

are nevertheless most vociferous in the use of the Amen, it may be replied that it is the liturgical and not the spontaneous use for which we contend as scriptural—not that each worshipper shall have the privilege at any point in the service at which his fervor moves him to break in with his unexpected and sometimes startling Amen, but that there shall be fixed points at which by preconcert the opportunity shall be afforded, and all devout worshippers shall be expected to utter a consentaneous and heartfelt Amen. Can any one doubt that if the formidable “long prayer before sermon” of the Presbyterian Church were broken up into sections, each covering one of the six topics recommended in the *Directory for Worship*, and each at its close affording an opportunity to the people to utter a devout Amen, there would be less complaint of the tediousness of this part of the service and more real participation in it? Such a response, provided for as a regular part of the service, would, of course, be liturgical, but it would seem that, to this extent at least in the direction of a liturgy, even our most ultra-non-liturgical churches might go with assurance both of highest scriptural authority and of greatest comfort and helpfulness to Christian worshippers.

When in the matter of responsive service we pass beyond the utterance of the concerted Amen at the close of supplications and thanksgiving, we reach a point where we are not only without explicit warrant from Scripture, but also without the inferior guidance of established usage in the primitive church. The effort to discover traces of liturgical forms in the Book of Acts and in the Pauline Epistles; the attempt to construe Pliny's celebrated *carmen dicere secum invicem* as referring to responsive forms of prayer, rather than to alternate singing of hymns, and the contention that the three-chapter prayer in the Bryennian manuscript of the 1st Epistle of Clement was composed for liturgic use in the church at Rome, may satisfy those who by education or taste are predisposed to liturgical forms. They will hardly meet with general acceptance. The great body of students of church history will doubtless continue to hold with the learned and conservative Mosheim (*Eccl. Hist. Cent. III.; P. II., ch. iv., n. 19*) that “in the earliest times, exclusive of the short introductory salutation, *Pax Vobiscum, etc.*, no established forms of prayer were used in public worship, but the bishop or presbyter poured forth extempore prayers.” In that famous passage of Justin Martyr (*Ap. 1: 67: 15*), in which the officiating minister (*ὁ προσεστῶς*), is said to send up supplications and thanksgivings “according to his ability,” (*ὅση δύναμις ἀσπῶ*), while the people shout assent in the Amen, the *δύναμις* will be generally interpreted as referring to mental and spiritual ability, and not to strength of voice or lung, and so as clearly implying extempore gift in prayer.

But whatever views may be held on this point, the fact remains