

the exception of certain preventient and sacramental graces which ever assist the soul, God grants others only through the medium of prayer, it follows, that the first thing that inspires devotion is an attraction for prayer; or, rather, it is itself that spirit of grace and prayer which God has promised by his prophet to pour out upon his people.

It is a spirit of prayer; that is, a disposition, an habitual tendency, of the soul to rise up towards God, and to unite itself with Him, adoring His supreme majesty, thanking Him for His mercies, asking pardon of its sins, and imploring Him to vouchsafe the spiritual help necessary to its weakness. It is a spirit of grace, because this disposition and this tendency are the effects of grace. I say an habitual tendency, which subsists always in the depth of the will, which holds it always turned towards God, and which, according to the occasion and the need, is manifested by distinct and formal acts, proffered by the lips or the heart. These acts cannot be constant: but the interior affection, which produces and animates them, can and ought to be; and this is that habitual elevation of soul which is inculcated in the precept of Christ, that "men ought always to pray and not to faint." If you have this spirit of prayer, O Christian soul! you have true devotion; but you do not possess it if you are led to prayer only by duty and necessity, and not by love and desire. You do not possess it if this exercise is painful to you; if it costs you a great effort; if you are careless, lukewarm, willingly distracted, or subject to ennui; if you count the moments; if you shorten them more than you ought; in brief, if you pay God as a bad debtor pays his debt. In this way, from habit, from routine, from human respect, because the rule or the state of life demands it, one may make many prayers without having the spirit of prayer; and nothing is more common.

#### OCCASIONAL PAPERS.

BY A COUNTRY PARSON.

#### THE EASTWARD POSITION.

EVERY now and then the smouldering embers of this dying controversy burst into fierce but fitful flames, and we have from the "old guard" of the Puritan remnant a solemn reaffirmation of the un-Protestant and Romanizing tendency of this practice. I say dying, because the custom has now been so widely adopted in all branches and divisions of the Anglican Church and by those who are avowedly moderate and "safe" men, that it has long ceased to be one of the distinctive marks of Ritualism and has come to be regarded as a very mild expression of "churchly" tendencies, on a par with the use of the surplice in the pulpit, the singing of the responses to the Commandments, and other decent practices, which in their day have passed through the fiery ordeal of fierce denunciation and stupid misinterpretation, but which are now all but universal. And so indications seem to point to the probability that in the very near future the eastward position will become an open question, and a mere matter of taste, to be left to the discretion of the officiating clergyman be he High or Low.

The precise teaching of the Church on this point will, I believe, always be involved in obscurity. It is quite probable that the rubric in the Prayer Book was made purposely vague so as to leave a certain latitude for tender Romanists and scrupulous Puritans. It exhibits strong marks of being a compromise, and it was evidently designed to prevent that idolatrous reverence for the centre of the Altar which is the distinguishing feature of the Roman Mass. The rubric of the first Prayer Book commenced "When the Priest humbly standing before the midst of the Altar," etc., and the aim of the second rubric seems to have been to make any position legal so long as it was north of the old

centre position, and thus to remove any superstitious reverence for any particular part of the Holy Table, which seems a natural result when the act of Consecration is always performed at one set place. The rubric before the Prayer of Consecration, "When the Priest standing before the Holy Table," etc., seems to take for granted that the priest has adopted the eastward position from the commencement of the service. Otherwise would we not have had a direction something to this effect—"Now shall the Priest stand before the Table, and having ordered the bread and wine, return to his former position at the north side," etc. However, without pressing the point, it is safe to conclude that, as far as the strict letter of the law is concerned, no one can pretend to speak with any degree of certainty, and that practically this is one of those open questions about which all are at liberty to form their own opinion. And this view of the question is in keeping with the breadth and comprehensiveness which is the glory of the English Church, and one of the chiefest marks of her Catholicity.

