

river. Here within five years four new churches have been built and five new parishes have been organized. The Church of the Holy Trinity has built a magnificent new church with accommodations for 800 more people than it had in the former structure. St. Andrew's has rebuilt and enlarged its old church on a new and better site. The new church has 500 more sittings than the old. The Church of the Archangel has been organized as a parish and has a handsome building which will seat 500 people. The new Church of St. Luke is almost finished. It will seat 800 persons. A flourishing congregation is already in existence and but awaits the opening of the new church to expand into a fairly equipped parish. The mission of the Church of the Holy Trinity has become Emmanuel church. It has a chapel that will seat 300 people. St. Bartholomew's has organized a chapel for the Swedes and purchased a church for their use. This building will seat 300 persons. Last week the corner stone of the new Church of the Holy Nativity was laid on the site of the old Church of the Holy Innocents, with which the former parish consolidated. This church will seat 700 people. Facts and figures indicate in a rough way the work that has been done, but the influence for good which each church exerts in the portion of the community in which it stands cannot be measured.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE CHURCH.

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."—Matt. xviii. 19.

It would be well if, in considering the various Ordinances of Religion, we began by narrowly examining their charter as it exists in God's Holy Word. How shall we ascertain their true character? how shall we know what we may expect from them, and what we may not expect? how, in short, shall we secure ourselves, against a false estimate of them, otherwise than by looking into their original constitution? The exact limits of a patent or prerogative, granted by the government of a country to any individual, can only be ascertained by consulting the terms of the patent. Let the holder abstract from the public records, and hide away the parchment on which those terms are written, and there are then no powers which he may not assume, on the general vague representation that the patent is his.

The passage which stands at the head of this lecture contains the character of Public Worship. The Church has given to Public Worship divers forms of its own devising; but here we have, if I may so say, the raw material, out of which all forms are manufactured. Now, from the examination of this charter, we will seek, first, to ascertain the true theory of Public Worship; and then draw from that theory some practical hints for the conduct of this devotional exercise.

It is not with any controversial object, for controversy is seldom edifying, but by way of clearly defining the idea, that we say, at the outset, that in the practice both of the Church of Rome, and of the Protestant sects in this country, we trace a degeneracy from the Scriptural theory of Public Worship. Extremes continually meet; and it is not a little remarkable that both by Romanists and Dissenters the func-

tions of Public Worship are all devolved upon the clergy,—whether priest or officiating minister;—and the people take, I do not say *no* part, but *no common* part with him. The Mass is the chief office of the Roman Church; at which even those who do not communicate assist, as it is called, every Sunday. In what does this assistance consist? The question may be answered by examining the books of devotion recommended and used at the Mass. It will be found, on looking into such books, that the idea of the congregation's praying as one body,—using the minister as their mouthpiece, and signifying their assent to him by occasional responds,—is, if not eliminated, very much obscured. The priest is *doing one act*, supposed to be sacrificial, to the effectiveness of which the congregation can contribute nothing; and while he is doing it, the people are furnished with separate devotions appropriate to the several stages of it, which each person recites secretly. The priest and they are not asking the *same* thing at the *same* time, and the only agreement which there is in their petitions stands in *place* and *time*;—in the fact that they are offered in the same church at the same hour. Nay it might happen that several of the worshippers should use different books of devotion on the Mass, even as with us different members of the congregation bring with them different books of devotion on the Holy Communion; and that thus two persons, kneeling side by side, might be so far from agreeing in what they ask, as to be offering two different petitions at the same moment. If the principle were carried out to an extreme, no two members of the congregation would be praying for exactly the same thing; and Public Prayer would resolve itself into a series of private prayers, said secretly, in public. But the truth is, that *Private Prayer* and *Public Prayer* are *wholly different things*, separated from one another by the much deeper distinction than the mere accident that one is offered in the chamber, the other in the face of the Church. Their Scriptural charters proclaim that they are *Ordinances differently constituted*. The *charter of Private Prayer* runs thus: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door,"—exclusion of the world from the *thoughts*, if not from the *place*, is an *essential*,—"pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." The charter of *Public Prayer*, on the other hand, runs thus: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." *Agreement in the petition* (not necessarily, as I understand it, agreement in the place or time of offering the petition, though that is both natural and proper) is an *essential* of this sort of prayer, so that if you remove this agreement, the prayer ceases to be Public Prayer at all. It is not the resorting to the same House of Prayer, it is not the being side by side with one's neighbor in bodily presence; but it is the mental and cordial agreement with him as to what we shall ask which constitutes the prayer public. Develop this idea a little further and you will arrive at the conclusion, which is as rational as it is Scriptural, that *Private Prayer* touches and deals with the relations of the individual to God, those relations to which no other heart than his own is privy, his secret sins, trials,

