitted to the Assembly.

Any motion, the general effect of which is not to interfere with the clergy, in regard to the conduct of public worship, further than by enjoining them to be careful and diligent in preparing themselves for performing this part of divine service, will probably be supported by many judicious men who are alive to the present dangers of the Church—in the hope that this may work some immediate improvement, and also

prepare the minds of the more candid and reasonable at least, for something better and more thorough hereafter. This upon the whole may appear the safest and wisest course for the present.

As to the adoption of any of the antiquated formularies, more and greater difficulties will be met with than readily occur on a first view of the subject. If either of the three forms of worship named above were perfect in its kind, or even approximated to perfection, the case would be otherwise; but no one who is not blinded by prejudice will impute this quality to any of them.

The Directory.

As to the *Directory*, it cannot be said to be a successful specimen of liturgical composition; indeed, properly speaking, it does not pretend to this character. The summary of its defects and faults, given in the preface to Jeremy Taylor's "Collection of Offices" (1658), is no doubt exaggerated and malicious; and yet it is impossible to deny that several of those thirty-one objections are founded in truth, and many are not devoid of apparent reason. No form of worship surely can be complete that never "thanks God for the redemption of the world, by the nativity and passion, resurrection and ascension, of our blessed Saviour Jesus;" "that hath no forms of blessing the people any more than of blessing God, which are just none at all;" "an office that never thinks of absolving penitents, or exercising the power of the keys;" "a liturgy that recites no creed, no confession of faith, so not declaring to angels or men according to what religion they worship God;" "an office that takes no more care than chance does for the reading of the Holy Scriptures;" "an office that does by implication undervalue the Lord's Prayer;

for it never enjoins it, and does but once permit (recommend) it." It is impossible to deny that there is some appearance of reason at least in several of these charges. The gravest defect of all, however, is one which is not mentioned in this summary, exhaustive as it may appear. The Directory makes no provision for the people taking any formal part in the public worship of the Sanctuary. They are neither to join in repeating aloud the Lord's Prayer, that "oratio legitima et ordinaria"—"publica nobis et communis oratio," of the ancient Church—nor are any Responses provided in which they are to join; nor, what is more strange, especially in such strict scripturists as the compilers were, are the people enjoined or recommended to express their assent and concurrence in the devotions by repeating the *Amen* aloud, according to precept and example of both the Old and New Testament—not to speak of the universal Christian Church, or the reason of the thing. They are regarded and treated throughout the whole service as a mere *audience*, the *hearers* of the minister.

It is not a little remarkable that the Directory evidently supposes *extempore preaching*, so far at least as language is concerned, as appears from the conclusion of the "public prayer before sermon;" but it neither supposes extemporary prayer, nor forbids set forms, if only made by each minister for himself. This appears to be indicated in the preface, where an "idle and unedifying ministry" is censured, "which contented itself with set forms, *made to their hands by others, without putting forth themselves to exercise the gift of prayer*, with which our Lord Jesus Christ pleaseth to furnish all his servants whom he calls to that office."

We must, in reading such language, not forget that the Churches for whom the Directory was intended had, both of them, been accustomed to *read* prayers, the Presbyterians as

well as the Episcopalians, though the former used also extemporary prayers. Considering the former habits and the known feelings of at least the *Episcopalians*, that is, of the great majority of those whose conduct of public worship the Directory was meant to regulate, the compilers could not doubt that prayers would be read still, unless this were stringently prohibited; and not only the absence of any such prohibition, but the use of the language just quoted, seems to prove that they anticipated, even if they did not mean to suggest, this result. Indeed, it may be safely concluded, from the whole drift both of the Preface and of the Directory itself, that the authors had two great objects in view—(1) To suppress the Book of Common Prayer; and (2) To induce each minister to compose his own prayers upon the model supplied; whether by mere meditation, or by writing, or even printing, is not hinted, and therefore is left open. Any one, however, who attempted to comply with the injunctions of the Directory, must have been compelled to *write*. No memory could retain the particulars of those long prayers, so as to translate them into his own language, paraphrase, condense, expound, or otherwise deal with them. If the operose directions of this document had ever been generally or seriously complied with, which they seem never to have been anywhere, the inevitable result must have been the introduction of a set form of prayer by each minister.

The marked reference to "the other Reformed Churches" favours the conclusion that a liturgy in some form was in the mind of the Westminster divines; for they knew well that all those churches whom this new Reformation was to content, and whose expectation it was to satisfy, had liturgies, and were accustomed to *read* prayers in their public worship.

The form of expression in which they sum up their reso-

lution favours the same conclusion:—"After much earnest prayer, they resolve to lay aside" (not a liturgy absolutely, but only) "*the Liturgy used* in the Church of England," and "the *former Liturgy*, with the many rites and ceremonies formerly used in the worship of God."

Though the authors profess that their work is a Directory *for all the parts of public worship*, it is noticeable that many parts are omitted. For example, besides the other omissions already noticed, they virtually leave "the praise of God" optional. The singing of the *first* Psalm is hinted at only in a parenthesis; and the *second* is to be sung only "if with convenience it may be done." What is more serious is the omission of all direction or mention of *what is to be sung*, whether Psalms alone, whether all the Psalms; and whether in metre, or in prose, or in both.

These omissions, besides many others, seem clearly to show that as the projected Church was to comprehend a great variety of Sects (besides the two great bodies, the English and Scotch National Churches), whose customs in worship differed widely from each other—it was found by the Divines expedient, or rather absolutely necessary, to leave a great many things open and undetermined; and that they never aimed at any such uniformity in worship as obtains in the Church of England, and can be secured by a strict ritual alone. It is true they speak of "uniformity in Divine worship," but it is only that "promised in our Solemn League and Covenant;" and this consisted only in the banishing of the Book of Common Prayer, and compliance with that general scheme which they have laid down in the Directory, and which (as we have seen) admits, and was doubtless intended to admit, great varieties in practice. Such uniformity as some now talk of is plainly not countenanced by the Directory, and indeed,

as was before said, is not according to the spirit of our Church. It could only be secured by new and stringent rules rigorously enforced.

We may add this remark:—Any one who reads the Directory may wonder why so many and such extensive directions, for prayer especially, should have been thought needful for ministers, "all of whom," according to the authors' theory, had been "furnished by our Lord Jesus Christ with the gift of prayer."

Upon the whole, the Directory is not easily vindicated in theory, and its rules would be absolutely impracticable, if the attempt to carry them out should ever be seriously made; which is not probable. It was a failure at first, and any effort to revive it would be equally a failure: we must do either a good deal less or a great deal more than is prescribed in the impracticable compromise of the Westminster Divines, if we would reform the worship of God in the Church of Scotland.

