

in decent repair. They have this further duty too in connection with the services of the Church, to maintain order and decorum during divine service, and, in the words of the Canon (19) "are to see to due reverence, and are not to permit loiterers, either in the church-yard or porch, but shall cause them either to enter or to depart;" and so it has been held that a Churchwarden was guilty neither of assault nor trespass who pulled off a man's hat in church! Any Churchwarden of our day would probably act in such a case as did he whose conduct induced the suit which has settled the law on the point, without stopping to consider his authority to do so; but it may be interesting to note that there is legal authority on the heads of all those men who appear in church with their hats on!

Blackstone also mentions an old statute of Elizabeth (1 Eliz., ch. 2) in force in his time, requiring Churchwardens to levy a shilling forfeiture on all such as do not repair to church on Sundays and holidays! Whether that statute is still unrepealed or no, the spirit of modern Christianity would hardly sanction the imposition of a *penalty* in such a case now-a-days, but there would seem to be a certain rough propriety in the enactment if the fine were to go to church purposes; in this way making absentees from public worship contribute to the maintenance and expenses of the church, as well as the worshippers! The converse of the case is the modern rule, however, and Churchwardens levy the shilling on those who repair to church on Sundays and holidays, and not on those who absent themselves!

The Church Temporalities Act provides that the Churchwardens shall yearly and every year within fourteen days after other Churchwardens shall be nominated and appointed to succeed them, deliver in to such succeeding Churchwardens a just, true, and perfect account in writing (fairly entered in a book or books to be kept for that purpose and signed by the Churchwardens) of all sums of money by them received, and of all sums rated or assessed, or otherwise due and not received; and also of all goods, chattels, and other property of the church or parish, in their hands as such Churchwardens, and of all moneys paid by them, and of all other things concerning their said office, and shall also pay and deliver over all sums of money, goods, chattels, and other things which shall be in their hands, unto such succeeding Churchwardens; which said account shall be verified by oath before one or more of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace.

Canon 89. of A.D. 1603, is to the same effect, and provides that all Churchwardens, at the end of their year or within one month after at the most, shall, before the minister and the parishioners, give up a just account of such money as they have received, and also what they have particularly bestowed in reparations and otherwise for the use of the church; and, last of all, they shall duly deliver up to the parishioners whatever money or other things of right belong to the church or parish, which remaineth in their hands, that it may be delivered over by them to the next Churchwardens by "*bill indented*!"

The "*bill indented*," referred to in the Canon, would seem to be an inventory of the goods of the parish!

PRAYER.

One of our contemporaries says, one of the mistakes made by some Christians with regard to prayer is that they only bring what they consider important matters to God, and attempt to manage smaller concerns themselves. This is really unbelief and self-confidence; for it is doubting his interest in us, and forgetting that word which says, "Without me ye can do nothing." If we do not bring our little con-

cerns to God, we attempt to bear them ourselves, only to prove our utter helplessness. Many a stumble has come about in this way. Then, too, we too often make the distinction between temporal and spiritual affairs, thinking the latter are proper subjects for prayer, not the former. If we do not bring our temporal affairs into God's presence, we fail to get his mind on them, and too often in this way let self-will have its way.—*Southern Churchman*.

CONGREGATIONAL WORSHIP.

The use of Forms of Prayer in the services of our Church is a very favorite objection of many who do not belong to it. We do not doubt that they are sincere in their objections, and sometimes perhaps their arguments perplex those whom they yet fail to convince. The reasons which a faithful Anglican may give for the custom of his Church are familiar to us, but the testimony of those who belong to other communions, to their felt need for Forms of Prayer, should be of great weight to those who often very dogmatically assert the superiority of extempore prayer.

It is for this reason that we offer in these columns a few remarks upon a very able and temperate statement of the objections to a service of extempore prayer alone, and a strong plea for some kind of book of common prayer, which was delivered last April by Dr. Sandford Fleming, C.M.G., to the Theological Alumni of Queen's University, Toronto, of which he is the distinguished Chancellor.