As to the decency and fitness of the position on its own merits there can be but one opinion. The old side position is awkward, clumsy and inconvenient; the eastward position is graceful, becoming and convenient, and in keeping with the whole plan of the Communion Office, which, though not a bloody sacrifice, is the shadow or picture of one, and designed, by its scenic and ceremonial features, to keep ever fresh in our minds the memory of the Great Atonement.

Let any clergyman who doubts this, and who is not bigoted in the matter, adopt the eastward position for a few Sundays and he will experience the truth of my assertion as to its convenience and comeliness.

Let us hope, however, that we are entering upon a better state of affairs in regard to these matters, and that before long this old Puritan prejudice will no longer be a factor in Church controversies and that we may learn to agree to differ about the position of the celebrant as being nothing more than a matter of taste to be determined, not by any imaginary doctrinal signification it may be tortured into possessing, but simply by common sense. Thus, I believe, we shall best carry out the spirit of the rubrics and of the whole English Church, which, in matters not essential, is the very soul of moderate and reasonable liberty.

#### THE TROUBLED SECTS.

THE *Church Times* has a long and thoughtful article upon the breaking away of the leading sectarian leaders in the States from the Creeds which differentiate their respective bodies from the Church Catholic. Being too lengthy for our columns we give the following interesting section:—

This American movement against Creeds is reproducing itself in a very marked manner amongst the sects at home. As is well known, there is a wide distinction between the Lutheran and the Calvinist theory. Luther, who in many other respects resembled Henry VIII., had no great repugnance to the old doctrines, and only brought forward as much reform as would suffice to justify him in breaking away from the authority of the Church. Hence, as Lord Macaulay long since pointed out, his theory of justification by faith was really a system of indulgences which underbid Tetzel. The Church compelled every one to confess his sins at least once a year, and make some sort of satisfaction for them; and it is a commonplace to say that the effect of the routine which the Canons on Confession introduced was hurtful to morality. But Luther substituted a mere act of faith to be performed just when the sinner liked. This new plan of making every man his own confessor was enormously popular, and the results have been just what might have been expected of it. At starting that godly potentate, Philip of Hesse, extorted from the Lutheran fathers a licence to commit bigamy, on the plea that he could not be content with a single wife. During the three ages of its subsequent history, Lutheranism has been curiously barren of saintliness; and the countries over which it has held sway have ceased to be Christian in more than name. We have seen a curious revival of the system under Mr. Booth, who may not unfairly be described as a vulgar Luther, at it is impossible not to view without apprehension the inevitable results that must speedily follow his teaching.

The system of Calvin, though it might at the first blush be thought more likely to lead to antinomianism of a very bad type, has proved a little less injurious in fact. The really pious Calvinist necessarily regards himself as a member of a sublime aristocracy, and if, like other aristocrats, he is often intolerably hard and arrogant, he feels himself bound by the maxim "*Noblesse oblige*." Nobody, for instance, would ever have thought of crediting Calvin with bacchanal ditties in praise of "Women, Wine, and Song." At the same time, his theology has grown quite out of favour even amongst Scotsmen, to whom its sharp, logical completeness, and its thoroughly business-like character, once made it very congenial. It is begun to be felt that Calvin has blundered like a tradesman who, because he could not get in a number of accounts that he knew were outstanding against him, chose to assume that they did not exist, and arranged his affairs on that hypothesis. Calvin has built up his system out of one class of Scripture texts, and has disregarded or explained away another class equally important. Anyhow, his authority is coming to nought amongst his disciples as completely as the views and wishes of the Wesleys have been set aside by their professing followers. The other day a conference of the London Presbytery was held to consider the relationship of its office-bearers to the Westminster Confession. One or two ministers, no doubt, were found to stand up for that famous standard, but the almost unanimous feeling was that it had become a dead-weight upon the sect; and that is repelled intelligent men not only from the ministry, but from the eldership. A motion of Dr. Oswald Dykes, which seemed to be well received, was that they should retain the Confession as a "great historical document of their Church's theological development," and that they should frame for popular use "some short, easy, modern creed which their congregations could join in reciting during public worship." This notable device is as if when a congregation had got hopelessly flat, the organist should keep indicating the original key for the purpose of showing how far it has wandered away from the right pitch.

