

God that they are miserable sinners, and that there is no health in them, is indeed distressing, and a woeful, almost irreparable shock to the whole devotional spirit of the service. The Lord's Prayer, too, is so infinitely pathetic and solemn that it should always be said with extreme quietness; otherwise, as the words are so well known, the tendency will be, as, alas, is so often the case, to rattle them through like a meaning less jig. In the same way the distresses and sorrows of the human heart which pour themselves out with such inexpressible tenderness in the Litany, should be rendered in a tone that is throughout gentle, devotional, and subdued.

My brothers, when I speak of *Edification* in Church music, I mean what our Lord said about the day of rest, that it exists for man, and not man for it. The service, however beautiful, does not exist for itself, that it should be performed even with the greatest ideal perfection without regard to the worshippers. Prose and poetry, music and plain, unmodulated speaking are all alike to Him, to Whose perfection and delight we can add nothing, and to Whom we can only offer ourselves. Some persons seem to have mistaken the Almighty, as revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ, for some sublime musical Deity, like the Apollo of the Greeks, in whose honour the perfection of music must be perpetually offered, without reference to the woes and passions, the joys and griefs, the passing temporary incidents and emotions of the frail human beings who are worshipping Him. That is not the view of St. Paul. All must be done to edification, to the building up of God's people. That is the sole point of view. A cathedral will edify in one way, a parish church in another. A cathedral, by the abundance of its resources, and by its daily and continuous practice, can offer a perfection of tone, a delicacy of harmony, a skillfulness of musical art, which will appeal to the highest faculties of educated men. A parish church will aim rather at encouraging all God's people to sing. But the beginning and end of the aim of both must be a thoroughly sympathetic, a thoroughly intelligent aim at edification.

The third principle common to both sorts of choirs in *Distinctness*. No possible good can result from either cathedral or parish church unless the words are understood. This object is probably more easily attained in a cathedral, because of the greater perfection of the singing, and the greater space or medium through which the words are heard. But it should always be remembered that, just as by far the greater part of the population of the country are the working-classes, so by far the greater part of our worshippers ought to be the working-classes, and that they do not catch words or meanings so readily as those whose ear is fully practised and educated. Whether they are in our churches in great numbers or not makes no difference. They ought to be there. We ought to expect them to be there. All our preparations should be as if they were coming. They are by far the most important class of our fellow-Christians in the present day, even if it were only from the sheer weight of multitude. If we conduct our services as if we did not expect them, then they will not come. No trouble can be too great to spend on absolute distinctness of utterance, the avoidance of harsh and screaming resonance, the elimination of confusion and echo, the calculation of accuracy in effect.

How strong and clear is St. Paul's rule on the subject! "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church."

TO BE CONTINUED.

## FAMILY PRAYERS

It has been stated, in Convocation and elsewhere, that the good and right practice of holding family worship has of late fallen much into disuse. While hoping that this is not so much the case as is supposed, it is very easy to point out one or two causes for this state of things, which, if attended to, might be removed.

In the first place, many religious and well-meaning people have unconsciously set up a stumbling-block by unduly insisting upon the desirability, if not the absolute necessity, of a separate room for family prayers. They throw ridicule upon the idea of the table spread for breakfast, paterfamilias kneeling at it, and the rest of the family kneeling at chairs in all directions. How much more seemly, they say, to have chairs arranged in another room, with a sort of reading desk, and as much imitation of a private chapel or oratory as is consistent with the very secular surroundings. And no doubt many wealthy pictures in religion who find the most expensive music that can be had in Church, and the 'dim religious light,' and all the rest of it, a help to devotion, have gratified themselves hugely by turning some room into a sort of chapel, and putting painted glass in the windows, &c. At Cambridge thirty years ago, an eccentric undergraduate, here and there, would delight to be pointed out, *digito preteritum*, as 'the man who has turned his gyp-room into an oratory;' and very likely there are men there in these days of the same sort.