struggles, successes; whereas *Public Prayer* embraces his relations as a member of the Church, not only to the Head of the Church, but also to the other members. In the one, there can usually be no agreement, by reason of the diversity of character and wants. In the other we approach God as a Society, incorporated by the royal charter of His Son, having an understanding with other members as to our wants and petitions, and framing them in language so general as to meet the necessities of all. To use an illustration, *Private Prayer* is the exhibition of a biography to God; *Public Prayer*, the exhibition of a history. A biography is a distinct thing from a history. The one presents the individual in the private sentiments which acutate him; the other in his public enterprises, as a member of the body politic. And on account of this difference of character, no collection of biographies of any period would form a history of the period, any more than the aggregate of private devotions said in public constitutes public devotion. At the same time it must be admitted that, just as biographies mention occasionally the public exploits of their subjects, and histories sometimes delineate the private characters of public men, so *Public Prayer* and *Private Prayer* will occasionally trench upon the strict provinces of one another,—as when in his closet a man intercedes for the whole Church, or as when in the congregation some passage of the Liturgy comes home to our own present want with a peculiar force and appropriateness. Suffice it that, generally speaking, the provinces of the two are distinct. We may not press any distinction too hard.

Turning now to the Protestant sects; does their practice realize better the true ideal of Public Worship than that of Romanists? We hold it to be at least a nearer approach to the true ideal; for the *theory* of all Protestant Worship certainly is, that there shall be agreement as to the things asked for, that minister and people shall join in the same petitions. But how can such agreement be effectually secured in the absence of a Liturgy, or form *previously prepared*, unless the pastor and congregation should meet before Divine Service, and come to some understanding as to the substance of their petitions; a course which, if not impracticable, has probably never been attempted: In *extempore* prayer it is out of the question that the people can know what the minister is about to pray for: when he has uttered his petition, they may, of course, give their mental and cordial assent to it, and doubtless devout Dissenters, of which there are numbers, endeavor to do so; but before this mental process, which consists of first taking in the petition with the mind, and then assimilating it with the will, is well finished, the minister has passed on to another petition faster than the worshipper can follow; and the latter soon finds that there is no way of really joining, but by listening as he would to a Sermon, and giving general assent to the contents of the prayer by means of the "Amen" at the end. On the other hand, a Liturgy, if seriously and intelligently used, necessarily secures exact agreement among the worshippers as to the things sued for; nay, determines even the form in which each supplication shall present itself to the minds of all. There are we believe, many other advantages accruing to a Liturgy like ours, which are beside the purpose of the present argument. We prize our Prayer Book for its intrinsic beauty, for its chaste fervour, for its primitive simplicity, for its close harmony with Scripture, for the way in which it fences us against false doctrine; but the fundamental advantage of a Liturgy, merely as a Liturgy, is this, that it *secures*, far more than an extempore prayer can do, that *agreement in the things asked for*, which is part of the *charter of Public Prayer*, and so grounds the act of worship on *Christ's own Word of Promise*: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven."—Goulburn.