Dr. Fleming reminds his hearers that the founders of modern Presbyterianism, Calvin, Knox and others, held the opinion that there should be pre-arranged forms of prayer, not exclusive of extempore prayer on special occasions. "The Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland" was prepared by Knox, and used for several generations. During the 16th and 17th centuries twenty editions of this work were published.

Affairs of religion were in the 17th century much complicated by affairs of State. The violent hostility of the Scotch Kirk to the efforts of Archbishop Laud and Charles I to enforce the use of the English Prayer Book, gave birth to and fostered a strong prejudice against all forms, and a non-liturgical form of worship became the rule which is to day of universal observance; but the Church has no laws on the subject, and it is open to loyal Presbyterians "to consider the merits of each system and ascertain on which side the weight of advantage preponderates."

Dr. Fleming states the objections to extempore prayer as follows: "Extempore prayer, pure and simple, unless by a rarely gifted person, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is apt to abound in crude unpremeditated thoughts and imperfect utterances." If, as is doubtless frequently the case, the prayer is carefully prepared during the week, it then ceases to be extempore, and "from his place in the pulpit the minister recites the thoughts and words already rehearsed in private." They might as well be written "and placed in the hands of every person in the congregation in order that all might join the officiating minister in the common petition addressed to the Great Author of our being."

Very pertinent is the following question: "If we feel called upon to petition Parliament, are we not extremely careful to have our wants expressed in well-chosen words? If a Royal, Prince, a Governor-General, or other high personage comes amongst us whom we wish to address, what course do we follow? Is it not customary, to induce a capable personage, or a committee of persons to draw up with care and deliberation the address in fitting terms? If we are so careful in thus arranging our words so

that they shall not be wanting in order, propriety and respect, how much more needful is it when a body of Christian people approach the infinite Deity that they should present their deepest thoughts in words fitly chosen, and not leave all to the impulse of the moment."

It is again well objected by Dr. Fleming, that in extempore prayer, the officiating minister addresses the Deity in words which up to the moment they are uttered are unknown to any single occupant of the pews. The people are simply listeners, the prayer cannot be called in any correct sense *the prayer of the congregation*. "It would be as correct to call the sermon, the sermon of the congregation as the ordinary extempore prayer, the prayer of the congregation." "Joint prayer, which amongst all denominations of Christians is the declared design of coming together, is prayer in which all join, and not that which one alone in the congregation conceives and delivers, and of which the rest are merely hearers."

When we turn to another part of the service, the Service of Praise, we find a recognition of set forms of words. The earnestness, the feeling, and devotion with which a hymn is sung, is not diminished but increased by familiarity. The pathos and pleading of such hymns as 'Rock of Ages,' and 'Jesus Lover of my Soul,' is not diminished by frequent singing, any more than the joyful exultation of 'All Hail the Power of Jesus's Name.' St. Paul places the two acts of worship—prayer and praise—on the same plane, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also." If we have set forms of sacred verse in psalms, paraphrases and hymns, why should we not have set forms of prayer? "*It would seem to be a calm common sense conclusion that a book of prayers is required for the public worship of God in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.*"

Dr. Fleming concludes with an appeal: "I ask that the men and women who gather together for Divine service in Presbyterian public assemblies be permitted to take part in the public worship of God, to a greater extent than at present."

Such is the plea of one of the leading laymen of his church, and one of the most distinguished of Canadian citizens. We do not doubt that he voices the sentiments of many others. His address is only one of the many signs of the time that the people are beginning to feel that extempore prayer may be more dull and uninspiring than the most lifeless reading of our prayers, for the beauty of the words cannot be altogether destroyed by careless reading, but a listless, stammering, extempore prayer may be united to barren and lifeless words.

We Churchmen may use or abuse Dr. Fleming's plea. We abuse it when we make it a ground of vaunting our superiority. We use it if we are led by its testimony to value more highly our privileges, and are stimulated to turn them to a better account. The more heartily we join in our services, the more thoroughly we enter into their spirit, the more surely shall we be partakers of their benefits and win others to admit their beauty and power.—*Parish Work, Ashburnham, Ont.*

What help we need He gives us as we sail,
To meet Time's tempest and outride its gale:
Until we reach Love's anchorage, safe and sure,
To furl the sail, the storm-tossed vessel moor.

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