But such persons seem to forget that all this is a kind of spiritual selfishness and luxury, and that, by insisting upon things which are expensive as adjuncts of domestic worship, they are promulgating the dreadful heresy that only the wealthy can worship God acceptably, and that poor people who have but one sitting-room in their house must give up family prayers altogether. If there is any parish where it is well known that the gentlefolk consider it necessary that a separate room should be used for family prayers, it is no wonder that many of the poorer families should be altogether discouraged from attempting to begin or end the day's work by gathering together in their Redeemer's name. It would, then, surely be a well pleasing sacrifice if wealthier Churchmen would give up such æsthetic luxuries in domestic worship as are beyond the reach of their poorer neighbours, for the purpose of setting them an example which it is possible for them to follow in a matter whose importance cannot be exaggerated.

But, secondly, people have been discouraged from instituting family prayers by the difficulty of deciding what form to adopt, and also by the formidable appearance of many of the printed forms suggested. The compilers of these, with the best intentions, have defeated their own object in the case of numerous families, both by making the little services far too long, and also by complicating them with versicles and responses, which present a difficulty to many minds. If artisans and labourers are to be encouraged to hold family worship, the forms adopted must be (at any rate, *at first*) very short and very plain, that there may be no excuse for the plea, 'Oh, we found it took up too much time,' or, 'We didn't quite understand how it was meant to be done.'

It seems highly desirable, therefore, that a sort of *minimum* form of prayer should be recommended from the pulpit and elsewhere for adoption by those heads of families who have but little time and are not experienced in family worship. Perhaps, as a *minimum* from which could afterwards be added to, the following would be best:—

### MORNING.

1. Collect for the week.
2. The third collect, for grace.
3. The Lord's Prayer.
4. The Prayer of St. Chrysostom.
5. 'The Grace,' &c.

### EVENING.

1. The Confession.
2. The Lord's Prayer.
3. Collect for the week.
4. 'Lighten our darkness; &c.
5. 'The grace,' &c.

A part, if not the whole, of that Second Lesson for the day which is from the Gospels or the Acts might be read before the evening prayers; and before the morning prayer it would be well for a few verses—say not more than four—of the Psalms for the day to be read, all standing. But these verses would have to be marked beforehand, according to some plan or list compiled by authority. For, while on certain days of the month, as the 5th, 10th, 18th, or 27th, it would be easy enough to make a suitable and edifying selection, on other days, as the 13th, 15th, 16th, or 22nd, it would be rather difficult to do so.

To the minimum form suggested above there might be added for those who had more time the prayer for all conditions of men in the morning, and the general thanksgiving in the evening. And on festivals the collect for the day could be either substituted for, or added to, the collect for the week.

For several reasons the Prayer-book itself seems preferable to any other book for the purposes of family prayer. Everybody has a Prayer-book, and no outlay is required to procure a special book of family prayers. No compilation that has ever been made is so comprehensive or so rhythmically beautiful as the collects of the Church. Many persons who have tried various manuals have grown tired of them, and have given them up for that all-but-inspired book of which loyal Church folk never grow tired, but rather learn to love it more and more. And, finally, where attendance at daily matins and evensong is not practicable it is a comfort and an encouragement to feel that one is nevertheless, joining to some extent in the daily prayer of the Church.—A. M. W. in *Church Bells*.

## TWO VIEWS—FORWARD, BACKWARD.

Two men stand by the cross of Christ. The one looks back, the other looks forward. He who looks back admires the character of Jesus Christ, accepts the truth of His moral teachings, and never tires as he tells of the noble life of Him who went about doing good. That cross represents to him the power of rage, and he looks upon Christ as a victim of a malice so intense as to put to cruel death the noblest man that ever trod this earth. In so far as that man tries to imitate the kindness and benevolence of Jesus, he becomes a better man. This is the moral man of this age.

The other man looks forward. He sees the empty sepulchre; the several appearances of Jesus Christ to His disciples; the gathering upon the mountain side; the command of the Saviour, "Go ye unto all the world;" the cloud receiving the ascending Lord; the tongue of fire, lighting upon the disciples; the power of the Holy Ghost descending upon them. Every moral teaching of Jesus, every noble hope inspired by those teachings, every deed of love, every word of truth receives a divine character, a divine force by these wonderful scenes on which he looks. He feels truly that God has visited this earth and established His kingdom among men. Impressed with the glories of the scenes, and the wondrous victory to which they give unquestionable evidence, he gives his life to the service of Christ. He seeks, by an obedient walk before God, to share his Master's victory over every power of evil. He rejoices over the