But it is not the Presbyterians alone that are thus perplexed. The bulk of the Baptists and Independents are pledged by the trust-deeds of their chapels to a theology similar to that of the Westminster Confession, and their congregations like it just as little as the modern Scotch Calvinists. In fact, it is said that there are many hundreds of cases in which the Miles Platting trouble would be reproduced to-morrow if only a comparatively few persons were mischievous enough to challenge the preacher's doctrine, and the preacher had fortitude to resist the "Dead Hand." This, we need not say, is a state of things which is altogether in favour of the Church. With those who have any real religious instincts, positive faith will always be acceptable than vague inconsecutive musings about religionism. We have heard a great deal about the spread of Roman Catholicism in England, and the reason for it must be sought in the advantages which its well-compact battalions have as against the disorganised hordes of Protestantism. That the country is not by this half-won to the Pope, is due to the fact that the Church of England has also brought into the field an army as well-appointed, but without the impedimenta of papal arrogance and mediæval or contemporaneous superstition. Hence it is notwithstanding the apparently boundless resources which are at the command of Cardinal Manning, the Romanizing movement is absolutely at a standstill, and has even receded from the point which it had reached some thirty years ago.

#### TRADITION IN THE CHURCH.

The function of tradition, then, is to ascertain the belief of the first ages of Christianity, and to transmit it unimpaired to succeeding generations. And thus the fault of the Church of Rome is not what it is commonly thought to be, and as is seemingly warranted by the language of the Council of Trent, that of unduly exaggerating the place of tradition by raising it to an equality with Holy Scripture; but contrariwise that of setting it aside at any time in favour of the current and fashionable ecclesiastical opinion of the day. The question of the withdrawal of the challenge from the laity is a crucial example of this fact. Scripture and tradition are here at one, and directly opposed to the decree of the Council of Constance, itself resting on an innovation scarcely two centuries older, which is thus as truly anti-traditional as it is anti-Scriptural. Amongst the usages which are, or at any rate have been, universal in Christendom without resting on the express language of Scripture, may be named infant baptism, episcopacy, and Sunday observance; while it is only the superior numbers of those who now reject the first and second of these which prevents their being regarded as being as eccentric and wrongheaded as the Seventh Day Baptists, who alone of Western Christians continue to keep the Sabbath.

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In fact, the incident and must be universal once reaches the mind even if the founder a fresh type of convert accept new chain of tradition lieve themselves from the Bible ar fidence of a large be which they uncon is particularly exca cal communion at stress on the doctri fication. That the shape in the New it is matter of histo they assume among prominent example till the sixteenth religious consciou Their modern adhe find them in the cause originally o under the influence tradition. And th which Christendom is as least as large follows the traditio a third that of Z w ley, yet others the the Roman Church traditional appar in the Creed of P Catholic to accept sialist traditions the whole mass o the whole growing constitutions, the all the decrees of of faith, practice bensive catalogue reason of its enorm all but a few ind be and constantly favour of any op with the "living ecclesiastical antl comprehensively.

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It has been ob this maxim that, granted, it is imp such entire univ to any tenet or t greater part of t we limit the wor the foundation tion of the ma Vincent intende been ignorant o the long conflict attests the non-t Christendom; so interpretation is discredit it.

Its real force ing it with wha lish jurisprude Book, which m another code kr does not rest fo tant, but on lon ions. In order of common law that it should t be merely loca as gavelkind, w (2) It must be as early as the been recognis pleaded in ther lect workable raise cavilling ment of all th existence of ga the perfect uni property); and same qualities prevalence; co Juction or bro synods, and c against such o