

indisputable that this responsive feature of church worship, which appeals so strongly to spiritual emotion, and which has its scriptural basis in the apostolic Amen, found expression at a very early period in the history of the church in various alternate as well as strictly responsive forms. Amongst the earliest of these were the *Pax Vobiscum*, to which Mosheim alludes, and the *Oratio Dominica*, recited clause by clause in concert by the congregation after the officiating minister. Then came in addition to the Amen such ejaculatory clauses as "We praise Thee," "We bless Thee," etc.; then the *Trisagion*, a brief litany with the responses, "Lord have mercy upon us," etc., the Creed, the Doxology, etc. However we may differ as to the time or the order of introduction of these forms of responsive or alternative service, and however we may disagree as to the extent of their warrant or authority, it must be admitted that the liturgies of Christendom have in large measure owed their power to the responsive element embodied in these forms, to their influence in bringing the people to feel that the service is not that of the minister alone, but of the whole congregation—that each worshipper has an appropriate and essential part to render. In the service of the Book of Common Prayer there is much that to those unaccustomed to liturgic forms seems cold and cumbersome, but the heart must be cold itself that is not moved by the "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord," of the Litany, and by the "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law," in the rehearsing of the Ten Commandments. These portions of the liturgy, which are truly and purely responsive, are full of power, and it is a question whether our non-liturgical churches, in breaking away from that which constitutes the weakness of liturgy, have not gone to the opposite extreme, and in failing to make provision for audible response of any kind in worship, shorn public devotion of a part at least of its strength.

II. But it is time to turn for a moment to that which constitutes the weakness of liturgy, namely, the substitution of a mere mechanical alternation of utterance for a genuine spiritual response on the part of the worshipper, by reason of which the service tends to degenerate into a piece of ecclesiastical machinery to be set in order and run through on every occasion of worship. In this substitution of mere alternation for real response lies one great objection to fixed forms of prayer. The advocates of these forms claim that in this way the public prayers become really the prayers of the congregation, giving expression to their desires and aspirations, whilst in extempore prayer only the desires and aspirations of the minister are expressed. If this be so, then the Amen at the end of the set form of prayer is not responsive, but simply alternate. If the prayer is the people's in the same sense that it is the minister's, then with equal appropriateness the congregation might utter the prayer, and the minister say