

## THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

(The substance of an address delivered to the students of Knox College.)

COMPLAINT has been made, not without reason, that the devotional services in some Presbyterian churches are conducted in a slovenly and unedifying style. The explanation of this state of things commonly given, is, that undue stress has been laid on the sermon, as though almost the sole purpose for which Christians meet in the Sanctuary were to receive instruction and exhortation, prayer and praise being regarded as mere "preliminaries." Let me say at once that the remedy does not lie in the direction of belittling the sermon. It has been a source of strength not of weakness, to Presbyterians that it has magnified the preaching of the Word. It is surely profitable however, while not allowing the sermon to fall into a lower place to bring the devotional services to a higher level.

It was with this object that "The Church Service Society" was formed in 1865 by a number of ministers of the Church of Scotland. This society, (of which a branch existed in Canada up to the time of the Union of the Churches), has done good service both in Scotland and in Canada, and its influence has been widely felt. Its aim was not to introduce a liturgy, but to fill up the chasm between "The bondage of a positive liturgy and the poverty of an absolutely extemporaneous service" by preparing or collecting forms of prayer and as full as suggestive of solemn, earnest, fervent devotion as words can be, and binding these into the simple order of our existing worship." The forms of prayer for public worship, and services for the administration of the sacraments, the celebration of marriage, the burial of the dead, etc., issued under the title "Euchologion," have been and still are, very helpful to many of us, and may be heartily commended to every young minister and theological student.

The first and great commandment regarding public worship is contained in the words of the Lord Jesus. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." If we