

The suffrage of remote antiquity, and the sanction of Jesus Christ himself as well of the Christian Church in its earliest and purest ages, being thus ascertained in favour of precomposed forms of prayers; it may not now be irrelevant to point out some of the advantages of such forms for the purposes of public worship. These may be seen first, in a *negative* point of view, by noticing some of the *disadvantages* connected with *extempore* prayer, as used by those who dissent from the Church of England. And here, without entering at large into numerous objections which might present themselves to persons of our own communion who have had an opportunity of judging for themselves, and have thought seriously on the subject; we shall content ourselves with the admissions of the dissenters themselves. For this purpose we avail ourselves of the following quotations from "A new Directory for Nonconformist Churches:"—"It is a matter of notoriety, that some
 "worthy ministers amongst us sometimes appear, at least, to be so
 "much embarrassed, as to occasion their hearers to be in pain for
 "them, lest they should be obliged to stop. In this case, the devo-
 "tion of the people will be interrupted, as that of the minister must
 "necessarily be, who cannot be considered as *praying*, so properly as
 "making a prayer. And the same, indeed, may be remarked of
 "others, who, though they do not commit any gross blunders in
 "speech, nor often recal their words, yet speak so slow, and with such
 "a degree of stiffness and formality, as to indicate that their minds
 "are more occupied in studying their language, than in exercising the
 "devout feelings of the heart.—It is also observable that the prayers of
 "many different ministers are so much alike, that they seem as if they
 "had been borrowed from some common form. The same common-
 "place phrases (and some of them very quaint ones,) perpetually oc-
 "cur; as likewise certain peculiar scripture allusions, not of the most
 "proper or intelligible kind."

"A certain popular preacher from the country, now deceased, in
 "praying before the sermon of one of his brethren, (in London,) gave
 "a long dissertation on the *evil of sin*; which he illustrated by enu-
 "merating the mischiefs it has done in the creation—expelling the
 "Angels from Heaven, turning our first parents out of paradise,
 "bringing a universal deluge on the earth, overturning cities and king-
 "doms, &c. &c. It was all ingenious and striking, but it was not *prayer*.
 "It may serve to set some people right in this matter," (i. e. the dis-
 "senting mode of prayer,) "to reflect upon the ingenuous confession,
 "made by one who had been much admired and followed for his ta-
 "lent in praying extempore. Having a prayer read to him, which had
 "been a good time before taken from his mouth in short-hand, and
 "being asked his judgment of it, he found so many absurd and inde-
 "cent expressions, that when he was told *he was the man who had*

prayers of our Church we offer up those expressions of devotion which, from the hearts and lips of holy men, have from age to age ascended like incense to the Throne of God.—*Edit.*