It may seem a question, whether the Church of Scotland be not now fairly relieved from obligation to comply with the Directory, and at liberty to fall back upon her more ancient forms and customs; or, in short, to do in the matter as she may see fit. 1. The Directory has long been practically of no authority. 2. It was adopted by the Church of Scotland as part of a covenanted (Presbyterian) uniformity of Church government and worship in all the three kingdoms. But the project failed, and was repudiated in the other two kingdoms. The conditions of the compact, therefore, being not complied with by the other contracting parties, it might appear that the Church of Scotland also was fairly relieved, and at liberty to proceed in her public worship as if no Directory had ever been composed or adopted. 3. The same would have been the

case in respect to the Westminster Confession of Faith, unless it had been recognised in the Revolution settlement and at the Union—which the Directory was not.

The Book of Common Order.

This book was republished by Rev. Dr. Cumming in 1840. In a preface the editor speaks as follows:—"I have no hesitation in observing that we have a Liturgy little less beautiful and impressive than that of England, long used by the devout congregations of our National Church, never interdicted, and not only worth resumption, but in all respects calculated to improve our service. It may also be observed of this venerable form, that it presents at once liberty and assistance. When the preacher feels he can pour out his heart in extemporaneous prayer, it gives him this power; but when he feels, as most men occasionally feel, it presents beautiful and expressive formulæ" (p. xxiii.)

If this appeared to me a correct character of what is often called Knox's Liturgy, I should have no suggestion to offer on the subject before us, but that this Liturgy or Order be revived, and restored to use, according to its design, in all our churches.

I venture, however, to think that this description is very nearly the reverse of the truth. The Book of Common Order is singularly, almost absolutely, devoid of beauty; the sense of which, if not wanting, was at least sadly uncultivated in its framers. It certainly is in some sense "impressive;" but its impressiveness is of a kind which would not be tolerated by any modern congregation, or by any congregation which had learned to distinguish Christianity from the law of Moses; so that, instead of being "calculated to improve our service," its introduction would render this much worse than it is at pre-

sent in almost any of our churches; for it would bring in a deeper and worse fault than any that now exists. Instead of being worthy of comparison with the Book of Common Prayer in "beauty and impressiveness," I hope and believe that the generality of our public prayers, extemporaneous as they are, and faulty in many respects, are yet superior to this Order, in those qualities which are most essential.

It has appeared to many an unaccountable circumstance that the Church of Scotland, both laity and clergy, should so quietly have relinquished that venerable form of worship, which, from its authors and from association, had so many claims on their reverent affection. It is almost unprecedented for people thus to surrender a form of words which had for generations been the vehicle which carried their united desires to heaven. In England, thousands, as well as King Charles, were ready to peril everything for the Book of Common Prayer; but in favour of Knox's Liturgy, which was commonly read in our churches some sixty, seventy, or eighty years,* no one stands up to speak a word; it is allowed to perish without

* The following curious passage from James Gordon's *History of Scots Affairs* (vol. iii. p. 250), may seem to prove that the Book of Common Order continued longer in use than has been generally supposed. Probably, however, the Parson of Rothiemay describes the state of things in the north, where there was less fanaticism than in other parts of Scotland.

"About the tyme of this Assembly lyckwayes, sett formes of prayers in publicke beganne to be dishaunted by all; and such as used them wer looked upon as not spritwall eneuch, or as not weall affected to the worke of reformatione. The Lordes Prayer lyckewayes beganne to grow out of fashione, as being a sett forme; and *Gloria Patrj*, which had been constantly used in the churche, since the reformatione, to be sung at the closure of the psalmes, beganne to fall into a desuetude; and not long after this, the saying of the Creede at baptisme was cancelld by many, and celebrating baptisme refoosed, except upon Lords day at sermon, or at weeke dayes conventions. Two or three was not looked upon as a congregatione publicke eneuch for baptisme, though Chryst sayed that he was in the midst of such a number. Finally, all wer

a sigh; and it is buried, as itself appointed that the dead should be, without solemnity or ceremony.

Any one who attentively peruses them will find in these prayers themselves a satisfactory explanation of this curious fact. They had never taken hold of the people's minds, or touched their hearts; and they could not do so, for they are destitute of the requisite qualities—of pathos, tenderness, and *unction,* of beauty and sublimity; of the meekness, gentleness, mercifulness, and sweet charity, which are the true characteristics and living power of Christ's religion. This Book of Common Order is so destitute of these that one might fancy the writers had taken for their model the prayers found in Ezra and Nehemiah, and the cursing Psalms, and that they were still standing in terror before Mount Sinai, under "the fiery law," and knew only Jehovah as "a consuming fire" and "a jealous God." In short, the Book of Common Order is too cold, hard, and dry—too fierce in its spirit, and too declamatory in its style—to be ever thought of as a Liturgy for the modern Church of Scotland, or to be tolerated by any congregation which has learnt how widely the Christian religion differs in its spirit from "that which is abolished." "Sin and wrath," "iniquity and vengeance," "impenitence and destruction," are the painfully predominating ideas in this composition; and the hyperbolical vehemence with which they accuse themselves and their co-religionists of all manner of enormities, is equalled only by the hearty zeal which they show in denouncing their opponents, "but chiefly the wicked rage and furious uproars of that Romish idol and enemy of thy Christ, and his most

urged to family worshipp, but ther prayers behoved to be *extempore*, not sett formes. . . . Finally, whatever the bishopps had established, it was their worke to demolishe." The date of the above is 1640.

cursed idolatry and superstition."—(Prayer for the whole estate of Christ's Church.)

"Our kings, princes, and people in blindness have refused the word of thine eternal verity; and in so doing, we have refused the league of thy mercy offered unto us in Jesus Christ thy Son, which albeit thou of thy mere mercy hast offered to us again in such abundance, that none can be excused by reason of ignorance; yet nevertheless, to the judgment of men, impurity overfloweth the whole face of this realm; for the great multitude delight themselves in ignorance and idolatry; and such, alas, as appear to reverence and embrace thy word, do not express the fruits of repentance as it becometh the people to whom thou hast shewed thyself so merciful and favourable," etc. The book abounds with uncharitable declamation of this sort, running out very often into downright sermonizing, composed in sentences of enormous length, sometimes occupying whole pages.

The following specimens are from *The Prayer in the Time of Persecution from the Frenchmen, But principally when the Lord's Table is to be administered*:—

"Thou knowest, O Lord, that their crafty wits in many things have abused our simplicity, for under pretence of the maintenance of our liberty, they have sought and have found the way (unless thou alone confound their counsels) to bring us in their perpetual bondage. And now, the rather, O Lord, do they seek our destruction, because we have refused that Roman Antichrist, etc. etc. Thine hand drowned Pharaoh; thy sword devoured Amalek; thy power repulsed the pride of Sennacherib, and thine angel so plagued Herod that worms and lice were punishers of his pride," etc.

