

and Rev. Dr. Boardman of Philadelphia. As a specimen of the views held by ministers, allow me to read a sentence or two from what the last named Divine has to say on the subject.

"How then shall we as a congregation of worshippers express our worship? Unitedly, as one congregation; or isolatedly, as a congregation of one? Permit me to say that I have the painful conviction that the worshippers in our non liturgical churches are allowed too small a part in the public worship of Almighty God. Everything is done by a vicarious worshipper. No voice but the preacher's is heard in adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, aspiration, communion. So far as the vocal act of homage goes, the preacher alone worships. Enter any Roman Catholic sanctuary while the service is going on. The priest is everything; the laity is nothing. From beginning to ending, excepting the organist and choir, it is the priest who carries on the entire worship; the congregation remaining as voiceless as an asylum of mutes or a graveyard of the dead. Enter one of our churches, and the same scene in its essential features is re-enacted. From beginning to ending, with the exception of the singing, it is the minister who is everything; the congregation is nothing. It is the minister who does the preaching; and this of course is right. But preaching is not strictly speaking a part of worship. Preaching means exposition, instruction, warning, entreaty, comfort, building up of the body of Christ. As such, and in its own place, preaching is of supreme importance, and indeed indispensable. But preaching in itself is not a part of worship. The addressing men on the subject of their duties and privileges is not worship. But prayer, not less than praise, is a part of worship. And our question is—How shall we as a congregation express our prayers, our service of confessions, supplications, intercessions, aspirations? Shall the minister and the congregation pray together, joining their voices in familiar and appropriate formulas? In brief, shall the congregation pray directly; or shall it pray by proxy?"

These are the opinions of leading ministers. There are laymen, too, who like myself have something to say. His Honor Wm. McTear Clark, the present Lieut. Governor of Ontario, thus expressed himself in a paper submitted to the Toronto Presbyterian Council.

"One of the greatest defects in our form of worship lies in the excessive length of the prayers generally offered. The express command of our Saviour, regarding the length of prayer seems to be wholly disregarded, and the words, not being few, are too frequently not well chosen. Instead of consisting of ascriptions of praise to God, confession of sin, and the offering of petitions, they become diffuse, discursive, and often times sermonizing. The attention of the worshipper is sometimes called to watch, with something of apprehension, whether the leader of his devotions will be able successfully to escape from the entanglements of some long and involved sentence, or will fail in the attempt. Ordinary worshippers complain greatly of the undue length of our public prayer, and confess to inability to maintain due attention; while strangers to our forms are, to say the least, not attracted by this feature in our service. The question is sometimes asked whether it might not be expedient to have some liturgical form of prayer. This is a wide subject and gives rise to diversity of opinion. Any suggestion even of such a thing is usually met with the

cry that it is not Presbyterian. Those who raise this objection forget, what is often overlooked, that Presbyterianism is neither an order of service nor a system of doctrine, but a form of government. That several churches holding the Presbyterian system use liturgies to this day, seems to be unknown to many Presbyterians, and while they allege that the use of any set form of prayer is unspiritual, they condemn such churches as the Waldenian, the Moravian and the Dutch Reformed. One thing is certain, that the want of liturgy has lost thousands of members to the Presbyterian Church. Our service is too much dependent on the gifts of one man, and our people confessedly have too little part in public worship." It is submitted that the use of a carefully prepared manuscript prayer would be greatly for the benefit of the congregation. An avoidance of repetition, of an irreverent use of God's name, and of insertion of dogmatic statement, sometimes of a questionable accuracy, would be secured."

The movement to give the people a more direct share in public worship is making decided progress in the United States. At the general meeting of the association a week ago, I made mention of the action taken at the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The movement is led by so able a man as the Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke, of Princeton, who is chairman of the special committee on 'Forms and Services'. I placed in your hands a copy of the long and carefully prepared report presented to and adopted by the Assembly, and I shall merely state that there is every prospect of our brethren in the Republic inaugurating at an early day an improvement in worship, by which Presbyterians all over the world will eventually be gainers.

Meanwhile cannot we do something for ourselves? In asking the question I wish to remark, that of all the Presbyterian congregations in the Dominion, there are few, perhaps there is not one which has less need of improvement in its worship than St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa. For this reason we need have no delicacy in discussing a matter of such wide importance. For this reason, if for no other, we may very fittingly consider the subject I bring before you. Possibly we may see our way as a congregation to set an example to other congregations less favored. There are occasions when our minister is absent and we hear an unfamiliar voice from the pulpit. On such occasions words here and there in the prayer are not seldom indistinctly uttered and it is impossible to follow the minister in his devotional utterances. As a consequence, many of the congregation are in danger of being thrown into an attitude of criticism or at least an undesirable state of mind. If this be our own experience in our own church, we can sympathize with a large number of our fellow Presbyterians in the 1000 congregations scattered throughout the Dominion.

In looking for a remedy—what is to prevent this Association requesting the minister, on behalf of the congregation to introduce a simple change in our ordinary church service? No one would think of asking him to use a liturgy or borrow the liturgical forms of any other church, but it seems to me that he might with perfect propriety be requested to prepare a general prayer for the use of the congregation in each service, a prayer to be printed and placed in the hands of every worshipper. By such means joint prayer of the people would be possible. The whole congregation led by the minister's

voice would be in a position to offer up unitedly and intelligently the same devotional words.

I would venture to submit for your consideration another suggestion. It seems to me that it would be a fitting time, immediately before the congregational prayer is offered up, for the minister on some occasions to address the people, chiefly with the view of awakening a devotional frame of mind. There are occasionally special circumstances to which he could with propriety allude in such an address, instead of introducing a reference to them in his prayers. In such an address he could always remind the worshippers that they are about to come into the Holy Presence, and speak as a congregation to Almighty God, that they are about to present their common petitions and submit their confessions, their thanksgivings and supplications to the Heavenly Father.

Having made these brief explanations bearing on this extremely important subject, I have the satisfaction to leave the matter in your hands. I do not urge a speedy determination, for to my mind unanimity is far more to be desired. To simplify the discussion, I have formulated four questions which I respectfully submit for your consideration.

#### QUESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION.

1. Should the people publicly assembled for worship be allowed a larger participation in Divine Service than they enjoy under present usages?
2. If it be desirable for the people to participate more fully in public should an adequate opportunity be given to every worshipper to join in the service of prayer?
3. Is there any reason why a departure from present usages should not be made in order to admit of offering up in each public service a single general or people's prayer, and that such prayer be printed and used in common by the whole congregation—led by the minister?
4. Would it be desirable to have the people's prayer preceded sometimes by such an address from the minister to the congregation as may seem to him fitting for the occasion?—SANDFORD FLEMING.

#### Literary Notes.

A SONG OF DECEMBER AND OTHER POEMS, by H. Isabel Graham, is an attractive booklet from the press of William Briggs, Toronto. Readers of the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN are familiar with Miss Graham's excellent contributions in prose as well as poetry. She always writes with tenderness and power, and these specimens of her work will be welcomed by many of her friends throughout the Dominion. The booklet will make a dainty Christmas gift.

FRENCH: The Story of a Gentleman, by William Sage, Mission Book Company, Toronto. This is the pretty little story of a French gentleman of noble birth who in order to save the good name of his dead friend who has embezzled his sister's fortune gives up all his own patrimony and leaves France for the New World where he has many improbable but picturesque adventures, and in the end wins the hand of a very charming American girl. The story is well told and the book is well printed and tastefully bound.