

"used it, he begged God's pardon for his former bold presumption
 "and folly, and resolved never more to offend in this kind, but to pen,
 "first of all, the prayers he should use hereafter in public."

We might proceed with quotations of this nature, but, as our object is not to drag to light the defects in the system of our dissenting brethren, (some of whom in England we knew, and highly esteemed both for talents and piety,) but to evince, that we are not, on *their own showing*, without some grounds of preference for a written form of prayer. We forbear. The last quotation, indeed, speaks volumes to a reflecting mind.

In proceeding now to notice some of the *positive* advantages of a Liturgy, we are led to remark, that it supplies a remedy for the unequal abilities of those to whose lot it falls to conduct the public service of the Church. Some men, indeed, there are, who are so highly gifted with the qualifications requisite for this important office—whose judgment is so matured, whose minds are so deeply imbued with the spirit of devotion, whose memories are so well stored with scripture truth and scripture language, and who are so blessed with a ready utterance, that a congregation would seldom, perhaps, fail of being edified under their mode of conducting its devotions, unaided by forms.* The number of these, however, is comparatively small. Such attainments are *usually* the attendants of age and experience. Our Church, therefore, in the adoption of a Liturgy, acts upon a correct and philosophical view of human nature. The principle which leads her to this choice is, that ordinary men, such as in the nature of things the greater number of every body of clergy must be, are not to be intrusted with the uncontrolled conduct of the highest part of the services of a Christian Church, because it cannot be supposed that they possess the qualifications necessary for that purpose. To the young and inexperienced minister this is especially applicable. Let experience testify whether this be not a sound principle. In the present state of human nature, that Church, as well as that individual, acts wisely who puts little confidence in man.—Again, a Liturgy presents a remedy also for the fluctuating and uncertain frames of mind to which every individual minister is subject, and according to which, rather than to the diversified state of the people, his prayers will gener-

* Even in this case there is a strong objection (an objection, indeed, mentioned in the latter part of this Essay) to *social* worship and *public* prayer, unaided by precomposed forms—we mean that "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."

We have occasionally attended places of public worship in which extempore prayers are used, and we invariably remarked that our attention was sadly distracted from the divine object of prayer, being almost entirely occupied in endeavouring to catch what the officiating minister uttered, of which we must be altogether ignorant until he have completed the sentence; and whilst we were repeating that sentence, the Minister had been uttering another, which of course was lost to us—thus we could only join with any effect in the *alternate* sentences, every alternate link of the golden chain of Prayer was broken, and the unity of the whole destroyed.—*Edit*