"Now though thou shouldst punish us much more grievously than thou hast hitherto done, and that whereas

we have received one stripe thou shouldst give us a hundred; yea, if thou wouldst make all the curses of thy Old Testament, which came then upon thy people Israel, to fall upon us, we confess that thou shouldest do therein very righteously; and we cannot deny that we have fully deserved the same. Yet Lord, for so much as thou art our Father, and we be but earth and slime," etc. (p. 30.—Prayer before Sermon.)

There is some apology to be found in the times, and in the dangers which surrounded those earnest and zealous men —"oppressed with fear and wounded with sorrow," as they say they were; "confounded in ourselves, as the people that on all sides are assaulted with sorrows" (p. 35); but there would be none for us, who no longer "go to Church to pray against our enemies," should we follow their example in offering up such railings and cursings as prayers to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—who hath taught us after this manner to pray for our enemies, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."*

It is worthy of remark that, as a general rule, the special services in the Book of Common Order are much superior to the forms for ordinary worship. The Order of Baptism and the Order of administration of the Lord's Supper both contain fine passages, which, with some retrenchment, might be advantageously used at the present day. The latter service, especially, is a refreshing contrast, in its conciseness and simplicity, to the endless preachings and insufferable tediousness

* The Book of Common Order distinctly recognises the propriety and the custom of *kneeling at prayer;* as a preparation for which it calls upon the congregation not "to stand up;" but, "inasmuch as before our Lord Jesus Christ *all knees are compelled to bow,* let us humbly fall down before him, and in this manner pray;" and again "prostrate yourselves before God," etc. (p. 165). And accordingly it thus describes the congregation engaged in prayer, "We thy children and people *here prostrate* before thee" (p. 162).

that have so long afflicted the Church in the dispensation of the Lord's Supper; while the Blessing and Exhortation which conclude the form of the "Election of the Superendendent" are, in appropriateness, vigour, and solemnity, not inferior to anything found in any Ordinal whatever, ancient or modern.* The order of ecclesiastical discipline, especially the order of excommunication, is an awful composition in the lofty claims to divine authority which it makes for the Church—that is, the ministry—for whom it arrogates a divine commission and a direct authority, to resist which is even more presumptuous than to transgress the law of God itself:—"We give over into the hands of the devil this forenamed obstinate contemner N——, and that not only for the crime that he hath committed, *but much rather* for his proud contempt and intolerable rebellion," etc.; *i.e.*, it was in their esteem a much greater sin to despise the Kirk, or resist the authority of the ministers, than to commit *adultery* or *murder;* the crimes specially contemplated in these excommunications. This is, of course, the

* There are several commendable features besides those already noted in the Book of Common Order. Thus it appoints the Apostles' creed to be recited, not only at Baptism, but at morning and evening prayer. It admits a *godfather* to take the vows in the absence of *the father;* but even when this is not the case, "the child is to be brought to the Church *accompanied with the father and godfather;*" and, instead of the overstrained strictness which afterwards became customary and still obtains, in many cases, it "judges them only unworthy who contemptuously refuse such ordinary means," etc. "For infants be of the number of God's people, and remission of sins doth also appertain to them in Christ; therefore, without injury, they cannot be debarred from the common sign of God's children."

It is remarkable that the Order for administration of the Lord's Supper does not go beyond the Zuinglian doctrine, and contains a bold protest against that mystical jargon which Luther employed on this subject, and from which Calvin was not free. The introductory exhortation is admirable—a refreshing contrast to those "Fencings of the Tables," which have so long been a scandal and an offence to sincere and enlightened members of the Presbyterian Churches.

doctrine of the Church of Rome; and it is easily proved, if the priest or the minister be the authorised representative of Christ; if not, the claim is as dangerous as it is impious. Men are to be regarded with suspicion, whether they be Catholic Priests or Presbyterian Ministers, who conceive themselves authorised by the Almighty to perform his solemn function, and doom their fellow-creatures in the following awful fashion:—"And his sin we *bind*, and pronounce the same to be *bound* in heaven and earth. We further give over into the hands and power of the devil, the said N——, to the destruction of his flesh, straightly charging all that profess the Lord Jesus . . . to repute and hold the said N—— accursed," etc. etc. (pp. 166-67).

Upon the whole, in composing special services for the Church of Scotland, if that should ever be attempted, some good use might be made of the Book of Common Order. For the ordinary worship on Sundays, it affords neither materials nor examples which could assist us. The efforts of Calvin and his disciples in this department cannot be considered otherwise than unsuccessful. It was not a subject they had studied with sufficient attention, nor had they formed a just idea of what is required in a good Liturgy. They were so much occupied with the *doctrinal* side of Christianity that they never appreciated its devotional element; so that they are always preaching even when they pray; and intending to compose a Liturgy, and address God, before they are aware they are composing sermons, and haranguing, often with all their overstrained vehemence, their fellow-sinners, accusing, upbraiding, and damning them.

The Book of Common Prayer.

It may seem quite beyond the scope of this inquiry to introduce any consideration of the Book of Common Prayer, except as a formulary which the Kirk at a very early period rejected after a few years' trial, and towards which she has ever since displayed only aversion, and a persistent opposition. It is only the grossest prejudice, however, that can deny that the Book of Common Prayer is distinguished by many conspicuous excellences. Its general tone is singularly humane and charitable, marvellously so, considering the period when it was compiled. This is to be explained by the fact that its contents are principally derived from times which were not agitated by keen and bitter theological controversies, and when *peace* was still reckoned among the number of Christian graces and blessings. It breathes throughout a spirit of pure and elevated piety. It is sufficiently comprehensive without descending to too great particularity. Some of its services throughout, and many passages in most of them, are truly noble compositions; and it very seldom offends against good taste, or genuine Christian feeling. For the most part also, it is moderate in its tone, temperately recognising Christian doctrines, rather than obtruding or *preaching* them: the chief exceptions being the doctrines of *the Trinity* and *the Divinity* of our Lord; in regard to which tenets it is dogmatical and vehement, and sometimes even intolerant and damnatory. On these subjects it reflects too much the keenly controversial spirit and dogmatism of the fourth and fifth centuries.

"The English Book of Common Prayer," says a learned and able Episcopalian clergyman, "is such a medley of contradictions, both in letter and tone, that it is quite impossible

for any school to endure long which builds itself upon it."—(Rev. G. Forbes, *On the English Book of Common Prayer*, p. 4.)

