

which I do not approve or practise, yet a charge based upon such action could not be entertained as anything but a frivolous charge. 5th. The use or non-use of prayer before the sermon is entirely a matter of private conviction, the preceding service being considered by many as sufficient preparation for the declaration of the sermon, the only authorized prayer being what is called "The Bidding Prayer," canon 55, and this, by reason of its unsuitableness to the circumstances of most congregations (in this country particularly) has fallen into disuse. In this difficulty with certain members of the Wingham congregation I have endeavoured to act with the utmost impartiality, bearing in mind that the clergyman has rights as well as the complainants, and that when frivolous charges are brought against him, he has a right to look to those in authority to defend and uphold him. I would remind you that you and those who were associated with you in removing the lecturer by night from the church have acted in a most unbecoming way, and been guilty of a gross ecclesiastical misdemeanour, and one which no bishop of the Church would pass over without the severest censure. There is provision made for the remedy of all just causes of complaint in canon 20, and no man, or body of men, has a right to take the law into his own hands. I trust, however, that notwithstanding the past, with its errors and hard feelings, you and they may still be open to reason, and hesitate before creating a schism on account of differences of opinion on points which, though perhaps outside your personal knowledge and experience, are, nevertheless, not forbidden by the canons of the Church, and have the sanction of general practice within its borders. I must tell you plainly that I regard the Rev. W. Hill as the victim of a most ungenerous and unchristian prejudice, a prejudice that rests upon no foundation whatever save that of ignorance of all Church practice outside the town of Wingham, and I have arrived at this conclusion, not from what has been reported to me by others, but from your own statements made at the time of our personal interview, the letters you have written and the absurd and frivolous charges preferred. My own views are, as is well known, strongly on the side of evangelical truth and practice, but I trust that my own opinions will never close my eyes to the fact that the basis of the Church of England is liberal and broad, excluding sectarian narrowness and party divisions—such was the mind of Christ and the teaching of the Holy Spirit by the Apostles. Those who seek to create difficulties and put obstacles in the path of the ministers of the Church, who, within legitimate bounds, strive to improve the services, are (though perhaps unconsciously) enemies of the Church, and so far as I am concerned, will meet with no encouragement. If you imagine, as I conceive from the tenor of your letter you do, that in appeal to his Lordship the Bishop of the diocese you will be able to secure the reversion of my decision in this case, then you are in error. By the commission which I hold my acts are the Bishop's acts, my decisions his decisions, and I am always careful neither to act or decide in a way in which I am not confident that his Lordship will approve. Of course, should you and those who are associated with you, choose to establish a Sunday-school in opposition to the Church school, and not under the control of clergyman of the parish, you have a perfect right to do so, but you must clearly understand that such school will not receive the sanction or approval of the Bishop of the diocese, nor will those taught in it be accepted as candidates for Confirmation until they have been instructed by the clergyman of the parish, and are presented by him as properly prepared for the reception of the rite. I cannot even in charity come to any other conclusion than that your present action is dictated by a feeling of irritation, because I, compelled by a sense of justice and fair play, have upheld what you opposed, and decided in a way which is contrary to your wishes. I have entered thus fully into these several points in the hope that the evil consequences of the course you and your friends have thought fit to pursue may be avoided and harmony be restored in the parish, and because I shall place this correspondence before his Lordship, on his return, for his information. I remain, dear sir, yours faithfully,

GEORGE M. INNES,  
Bishop's Commissary.

#### UNION AND UNITY.

IT may be doubted whether, up to the present time, there is any very strong desire amongst Christian Dissenters for the promotion of unity. Churchmen are, happily, the first to show anxiety in this particular; but the day is not very far off, probably, when Dissenters will desire it too. There are many unconscious proofs of this, as it appears at least to some men, in the wonderful approaches

which Dissenters are making in their own ministrations at their meeting-houses towards the services of the Church. It may astonish some thousands of Churchmen to be told, what however is now beyond dispute, that in not a few Dissenting places of worship the services are far more ornate than would even be tolerated in some churches of the Anglican Communion. But so it is, and the services as now rendered in many Wesleyan chapels, and in very many chapels of Independents, are such as, within the last ten years even, have been denounced as "Popish," "suspicious," "Popery and water," "going back to Rome," and the like, when attempted in some few churches. It is possible to point to large towns in which the Dissenting services are far ahead of those in the churches in the same towns in regard to ritual. The Psalms are always chanted; an anthem forms part of every Sunday-morning service; and even the Lord's Prayer, the use of which was once practically forbidden, is now "said" or "sung" very frequently, and this too in some parishes wherein the Church Services are still very cold and dreary! All this may not be regarded by the Dissenter as likely to lead to further changes; but to the Church man it is a sign full of much anticipation. The movement is in the true direction, and cannot rest until it reaches the real ground of repose in the whole truth of the Church of God.

