

ter capacity, which you will hardly deny, then, it will necessarily appear, that he was not an enemy to forms, for the service, in which he joined, was of that sort. We also know, that, when he heard by his disciples, of the practice of John the Baptist, who taught his followers a form, he did not condemn it, but gave a similar one to his own, called, by way of eminence, *the Lord's Prayer*, and commanded them to use it. Would he have done this, had he thought that precomposed prayers were inconsistent with spiritual worship? In his great agony, when his sweat was as large drops of blood falling to the ground, he prayed *three different times, using the same words*. Would you not call this a form? On the cross, he used that solemn prayer of the XXII Psalm. Therefore the example of our divine Saviour, "who spake as never man spake," sanctifies the use of precomposed prayers. That any man, or bodies of men, should run in the face of his example is, to me, a matter of regret and astonishment. They have much to say in defence of their practice, I know; but in opposition to every argument that can be devised by the wit of man to establish extempore public prayer, I will observe to you, that, if you worship God at all, as an individual of a congregation, it is impossible, from the nature of the thing, that you ever did, or ever will do it, but by a form.

M. I am not willing, at present, to interrupt you, but your last assertion, for it is no argument, really confounds me. I do not understand you.

E. Your minister, I very well know, has no written prayer before him; and, for argument's sake, I will grant that he does not commit one to memory; that every time he stands before the congregation, he speaks unto God, as the spirit pleases to give him utterance.

M. You need not suppose that. We believe it to be a matter of fact.

E. What then? Does he not in the spontaneous language of the moment, offer unto God the petitions, supplications, and thanksgivings of the congregation for himself and them? If he does this in your name, and you follow him by your amen, or by any other token of assent, then you worship God as much by form, as if that form had been composed a thousand years ago—for his prayer is, to all intents, a form to you. If you do not join in his prayer, you do not worship God at all. This conclusion is fairly unavoidable, and if you will narrowly scrutinize your own experience, you will, I think, find that a great part of your time, especially in hearing a new minister, must necessarily be occupied in judging and determining, as the speaker goes on, whether or not his language represents or misrepresents your principles and desires. This I consider neither prayer nor devotion. The question then is, not between *precomposed* forms and *no* forms, which, to a congregation are impossible; but between *good* and *bad* forms,—between what is, or may be perfectly, known to every