One of the most commendable features of the Book of Common Prayer is the abundant introduction of the Scriptures in Lessons, Gospels, Epistles, Psalms, etc. This is becoming in a Protestant Church, and is indeed a Protestant characteristic: though some Protestant churches, and these most vehement in maintaining the highest dogmas respecting Scripture, have proved quite negligent in this regard; so that, in their public assemblies, the Old and New Testaments, however often quoted and lauded, are yet seldom and little read, and then only with comments and explanations, as if the clergy feared to let the Word speak for itself and teach its own lessons.

Nor must we omit to notice the becoming position in which that Ritual places the congregation. Like the Catholic Church in general, of which it retains many of the best features, the Church of England assumes that the assembled people are not a mere *audience*, or a dumb crowd to be spoken for and spoken to, but the living members of Christ, each of whom is privileged to say for himself—

"O Lord open thou my lips;

"*And my mouth shall show forth thy praise:*"—

And is therefore called upon to take an articulate part in all acts of worship whatever, whether of prayer or praise; either repeating the words aloud after the officiating minister, or assenting to them by a *response*, or adopting them as his own by uttering the *Amen* at the conclusion of each prayer or petition. This practice, dictated by the plainest propriety, sanctioned by Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, and recommended by the most ancient usage, teaches or rather compels each person to regard himself as a wor-

shipper, and not a mere *hearer;* and he can never feel or speak as if the public prayers were "the minister's prayers" (which is the common language, because the prevailing feeling, in this country); or were other than his own addresses to the throne of the heavenly grace.

Being compelled by the conditions under which they worked, to adhere pretty closely to the ancient forms of worship, and to *reform* the Church service, instead of constituting it anew after their own ideas, as the Calvinistic divines did, the fathers of the Anglican Church were prevented—perhaps against their own inclinations in some instances—from composing continuous, lengthy, and often declamatory and dogmatical orations, after the Reformed or Calvinistic model. Their work might be called "fragmentary and disjointed" by those who think of prayer as of a speech; it was, however, based upon the true idea, which had been tested and approved by the long experience of all Christendom, and which has justified itself by the fact that, while the Calvinistic Liturgies have, without exception, come to satisfy less and less those who used them, the Book of Common Prayer has constantly gained upon the minds and hearts of the English people, and of all who speak the English language over the whole earth, notwithstanding many defects and some grave faults, which have always been imputed to it, and from which only blind prejudice will contend that it is altogether free.

A Calendar, in retaining which the other Reformed Churches generally concurred with the Anglican Church—at least to a certain extent—is surely natural, decent, and edifying, provided none but important events and eminent personages be commemorated. It seems proper to connect the great facts of the Christian religion with the seasons of the year, so that by the recurrence of these, those may be periodically recalled. For

us who celebrate Christ's resurrection fifty-two days in the year, not to set apart even one day to commemorate his death, appears at least unnatural; and to have no special time for commemoration of the birth of our Lord, or his resurrection, or the descent of the Holy Ghost—the very inauguration of the Christian Church—is to lose valuable means of impression and edification. It is true that none of these festivals has any sanction in the New Testament; but no Church has been able in practice to carry out the doctrine, which many of them have professed, that only such observances are lawful in the Church as have that sanction. Sacramental fasts, Preparation days, Thanksgiving days, and many other customs, may plead a human expediency, but they have no more a Scriptural support than Christmas, or Easter, or Good Friday, or Whitsuntide; and to shun such ancient and general observances through fear of superstition, is nothing else than to indulge one superstition through fear of another, and a less.

That the Book of Common Prayer has many serious faults, as the organ of a national worship, the more enlightened members of the Episcopal Church not only acknowledge but many of them loudly proclaim. Perhaps there is no party in that Church which it altogether satisfies, nor is it possible that any formulary should do so, which embraces so many incongruous elements, and speaks sometimes the language of Puritanism, and much oftener that of Catholicism. It is indeed difficult to obtain a just estimate of the merits and demerits of this work; the generality of its critics being either too little familiar with it fairly to judge of its spirit and effect; or, what is more common, so familiar with it, and so little accustomed to other forms of worship, that itself has become for them the perfect type, and the standard of judging.

Besides the more prominent faults of tediousness, excessive

repetition, mingling of services, the indiscriminate use of the Psalter, the shocking intolerance of the Athanasian Creed, the enjoining of certain ceremonies which should be left free; to say nothing of certain questionable doctrines which it teaches or recognises—the Book of Common Prayer has for us these insuperable objections, that it takes the public worship altogether out of the hands of the officiating minister, leaving him no discretion to add, omit, alter, or modify any part of the service, whatever may be his own circumstances or those of his flock. Such restriction, as the Westminster Divines justly say (*Preface* to Westminster Directory), "is a great burden;" in particular cases, it must prove extremely inconvenient and unsuitable, as incidents and occasions sometimes occur for which appropriate prayers cannot be provided beforehand; and it appears to us a *degradation of the minister.* Some medium, we persuade ourselves, may possibly be found between two such wide extremes, as entrusting *everything* in public worship to the capacity and discretion of the minister, (as the Church of Scotland now does); and entrusting *nothing*, like the English Church, which does not recognise her clergy as to any extent qualified to offer up public prayer according to their own judgment, or in their own words.

Many of us have come to be of the opinion that *everything* should not be left, as it now is, to the discretion of each minister; that some assistance should be afforded, some public formulary prepared, which may be used in certain parts of the Church service, and especially in administering the Sacraments, and on some other special occasions; but I can hardly believe that any number of our ministers have adopted the opinion that *free prayer* should be abolished in our Church, that a public Liturgy should supersede altogether the prayers which each minister may occasionally see fit to

introduce from his own mind and of his own composition. In short, even those who are most resolute in their opinion that some public formulary should be introduced, and used to a certain extent, would probably be found nearly unanimous in their opposition to any ritual—such as the Book of Common Prayer—which should take away altogether the right of free prayer from the ministers of the Church.

