

Now, whatever one may think of the correctness of their *opinion* on this subject, there can be no doubt what would have been the action of the early Church in regard to any persons, who on any ground and for any reason, should have undertaken to leave the Church of the country in which they were born and baptized, and set up in the same country, or community, or elsewhere, a new organization, with the claim that it should be recognised as a branch of the Church of Christ.

Hence, whether we can defend Episcopacy, or whatever is essential to it on Scripture grounds alone, and by citing Scripture texts concerning it or not, it is certain that *the Church itself* and for itself has decided this question. It is the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ; to it was committed the Gospel and the sacraments. It has the power to bind and loose. It has the right to decide who are its members and who, as branches, are cut off from the Vine, and who, as rival bodies, are only forms of the anti-Christ which, as St. John says, had begun to appear even in his days (1 John ii. 18).

It must be borne in mind that I am not discussing this question with reference to the Reformers and Protestants on the Continent of Europe—their case was in every respect peculiar. But the ancestors of most of the denominations around us seceded from the Church of England after it had affected its own reformation and had returned professedly—and we may add in fact and really—to the doctrines and form of the Primitive Church, so far as the circumstances of the times and their age in the world's history would allow. If then, we concede that they had a right to remain in the Church and do what they could to make it to suit their views, to abolish Episcopacy, and substitute in its stead some form of Lutheranism or Calvinism, Presbyterianism or Congregationalism, or to adopt Calvinism in the place of the Primitive Faith, it is manifest that they had no right, nor power to leave the Church and establish one of their own outside of it. On the most common, and the best established principles of Church law, they had no more power or right to abolish Episcopacy than they had to reject the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds, which declare the Divinity of Christ and the Personality of the Holy Ghost, and yet claim to be received as Christians and a part of the Body of Christ's Church.

It is the very common and prevailing impression among these dissenting denominations that their ancestors did, and that they are still doing only what the members of the English Church did at the Reformation. But nothing can be further from the truth. The members of the English Church did not separate from the Romish Church and form a new one of their own and according to their own notions of what a Church ought to be.

### THE LITURGY.

(By the Right Rev. Hugh Miller Thompson, S.T.D., LL.D., Bishop of Mississippi.)

A liturgy is a growth. It is the accumulation of centuries. It is the prayers of the holiest in the past. It is the praises of the saintliest of all ages. It comes down, burdened with the most sacred memories, sanctified with holiest and loftiest associations. These prayers have been the utterances of the greatest brains and the holiest hearts for centuries. These praises have been hallowed by the purest lips that ever spake. These petitions have gone up from dungeon cells, where Christian heroes prepared to give life for faith. These hymns have rung in triumph round blazing pile and bloody block. Divinest sorrow has breathed these *misereres*. Divinest joy has winged these *inbيلات* up to God. They are, at last, the concentrated worship of the Christian ages. Every

pain and every gladness, every mournful defeat, every glorious triumph in all the cycles of the Church's story, are living yet in these words of power. They have been whispered when an infant died; they have been wailed by a smitten nation asking mercy of a chastening God. They have echoed in the laborer's cottage his thanksgiving for humble mercies to the lowly; they have rung through the vaulted roofs of grand cathedrals a people's shout of glory for deliverance to the God of battles. They are not one man's words—one heart's utterances. They are the world's words. They are humanity's cries to heaven for ages.

Thus has our liturgy grown. Thus does it come to us. Such a liturgy can never be made. Such a liturgy only grows. The oak of centuries stands by the hand of God. It has grown to what it is by His will. Men do not make either oaks or liturgies.

The liturgy expresses, possibly, for no two who will use it in any Church next Sunday exactly the same. Each prays his personal prayer and offers his personal thanks under the general form. And any devout soul, looking back to his spiritual experience, will find, besides, that the general formulas mean more to him to-day than they did last year; that they meant more last year than they did the year before; that, as he has passed through the changes and chances of this earthly life, they have, for him, acquired special significance under this judgment or that mercy.

It is the most beautiful thing about the liturgy, this gradual unfolding of its profound and personal senses in the phases of religious life; this process by which, in a certain sense, I appropriate and make the general liturgy my own.