Minds which see the propriety of forms of prayer and hearty services will not long be contented to have these alone, but they will inquire presently why they are severed from the Church of their ancestors, seeing that their mode of worship has been almost unconsciously brought back to that of their ancestors, and differs only in the question of Unity *versus* Dissent, or of the authority of an episcopally ordained minister *versus* one chosen and made by the laity alone. Then, too, the fact that a trust-deed of any meeting-house is as dogmatic as any of the Thirty-nine Articles or the Creed of Athanasius, the only difference being that these latter are the words of the Church, and the trust-deeds are the dogmas of a few men who wrote down in solemn words certain declarations which should henceforth regulate the doctrines of the people assembling as members of that meeting-house, must sooner or later come forcibly before their consciences, and they will reflect upon the inquiry: Is it right that we should bow before the opinions of a few men who, fifty years or a hundred years since, embodied those opinions in the title-deeds of this place of worship to regulate them through all time, or prefer the teaching of the Church of God? This inquiry must before long come forcibly into the minds of thoughtful men amongst the Dissenters, because circumstances are forcing it upon them. And when once it takes possession of them the results must be important. For so it is. Every meeting-house has its "trust-deed," the work of a few well-meaning men, perhaps, in every instance. The object in these trust-deeds has been to secure the setting forth, not of all the counsel of God, but of certain portions of the whole truth, *practically* to the exclusion of the other portions; whereas the Church witnesses for and to the whole Catholic truth in all its many sides, even when seemingly they contradict one another. This is her glory. Dissenters will come to see this presently, and must break from the trust-deeds and adopt the more excellent way, and this will be to return to the Church of their fathers.

Every sect of Dissenters arises in its proceeding as if that one sect in particular presented the whole of God's revealed truth, and that in the points

wherein other sects differed from it those sects were in the wrong. Thus one sect has assumed that Calvinism was in itself a complete system of theology, while another has regarded Arminianism as the real truth, and in this way each sect has been produced, and has for a while flourished, and then waned. Now the Church attempts nothing of this narrowing character, but, with St. Paul, does not hesitate to declare all the counsel of God.

There is a practical remedy in regard to our pitiful divisions which now imperil all Protestant Christendom. It has not perhaps been mooted before, but it might be put into operation easily.

Let the Home Reunion Society prepare a very lively, suitable service, to be drawn up by some of their own body, to be used at sundry meetings, which might be held in different parts of Great Britain, in schoolrooms and elsewhere. Let Dissenters be invited to come and join in using it; let the petitions simply pray for guidance, for direction, for the Divine presence and blessing, that unity may be promoted only so far as God appointeth, in the manner He approveth, in the time He chooseth, and by such concessions as He alone wills. Let this service be well conducted and most heartily said or sung on the knees before the majesty of God. Let the people be invited to attend, and let all be done simply, with the intention of securing the guidance and blessing of God. And there, on such occasions, let the matter rest.

—G. V. IN Church Bells.

#### AD CLERUM.

##### HINDRANCES TO DAILY PRAYER.

AS to the apparent difficulties connected with this subject, they seem of little importance—"Where there's a will, there's a way." In secular matters we triumph over difficulties which in matters of religion, with shame let it be said, we magnify and urge as excuses for actual duties incumbent upon us.

We will not consider the difficulties raised by the brethren of the laity, but notice those which occur to the incumbent of a city or country parish.

First, it is urged that there would be no congregation. We answer, in the first place, that this would surely be because we have never yet made reference to it or urged it upon our people. Moreover if the congregation be small, is this a valid objection to an observance which the Church requires, when we reflect that it is a requisition that has respect to every priest and deacon, whether there be a congregation or not? It is scarcely conceivable that there is a parish anywhere in which "two or three" cannot be found to embrace the opportunity of daily praising God in His holy temple, if it only be extended to them. Most clergymen have their own households with which to form the nucleus of a congregation. Moreover it would be practically a new movement in whatever parish it was introduced, and being so would require working up and explaining to the faithful. Of the three thousand converts to Christianity, made by the preaching of St. Peter, we read that they were "daily and with one accord in the temple praising God," and yet the time was when Jesus stood alone in that temple preaching the Kingdom of God. In like manner we shall find our congregations will increase if we ourselves be faithful, and if true and earnest religion exists amongst our people. Men need to be taught that time must be given for religious duties. That their work must not be allow-