There is another objection which lies against the English Prayer Book, in common with all rituals of the same class—namely, their uniformity, or rather *sameness.* Some variety is indeed secured in the Psalms, Lessons, Collects, and in the prayers provided for particular festivals, etc.; still, the great body of the service is identical from day to day; the same words are repeated without variation for ever; and not only so, but even the Evening Service is in considerable part identical with the Morning Service. The introductory Sentences, the Exhortation, the Confession, the Absolution, and down to the *Venite,* are all the same, as are also the five concluding prayers in each; so that not only is the same Service repeated from day to day, with only trifling modifications, but a great part of it is repeated twice, or even thrice, if there be so many services the same day, as is often the case. Surely such sameness is not needful; and we cannot help thinking that it is inexpedient and hurtful. It shows poverty in a Church, that it must thus confine itself to one form of words in offering up its worship, however excellent that one form may be. One might expect that a distinct Service might at least be prepared for Morning and for Evening Prayer without the one plagiarizing half of the other. We are inclined to go further, and maintain that it would be better that several Morning and Evening Services were prepared—say one for each of the Sundays of the month—that some

freshness might be added to the solemnity which undoubtedly attaches to set forms (*solennia verba*), familiarly known by long and frequent use. It is, we conceive, undeniable, that some bad consequences are apt to arise in many minds from the constant repetition of an unvarying form of public worship. Words so familiar are apt to be heard and repeated without making any impression, or almost exciting any attention ; as many bodily acts become so familiar as at last to be performed even without consciousness. Besides, is it not a fact, that the constant use of one form of words is apt to create, if not an opinion, at least a *feeling*, that there is some peculiar virtue or sacredness in *these* words ; that the repetititon of *them* has more value—more *merit* I had almost said—than of any other words, though these were equally good, or even better, in themselves ? Hence, a considerable portion of the English people, and these not the lowest or least educated, have come to regard their Prayer-book with feelings which it would not be easy to distinguish from *superstition ;* and many hardly seek to dissemble their opinion, that nothing is worthy to be considered public worship which is not according to that form, and that the Book of Common Prayer is, in fact, that which makes the Church. We do not esteem of it as King James did—"an evil-said mass in English without the liftings." We have a very different opinion ; yet we cannot see that its excellences are so peculiar, so sublime, or so unapproachable, that it should attract such peculiar worship. Something even much superior might, without miracle, be produced. Itself might be greatly improved by numerous omissions and other changes ; but this, we venture to maintain, is a fatal defect in it, and in all Liturgies of its class—that they are too much one and the same perpetually ; and hence, they give to mere words and forms of expression an import-

ance which is not healthy or beneficial, and which is apt to generate superstition in the minds of the ignorant at least, who are always a large proportion of the people in every Church.

This is one of the points of objection urged by the Westminster Divines; and without going all the lengths they go, it would not be easy to deny that there is, at least, some ground for what they allege. "Prelates and their faction," they urge, "have laboured to raise the estimation of it (the Book of Common Prayer) to such a height, as if there were no other worship, or way of worship of God among us, but only the service-book, to the great hindrance of the preaching of the Word; and in some places (especially of late), to the jostling of it out as unnecessary, or at least as far inferior to the reading of common prayer, which was made no better than an idol by many ignorant and superstitious people; who, pleasing themselves in their presence at the service, and bearing a part in it, have hardened themselves in their ignorance and carelessness of saving knowledge and true piety."—Pref. to *Directory*.

The introductory portion of the Daily Service is singularly excellent. It proceeds according to what appears the natural order of thought and feeling—first, God's Call in the Scripture sentences; then the Exhortation by His minister to His people; next, their common Confession, followed by the Absolution assuring the penitent of pardon and grace; after which they are prepared with confidence (παῤῥησία) to enter into the Holiest, and say aloud, in the words which our great High Priest hath taught us—"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

This portion of their Liturgy has been much admired and highly extolled by the more sober and judicious expounders

of it in the English Church; and with good reason. But it greatly scandalises the *Catholic* party; who are deeply offended, not only because the *Catholic* form of Introduction should have been departed from, but chiefly that this innovation should have been effected—as it appears undoubtedly to have been—under the influence of Protestants and Presbyterians. It appears first in the second of the Liturgies of King Edward VI., A.D. 1552. One of the writers of the Tracts for the Times (No. 86), goes so far as to consider such tampering with the Church's offices, by such hands, as no less than a judgment:—he does not explain upon whom or for what; though, as he admits, it has been a judgment not unmixed with mercy. These gentlemen show very clearly that, in their view, the *Protestant* elements in that composition were all of them defilements; and they do not attempt to conceal that impatience of the control of the State, which was remarked on in an early part of this essay, as characteristic of the High Church clergy in England. The genuine *Priest* is always jealous of the civil power; he naturally resents any interference between his heavenly function and the flock upon whom he has received divine authority to exercise it. Accordingly, he is supremely happy when the State will condescend to act as his minister; but he resents it as a desecration, and a rebellion against God, if the civil power presume to judge and act for itself, and so curtail his authority and perhaps thwart his action. This is our own doctrine of spiritual independence, dressed in a surplice instead of a Geneva gown. It is the same everywhere—

"New *Presbyter* is but old *Priest*, writ large."

It is not necessary to add that *we* do not approve this part of the Book of Common Prayer the less on account of its Presbyterian origin and character: though we wish all the

contributions which came from the same quarter had been equally worthy of approval—which we do not think they are.

It is curious that the Book of Common Prayer should carry out the Presbyterian idea of the proper introduction to public worship (in opposition to the Catholic idea) more perfectly than either Calvin's own Liturgy or any of its descendants, though that idea is recognised in them all, including even our own Directory.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Πάντα εὐσχημόνως καὶ κατὰ τάξιν γινέσθω.—1 COR. XIV.

The order in which the different acts of worship should succeed each other is a matter of great importance, though among us it has received very little attention, or rather none at all. But as *arrangement* is a capital consideration in rhetoric—the effect of any discourse depending much upon the proper disposition of the parts—so the impression which the various acts of Divine Service shall produce will always depend in a great degree upon their being presented to the minds of the congregation in a natural succession, so that one part of the worship may prepare the way for that which is to follow, and all abrupt transitions being avoided, no part may appear disjointed or detached. Thus the different acts which compose the Service shall support each other, so to speak; and the whole will be seen, or rather felt, to constitute one organic whole, in which there is nothing superfluous on one hand, nor, on the other, any thing wanting or defective. Let us not disguise the matter: a good Church Service is a work of art—as a good sermon is—and they who imagine they can produce either without thought, labour, and skill, have either a very exalted idea of their own abilities, or a very mean conception of what they are called to do. No doubt "it is the Spirit that quickeneth;" but the Spirit quickens and

blesses those who use and improve His gifts, and leaves those who are negligent and slothful to unfruitfulness and reproof.

Some may even be shocked by the very mention of *art* in connection with things so sacred as prayers and divine worship; but such persons should consider that we need not be barbarous, rude, or unskilful, because we are Christians: also that in speaking to men, the Holy Ghost has conformed to the laws both of logic and of rhetoric; of which more perfect examples can nowhere be found than in the Holy Scriptures themselves—in the Psalms, the Parables of our Lord, the Speeches of St. Paul, and the Lord's Prayer.

