

EXTEMPORANEOUS PRAYERS.

EXTEMPORANEOUS PRAYERS are of comparatively recent date. Calvin was emphatically opposed to them as appears in his letter to the Duke of Somerset, written A. D. 1549 :—

“The origin of extemporaneous prayers in England was entirely Popish; devised by Roman emissaries who assumed the garb of Protestants, and pretended to feel the deepest abhorrence of what they stigmatized as the corruptions of Popery, still existing in the English Church. They endeavored to bring the Reformed religion itself into disrepute; vilified the liturgy as a new edition of the mass book, and insisted that it should be wholly abandoned by such as desired to pray under the immediate influence of the Spirit of God.”

The denominational descendants of those who were thus easily moved to suspicion from the Church, are now either using more or less of prescribed forms of prayer in their public worship; or, are considering that the heart itself can be more engaged when joined with the voice in the use of devotions already arranged, than in silently waiting to hear what unexpectedly shall come next, and not always to edifying, in extemporaneous prayer.

The Book of Common Prayer is the production of no one Christian period. Its roots strike into the apostolic age. It expresses the devotional spirit of Christian centuries. Its evangelical soundness, its comprehensiveness, its simplicity in style, need not be more than mentioned here.

It largely helps in attaining the highest of all spiritual conditions, the “serving GOD with a quiet mind.” The world is for excitement. The Prayer-book aids devotion as no other method can, by leading on to that restfulness which is necessary for acquiring a deep and refreshing spiritual life.

RELIGION is the natural element of the human mind, and its native tendencies and results ought always to characterize the physician; at every step of his career, in every tissue and organ of his body, there is evidence of creative wisdom, power and goodness, all Divine, which tells, as with a sunbeam, that there is a GOD.

“OH believer, when thou thinkest thyself nothing, knowest nothing of thyself, then thou thinkest and knowest right. But when thou art led to think, now I am something in myself; now I know something by myself; now I can do something of myself, to keep myself in the favor of GOD, and to be faithful to His grace, verily thou deceivest thyself. This is acting like the Church of Galatia under spiritual witchcraft, ‘beginning in the spirit, and ending in the flesh.’ This, in the strict and proper sense, is ‘falling from grace.’ So nature’s pride exalts one’s self, and censures other Christians as carnal and unfaithful. This pride of the flesh opposes our growth in grace and is contrary to the humbling knowledge of Jesus Christ.”—*Mason*.

WHATEVER may make a man distinguished in this life, it is his character as a Christian upon which his friends love to dwell, when all earthly honors have faded away.