

a second edition appeared with a similar Dedication, and as late as 1648, it continued to be the common ritual of the church.

"Some of the prayers in it," says Dr. Cunningham in his Church History of Scotland "for transparency of diction and beauty of piety may well compare with the much lauded compositions of the Anglican Prayer Book"—adding, "the whole compilation is characterized by good sense and sobriety of religious feeling."

The Church of Scotland, which for a hundred years had thus preserved these written forms, at length laid them aside, not that it had any disposition to do so, for as we have seen various editions of the book were published, and this in accordance doubtless with the demands of the church down to the very year of the meeting at Westminster, but in concession to a plan of uniformity with other churches in the use of a common Directory for worship. The fact is a remarkable one that the Church of Scotland laid aside her Book of Prayer to please others rather than herself, and adopted a system propounded by strangers, in the hope of the benefit of an extensive agreement and uniformity to be released upon an entirely New Platform, which hope, it need scarcely be added, was doomed to signal disappointment.

Whether the church acted wisely in thus giving up the use of her venerable Formula, has been disputed. Her children, it is true, have loved her in spite of her having deprived them of everything like a form of worship, save her old version of metrical psalms, round which memory and association can entwine; but had she retained her Old Liturgy, she might have bound them closer in her embrace and prevented many from straying from her fold. The experiment of leaving the prayers of the Sanctuary to the unaided individuality of the Minister has now been fully tried. For two centuries and more has the church in the face of all historic precedent, and in conflict with her own earlier principles and practice adhered to the method agreed to by the Westminster Assembly, and unknown in ecclesiastical experience before the sittings of that body. This method many have come to regard as quite defective and, if judged by its working can scarcely be pronounced, even by its greatest admirers a success, a thing at which no one need greatly wonder. The Westminster Assembly met in troublous times, times but ill fitted for calm and unprejudiced legislation, even for the age that then was, much less for the far distant future. Besides, its recommendation of or agreement upon a Directory for Public Worship was an issue to which, it may with truth be said, it was driven by the circumstance of the times—being a not natural revulsion from the use of an enforced Liturgy, containing many things to the members of it offensive, and which left them no liberty or discretion whatever,

in the words of Dr. Shields "a revolutionary protest against civil and ecclesiastical tyranny" while the adoption of it by the Church of Scotland is to be accounted for on the same principle, "a consequence," as says Principal Tulloch, "of the insane Prelatical despotism of Laud and his associates." A proposal to change or modify in any way the system thus set up by the Westminster Assembly and adopted by the Church of Scotland, some, strange to say, would be disposed to regard as little else than an act of impiety, though such a proposal need not be regarded as at all reflecting on the wisdom of the great and good men of that Assembly, who could scarcely have been so sanguine as to expect that it would be followed for two hundred years, much less for a longer period, especially by the Church of Scotland, which had so small a Representation in it—for of the 120 Divines who sat in that assembly only 5 were commissioners from the Church of Scotland; of the Westminster assembly, we are ready to say what the members of it said of those who went before them in the work of Reformation, "we acknowledge them as excellent instruments raised by God, and desire that they be had by us and posterity in everlasting remembrance—and are persuaded, were they now alive, they would join in this work" of reforming the service of the Church with the view of adopting it, profiting by the experience of the past, to the felt requirements of the age and the changed circumstances of these our times, for whatever that system may have been or their own age and times, it is not, in the opinion of many of our most distinguished clergymen and enlightened laymen, the best possible that could be devised for us, living more than two centuries after them and in times so very different. And to the smouldering convictions and wishes of not a few such, expression has in recent years been given. The enlightened are perhaps the least satisfied with the present meagre devotional equipment of the Church. The belief of many is that that system is not the best which places the whole of the devotional services in the hands of the officiating Minister, be his state of body or spirit what it may at the time, and which assumes that he can at all times and under all circumstances, conduct these becomingly, if able to attempt doing so at all. Dissatisfied with the present naked and unequipped state of the church, they desire a return to a discretionary Liturgy for public worship and prescribed forms for the administration of the sacraments, the celebration of marriage, burial of the dead &c. Having as great a dislike to a fixed and enforced Liturgy, as a conviction of the defectiveness and utter unsatisfactoriness of the present system, they are prepared to urge the use of a discretionary Liturgy, retaining all that is valuable in the Church of the past, and yet adapted to the Church