The *Catholic* mode of beginning public worship, is generally with a psalm. The Reformed, or *Presbyterian* mode, is different, and is founded upon a rather different order of ideas—namely, that the first act in the service should be a solemn admonition or Call; something to solemnize our hearts, and to remind us where we are, and what we are about to do; or, as a learned divine of our Church once expressed it, "the first word should come from God." Calvin's Liturgy, the Book of Common Order, the Directory, all recognise this principle more or less distinctly; though curiously enough, in the Book of Common Prayer, as we have seen, it is most fully and completely carried out.

This solemn Invitation should evidently be followed by prayer; and, I suppose, it will not be doubted that prayer should be succeeded by praise. Thus, the three acts of worship are complete—the word, prayer, praise—and they constitute the first part of the Service.

The reading of the *Old Testament* naturally opens the second part of the Service; it is followed by the Second prayer, and by praise: and the reading of the New Testament begins the third part of the Service, followed by the Third prayer and

by praise. This completes the *worship* in the strict sense of the word. The sermon comes after, followed by an appropriate prayer; the whole concluding with a doxology.

The First prayer, immediately following the Invitation, is the prayer of faith—containing the acknowledgment of God, confession of our sins, thanksgiving for his mercy through Christ, and supplications for pardon, grace, etc.

The Second prayer, following the reading of the Old Testament, has reference chiefly to the duties, trials, and temptations of life, and to the cultivation of godliness, righteousness and sobriety.

The Third prayer, which succeeds the lesson from the New Testament, is the prayer of hope and charity. It relates to our peculiar position and prospects as Christians, the second coming of Christ, death and judgment; also to the welfare and salvation of our brethren and of the world at large, and to our country, civil rulers, etc., etc.

The above order of Service is unquestionably logical in its structure. It is founded upon and agreeable to the general principles of Presbyterian worship. It is perfectly simple; it requires no violent change from present customs; and, unless I mistake, this arrangement of a church service secures, besides, the following objects:—

(1.) That the three acts of worship shall uniformly succeed each other in the same, and that the natural or logical order—1. The Word; 2. Prayer; 3. Praise.

(2.) That each of the three prayers shall have a general relation to *the Word*, which immediately goes before it, whether Sentences, Old Testament, or New Testament.

(3.) That all the three acts of worship shall proceed from a lower to a higher ground; from Faith, which is the beginning, to Charity, which is the end of the commandment;—the word,

the prayers, and the praises, all rising towards a climax at the end of the Service in the Doxology, or act of unmingled praise ; bringing us at the close of our earthly worship nearest to the worship of heaven.

This arrangement, among other recommendations, has this one, which will not be esteemed trifling by men who are called to conduct a long service, perhaps twice each Sunday, without any assistance ; that while the common custom of beginning with singing (in itself indefensible, apparently introduced by mere accident, and continued without any public authority) allows them only *one* respite from speaking during the whole service, the above order always secures *three.* This interrupts the tediousness of the service, and by introducing a greater variety, relieves the pressure upon both minister and congregation. The worship in country parishes, and even in towns, very generally extends to two hours, and often exceeds that length ; the whole of which time—as matters are now generally arranged—the minister is engaged in speaking, except the four or five minutes which are consumed in singing the second Psalm—the first being sung before his exertions begin, the third after they are finished. In a mere physical point of view, this is surely an injudicious, and for all parties an oppressive arrangement.

To some these may appear small matters, and unworthy of serious study ; but nothing should be esteemed small or trivial which concerns the propriety, beauty, solemnity, and impressiveness of divine worship in the assemblies of the saints. Indifference to such things is not a proof that we are really animated by his spirit who said, "The zeal of thine house hath consumed me."

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

> Quod ad formulam precum et rituum Ecclesiasticorum valde probo, ut certa illa extet, a quâ Pastoribus discedere in functione sua non liceat; tum ut consulatur quorundam simplicitati et imperitiæ, quam ut certius ita constet omnium inter se Ecclesiarum consensus; postremo etiam ut obviam eatur desultoriæ quorundam levitati qui novationes quasdam affectant. . . . Sic igitur statam esse oportet Sacramentorum administrationem, publicam etiam precum formulam.—JOH. CALVINUS, PROTECTORI ANGLIÆ, 22 Oct. 1548.

UPON the whole it seems now time for the Church of Scotland to consider whether some great reform in her public worship has not become necessary; and particularly whether she should not resume the use of a Liturgy—to some extent at least.

Besides the reasons already stated or suggested, we may add that without some authoritative form of worship, a Church has no standard of doctrine, nor any profession or confession of faith, so far at least as the *people* are concerned. Confessions of faith, as we employ them, are merely standards for the clergy—to regulate their teaching, or to ascertain or fix their opinions on theological dogmas, many of which are of a speculative character, and a great proportion of which never are, and some of which never should be, made subjects of sermons. But the Liturgy is a confession of faith to all who join in it—laity no less than clergy. According to this rule and in these words *they pray* and *praise*. These acts—whether

supplications, hymns and psalms, or creeds—they present together, as one body, before the Divine Majesty. For, whatever they may think, men are of one religion and of one faith when they can heartily join together in the same prayers.

The Liturgy is therefore the real confession of faith: nor can the Church have any other for all its members. It may also be doubted whether it needs any other, even for its ministers; as also whether without this any body can, properly speaking, be a Church at all. It was noted as a fatal defect in the Westminster Directory that "it recited no creed." Probably every writer *De Re Liturgica*, of whatever age, country, or sect, is agreed that *the reciting of a creed* is indispensable on every occasion of public worship or common prayer; and this is so essential, in the administration of the Sacraments in particular, that without it these ordinances cannot be regarded as performed in a regular, legitimate, and proper manner.

It appears to me also that the want of all liturgical forms is one of the chief reasons of that singular want of coherence, and of that disastrous tendency to separation, which have so remarkably distinguished the Presbyterians of Scotland during the last two hundred years—*i.e.*, ever since the Book of Common Order was laid aside.

The explanation is very obvious. In our worship *the Church* is not in any way represented; it is neither visible nor audible in any sense or to any degree. The minister is all in all. He alone appears; he does, or directs everything. Not only is the sermon the minister's discourse, as it should be, but the prayers are the minister's prayers; the Psalms which are sung and the lessons which are read (if any be read) are those which he selects; the Sacraments are administered in the manner and with the language he chooses; so that *the*

Church has no function, authority, or operation at all in the business of public worship. If the minister happen to be a person distinguished for talents, acquirements, eloquence, or taste, these distinctions do not in any way redound to the aggrandizement or credit of the Church, but rather the contrary; for the people naturally consider such a person as an exception to the general average of his brethren; so that, instead of being attached to the Church, they are rather separated from it, by his peculiar gifts. Accordingly, when ministers secede, the bulk of their congregations naturally secede with them. This is the almost universal rule, and it is easily explained: in adhering to their minister, they adhere to the only Church practically that they either love or admire, or in fact care or know about.

