

ally be conceived. Of the effect of these diversified feelings every one in the habit of using extempore prayer in his family and his closet, whether Minister or private Christian, must often have been painfully conscious. Ministers are still men when exalted in the desk or pulpit. Transfer then, the ideas thus called up, to the public service, and it will at once appear what an obvious advantage a written form, prescribed and drawn up by the collective wisdom of humble and holy men, has in all these respects. The very repetition of language which has often before been connected with devout feelings in our minds, may, by the blessing of God, be the means of rekindling the almost extinguished spark, and fanning it again into a holy flame. And, on the other hand, when our spirits are higher and our imaginations heated, such a form, not depending upon the caprice or feeling of the moment, will prevent our running into any extravagancies of thought or expression, and will be always applicable, and always safe. We might further dwell upon its advantages as a safe-guard against erroneous doctrine, but we have already, we fear, exceeded our limits. One point more we must notice, and that is the advantages which a Liturgy affords to the people, considered distinctly from the minister. When a Liturgical form of worship is used, the people are aware of the nature and import of every petition before it is offered up, and are prepared to accompany it with corresponding feelings of devotion; but where extempore prayer is used, the petitions which may be presented to Almighty God by the minister cannot be known till uttered by him, and consequently their import cannot be sufficiently weighed to warrant the concurrence of the congregation, without danger of their losing what may follow, and thus entering very imperfectly into the spirit of this duty. In *any* mode of conducting public worship, the intrusion of worldliness or of formality will always remain to be guarded against. But it is surely more easy to resist that intrusion, when we have an opportunity to study the expressions, and catch the spirit of the prayers we use, by previous preparation, than when the attention must be employed in listening for the words of the minister at the very moment when we are called upon to apply them.—Again—the fervency with which the soul may have accompanied an extempore prayer, can with difficulty be retraced in subsequent meditation: but a Liturgy affords facilities for embodying and recalling the impressions of our happier moments; its language is enriched to aged Christians, by being the representative of their past experience; and many delightful records are associated with it of hours when it softened and soothed their hearts.—Another advantage, and the last we shall notice at present, is, that a Liturgy affords no room for display on the one side, or criticism on the other. Few can have attended, even occasionally, at places of worship where extempore prayer is employed, without having felt themselves pained and offended by the way in which the petitions and expressions of the prayer are animadverted upon. For this, a Liturgy cuts off all opportunity.