

you," to which the answer is given, "And with thy spirit." After the recital of the familiar words of the Lord's Prayer, there follows an invocation for their Majesties King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra, the Prince of Wales, the Princess of Wales, and the other members of the Royal Family.

The devotional proceedings are concluded with the Apostolic benediction: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore." Scarcely has the "Amen!" been spoken than the chief doorkeeper's call is heard, "Speaker in the chair!" and the doors are opened and the day's public business is started.

At the present time Members of Parliament stand during prayers, but at one period in history both the Clerk and the House went through their devotions kneeling. There is at least one case recorded in support of this, though the method of conducting the service and its order were occasionally varied. Mr. Speaker once found it incumbent upon himself to deliver a short oration. A few days later we learn that "Mr. Speaker, coming to the House after eleven of the clock, read the usual prayer, omitting the Litany for the shortness of time."

The Puritans are said to have been responsible for some of the changes in religious procedure at St. Stephen's. They were not too partial to the Book of Common Prayer, and disliked the Litany, which, until 1580, was read within the walls at Westminster. At this sitting of Parliament, however, a zealous member, Paul Wentworth by name, moved that there might be a sermon delivered every morning before they sat.

We are not aware that this sugges-

tion was ever carried into effect. Those were the days when a sermon was a very formidable thing, in point of duration, at any rate; besides, many of the preachers had a way of saying what they meant in the most unequivocal language. The tabloid sermonette of to-day is a very different thing to its ancestors of the Cromwellian period. The day may come when the worthy Paul Wentworth's suggestion will be adopted.

In addition to the whole reign of Queen Elizabeth, and most probably when James I. was king, also during the beginning of the reign of Charles I., prayers were used. Formal prayers gave place to extempore petitions in 1644, when the Book of Common Prayer was "disused and prohibited." During the whole of the time of the Commonwealth, printed or written prayers were superseded by extemporaneous utterances. During the last year of Cromwell's time an effort was made to renew the practice of reading prayers.

In 1659 one Gauden delivered a sermon pleading for the old order of things, on the ground that the printed or written Word reminded members of their duty in the House. He said that it was "much more significant, grave and pertinent, than such seraphick, or rambling and loose, or odd expressions as some men are prone to use, either in affected varieties, or in their tedious tautologies." Extemporaneous prayers were discontinued after 1660, and the printed Word was thereafter used. At one period it was the duty of the Clerk to read the petition, and at another the Speaker either prayed extempore or read the devotional exercise.

Far be it from us to join with those who say that the House of Commons is past praying for. For every