Keeping this in view, we need not wonder why the Scotch people make the choice of a minister such a matter of life and death; and why the mode of electing or appointing ministers has always excited among Presbyterians so profound an interest. This appears unintelligible to Christians of other countries: but it will be easily understood by those who consider what has now been said—that among us the choice of *our minister is indeed the choice of our Church.* In *liturgical* communities the worship is the same, whoever may be the minister; that is, *the Church* continues one and the same, for the worship is the essential element of the Church; but among us it is quite otherwise—everything depends upon the minister. He is all in all for doctrine, and worship, and everything. No wonder we feel an interest in the appointment of ministers, which others can neither feel nor comprehend.

The next point to be considered is—What sort of a Liturgy would appear to be desirable; and whence it should be de-

rived. Upon these topics I shall offer the following observations:—

Any committee, or any individual, that may be charged to prepare any draft of a form of public worship, should attain a general acquaintance with the ancient liturgies—as well Greek as Latin; as also with the principal liturgies of the reformed churches. But my distinct opinion (which I expressed some years ago, and now reiterate with greater assurance) is, that none of those formularies furnish a model which it would be wise in us to follow—though particular passages may be appropriated or adapted. Though ancient, they are not *venerable to us*, because they are to us neither familiar nor known. The same may be said of Calvin's forms, and all their translations and modifications. They are not *ancient to us.* We know nothing about them: on the contrary, their language and modes of expression sound strange in our ears; they wear a foreign and outlandish air, so that they are neither venerable nor solemn to us, but the contrary.

A form of worship, adapted to our wants and suitable for our times, should be simpler in its structure—less theological and dogmatical, and more religious and spiritual, than any either of the Patristic or Reformed rites—not to say that it must eschew their superstitions and their intolerance, both of which are sometimes grievous. It should exhibit forbearance and charity; should make nothing essential which the New Testament does not make so; be content to set forth the doctrines, especially the mysteries of our holy faith, as much as may be, in the language in which the Scriptures themselves set them forth; and not presume to know more, or to speak more confidently or emphatically or particularly, than our Lord and his apostles have seen fit to speak; so that all men who profess the Christian faith may be able to join in it,

notwithstanding many and even wide differences of opinion among themselves, respecting the manner in which Christian doctrines and mysteries are to be explained. For a national Church must not, in its worship at least, contract itself into a sect, and exclude all who are not upon one side of a theological controversy, but should aspire to be *Catholic* in a good and Christian sense—comprehensive and tolerant of all differences of opinion that do not touch the essentials of the Christian religion as laid down in the New Testament.

Whenever any ecclesiastical body so contracts itself, as to assume the position and character of a *sect*, it denudes itself, by so doing, of the character and legitimate position of a national Church: this must aim at being as comprehensive as possible, and exclude nothing that can, by a candid and liberal interpretation, be considered Christian.

After all, the language of Scripture is for this purpose the best—the simplest, the purest, the truest; and also for us the most venerable and impressive. It comes to our minds with a weight and solemnity which no other language has or can have; and therefore I cannot help thinking, that the prayers, as well as the praises of the Church, should not only be framed upon that model, but should consist in great measure of well-chosen expressions from that sacred magazine of divine wisdom, grace, and love. The *ideas* should be *scriptural;* so should be the manner of thought and expression: and all this may be attained without making prayers nothing else but a string of quotations from the Bible. In particular, the Book of Psalms furnishes a rich abundance of the finest materials for Christian worship, both for prayer and praise; but it must be used wisely, not indiscriminately—as it has often been; for the Spirit of God still dwells in his Church; and this is a spirit of wisdom, as well as of love and power.

The style of our authorised English Bible has become the standard of language for religious compositions, and it should be taken as the model in all prayers for Christian congregations. Excellent in itself, it has the inestimable advantage of being associated in the people's minds with Christian thoughts and sentiments: its very tone is to them solemn and holy.

I cannot tell whether the General Assembly will take any action in this important matter at present; certain I am, that if the Church is to keep her footing, it must be attempted, and that at no distant day.

But whatever else may for the present be resisted, delayed, or neglected, I do hope that some steps will be immediately taken to have a service, or more than one, prepared for administration of the Sacraments, as also for the celebration of marriage, and (though this be a violation of our old rules) for the burial of the dead. It appears intolerable that in the same Church, and that recognised and established by law, one minister shall demand of candidates for Baptism or the Lord's Supper, a different profession of faith from that which another demands; that one shall require assent to almost nothing; another to the Apostles' Creed; while a third requires assent to "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, with the Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms." In "Fencings of the Tables," as they are called, the same and even greater discrepancies prevail. Some make the way to the Sacrament very wide and easy; others make it so narrow with theological opinions, and so rough with practical scrupulosities, that if the people believed what the minister taught, not one of them would attempt to enter it. Surely those are, in fact, different churches between which such

differences prevail; but as they all profess to be one church, some effectual measures should be taken to secure their unity and agreement at least in matters of such great importance, and of such obvious necessity. Whatever therefore may be done, or left undone, in regard to our ordinary Sunday services, it appears indispensable that for administration of the Sacraments especially, some formula or order be provided without delay.

Without such provision, these solemn ordinances can never be expected to be celebrated with sufficient decorum and reverence; and I believe that, in point of fact, they never have been so. The judgment of John Calvin should have some weight with Presbyterians. In his celebrated letter to the Protector Somerset, Calvin writes as follows:— "As to what concerns a form of prayer and ecclesiastical rites, I highly approve that there should be a certain form, from which the ministers be not allowed to vary: Firstly, that some of these, who are simple and unskilful, may be provided with some help; Secondly, that the consent and harmony of the churches (or congregations) one with another may be made to appear; Thirdly, that the rambling and levity of such as affect new and original modes of expressing themselves may be checked. . . . Therefore there ought to be a stated form of prayer and administration of the Sacraments."

It may seem too daring to propose that all the people should be exhorted to say *Amen* aloud at the conclusion of all prayers in church, or to *sing* it. This is not forbidden by any law; and it is recommended by evident reason, as well as by a host of scriptural authorities. To pretend (as some have done) that in Presbyterian Churches congregational *singing*

comes in place of the responses in the Catholic Church, is nonsense. For Christian worshippers *responded* long ages before they ceased to sing; as the Jews always did in their religious assemblies. Besides, we respond *to the Psalms* that are sung, by joining in them, or by singing or saying the response; but that is no assent or response *to the prayers*, during the saying of which, and after it, we remain as dumb as if we could neither hear nor speak. That Calvin introduced or rather revived congregational singing may be true; but that does not make up for the want of responses in his Liturgy and in all its descendants. This is a radical and fatal defect in all of them.