The prayers are used day by day. They seem to have all the meaning they can have. I use them devoutly. One day a dear friend sails away to a distant land. The words, familiar so long, fall from the pastor's lips, "That it may please Thee to preserve all that travel by land or by water," and I am startled by the new power of these words to me.

Again and again I hear the familiar liturgy. I seem thoroughly to possess its meaning. One day I learn that God has written down a dear sister, a widow, in His book; that she and her babes are desolate. The old, familiar petition, "That it may please Thee to defend and provide for the fatherless children and widows," falls on my ear in the familiar tones. Henceforth it is *my own* with a profounder meaning. From a heart touched by the finger of God, the response, "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord," comes with a depth of feeling, with a sense unknown before.

The priest stands at the altar. The sublime "Prayer for the Church Militant" falls from his lips in the people's name. I have heard it a thousand times, and I have entered into its power and spirit. I have been carried upward on its strong wings of supplication often. An honored father dies, I have stood by his open grave, and have heard the solemn words that committed that sacred dust to the earth till the morning of the Resurrection. Again I hear the grand supplication at the altar-side. So solemnly the well known words fall on the ear, "And we also bless Thy Holy Name for all Thy servants who have departed this life in Thy faith and fear." The old words are new. I feel their meaning now. The prayer, at last, under God's chastening hand is mine. The pulses of another heart shall beat time till death to the solemn cadences of that majestic petition which joins earth and Paradise, the crowned dead and the struggling living, both in one.

So grows a liturgy into the soul. There is the secret of its power among us. That is why, to Churchmen, extempore forms seem so dead and barren. The spiritual life of every devout Churchman has crystalized around those solemn sentences. They are not words only. To him they are things.—*The Church Chronicle*.

### CLERICAL HONOR.

The *Church Press* of New York, under the above title has the following article, which, we fear is not without force and application on this side of the line. It says:—

This is an element of character which appears to be diminishing amongst us. There are some men in the ministry of the Church who are utterly destitute of honor. How they ever came to get there, is a mystery; and why they are now continued in the ministry is one of the incongruities of our Church discipline which brings a serious reflection upon us.

Such men are not wholly destitute of ability. They have a certain amount of popular talent and plausible address which enables them to produce a favorable impression upon the undiscerning and unwary. But they are wanting in the moral requisite without which intellectual gifts become positively injurious. The prime object of such men is to promote their own personal ends, regardless of the laws of the Church and the rights and interests of others. It is convenient for them to ignore episcopal authority and to trample down the wishes and rights of rectors and parishes when their selfish ends cannot be otherwise attained. And in furtherance of their schemes to supplant others and put themselves in their places, they intrigue and plot, lie and slander, disturb the peace of families and interrupt the harmony of parishes.

Such men are a reproach to the Church and a curse to society. There is nothing manly, and open and straightforward about them. They get along only by trickery, and misrepresentation and fraud. We have had such men in the ministry; there are some of them among us now; and the injury one such unprincipled dishonorable priest does more than counterbalances the hard, honest work of a dozen reputable ministers of Jesus Christ.

It is time some greater precaution was taken against these wolves in sheep clothing. Our Bishops should be more careful in ordaining men to the sacred ministry of the Church; our Rectors and vestries should be more discriminating in recommending men for ordination. We want moral character as well as intellectual gifts. The Church requires gentlemen to serve at her altars—men who will walk uprightly, and speak the truth in their hearts, and backbite not with their tongues, and do no evil to their neighbors. There are some men of an opposite character in the ministry to-day, as there have been in all days. They are a blight upon their profession. The Church can never prosper under their influence. It is the duty of the Church to cast them out and to proclaim more forcibly than ever, "Be ye clean that bear the vessel of the Lord."

### ST. BARNABAS.

"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost."

What words are these! We have often heard them, and so our ears become dull to them. Yet so does Scripture entitle only one human being besides, and him that one who was chosen to the high dignity of being first in the noble army of martyrs. Nor is it "filled" only, but "full:" not filled for a time, but lastingly, abidingly, and full of the Holy Ghost, of God. God is a consuming fire, and where He dwelleth, He must consume all that is alien or offensive to Him. And He dwelleth in us in proportion as we shrink not from that burning touch, which often with pain, that reaches to the very inmost soul, cleanses and makes us meet for His indwelling by consuming what is unfit.—*Dr. Pusey*.