The time has perhaps come when it may be proper seriously to inquire whether there be any good reason why we should not celebrate such festivals as Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Whitsunday, with all or nearly all our Christian brethren over the whole world. It is uncomfortable to dissent from *Christendom* upon such points, especially when we dissent also from the very men who taught us our theology, and gave us our ecclesiastical government, and were in short the fathers and founders of our peculiar church polity. The festivals named above were retained by Calvin, and by all or nearly all the Reformed or Presbyterian Churches abroad, "among whom Christmas and Easter are celebrated with peculiar solemnity, as two out of the four sacramental occasions in the year." The rejection of these festivals, moreover, gave scandal and offence to the foreign Protestants, who expressed to the Church of Scotland their dissatisfaction that, by this singularity, they should have created a kind of schism among the Reformed or Presbyterian Churches.

I cannot persuade myself that any mischief would accrue to our faith or practice, or to our soundness and safety as Protestants and Presbyterians, though we should consent to follow the example of nearly all other Protestants and Presbyterians throughout the world, and commemorate, on the same days as our brethren, the birth, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of our Lord, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, according to His promise. The non-celebration of Christmas, in particular, is in every respect unnatural, and a blunder. Our ignorance of the true day of our Lord's birth, is a paltry and ridiculous objection. We often celebrate the births of our sovereigns on days other than the true ones—for some reason of convenience or necessity; and Christmas has been so long solemnized, as to give it a firm prescription. We celebrate the births of our princes, our kindred, our friends and benefactors—of those who have cheered a little this sad and weary journey; and we fear it would be a superstition, if we should unite with all other Christians in commemorating the birth of the Prince of Life, our elder Brother and Saviour, who has dispelled for us the great darkness, and cast cheering light upon the valley of the shadow of death. Let us lay aside such weak scrupulosities: here also our fear of other men's superstitions only reveals our own. What makes the case worse, is that now it is become general, even among Presbyterian Scotchmen, to keep Christmas as a day of domestic festivity; but the *reason* of this day being celebrated is a religious reason; and surely it is not edifying to distinguish the day, and yet omit the religious distinction; to go to a feast, and not go to Church. Some, I am aware, consider these two incompatible or discordant; but none of us, I hope, so feast, as to forget that we are Christians, or go to Church, as a cloak or licence for our making provision to fulfil the

desires of the flesh. We believe that it is possible to hold a feast, "and eat and drink to the glory of God," as we are commanded to do. And we must not forget the frequent injunctions of the Law, that God's elect under the old Covenant should "eat and drink and rejoice before the Lord their God." No doubt, we live under a higher dispensation; but God and man are both the same under the Gospel as under the Law. For my part, I cannot see that any damage would be done, if, in all our Churches, we had public worship on those five days, or at least upon Christmas day and Good Friday; and I imagine there would be considerable convenience in our celebrating the Lord's Supper, all over Scotland, upon Easter Sunday, and making Good Friday the Fast-day for the whole country. This would make the Fast-day virtually a Sunday for the whole community, and people would universally cease from their business and also from their pleasure—as much, at least, as they do on Sundays. I earnestly hope this will be taken into serious consideration. Our Fast-days are becoming quite a scandal, and some remedy must be found, and that speedily.

At present, we are in this strange position, that "the English holidays" and our own "preaching days" are both observed, at least in all our towns, to the unnecessary interruption of many important operations, and the great inconvenience of the community.

A simultaneous communion all over the country would of course prevent ministers assisting each other at the Sacrament. But this is one of the strongest arguments in favour of such a reform; for thus the people would be delivered from the grievous burden of so many "preaching days," and also from the intolerable sermons, styled Table Services, of Sacrament Sundays. Each minister, being compelled to

perform the whole service himself, would at last come to understand that one man commonly is able to speak as long as men in general are able to listen, and often much longer; and that a service which is too much for the minister's lungs, is far too much for the people's patience, piety, or profit in any way. A communion service five or six hours long would soon come among us to be reckoned as irrational, unedifying, and preposterous, as it is esteemed by all mankind besides.

The inconveniences also, of the Sacramental Fasts being held in different parishes on different days, have been so much felt, as to have formed the subject of numerous complaints of late years. There is good reason in such complaints; and accordingly, they will become more frequent and louder, as intercourse increases between the different parts of the country. A change is inevitable. Would it not be best to make it at once, and so anticipate dissatisfaction?

Suggestions for the amendment of such things should not be esteemed eccentric imaginations: the things themselves are eccentricities, in which we differ from all the world. These are our singularities, which we should maintain only if they were excellent, and not persist in simply because they are our singularities.

The reforms advocated in this essay may appear to some revolutionary, and to surrender the characteristic principles of the Church of Scotland in the matter of public worship. But indeed they only tend, for the most part, to restore those customs and practices which the fathers of Presbytery thought expedient, and which they established, and themselves practised. John Calvin has been charged, both by wisdom and by wit, with having stripped the Church naked; but others went much further in the same course than Calvin either

wished or imagined. We cannot think such extreme denudation necessary or desirable now, if it ever was so; and no one should raise an outcry against *ritualism, formalism,* or any other *ism,* when nothing more is suggested than a return to some practices which the universal Church has sanctioned, which our earliest and wisest Reformers approved, and which the more enlightened portion of the Scottish people at least are prepared to welcome. It is not necessary to perpetuate for ever the results or symbols of ecclesiastical and civil feuds—which happily have themselves passed away, or to separate ourselves longer from the general Christian Church, by distinctions which are not better, but rather worse in themselves, and less suitable for us at the present day—whatever they may have been for our ancestors two hundred years ago.

We are not always surely to continue the slaves of our forefathers' superstitions, prejudices, or other peculiarities. Our circumstances are different; our experience is incomparably wider, and our lights are far greater than theirs. For them neither church history nor civil history had been written; the age of criticism had not come in any of its departments; the light which shines around us from this source had not dawned upon them: so that we possess numerous means of understanding and judging, in all departments of knowledge, as well sacred as profane, which were not granted to those men—pious, sincere, and earnest as they were. Let us venerate their Christian virtues; let us imitate their earnestness and zeal and self-devotion; but let us not be guilty of the narrowmindedness of following them in the letter rather than in the spirit of their conduct. We shall deserve to be condemned as fools if, in many things, we be not much wiser than they. To us far more has been given,

and of us also far more will be required. How deep a disgrace, not to say how great a guilt, shall we incur, if it shall appear that, with all our superior advantages, we are less enlightened, liberal, and wise than they were!

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