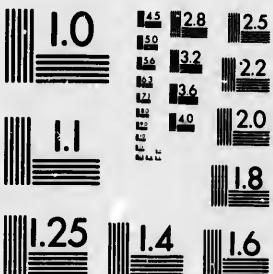


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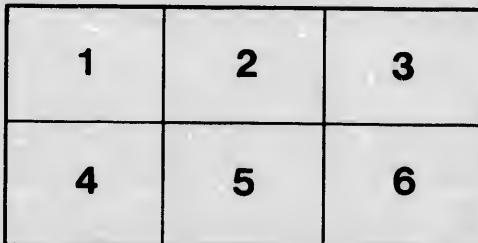
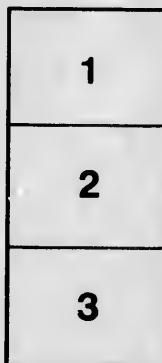
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ADVANTAGES

OF

A LITURGY

IN COMPARISON WITH

EXTEMPORE PRAYERS

IN THE

PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE CHURCH.

BY REV. T. L. HANSON, B.A.,

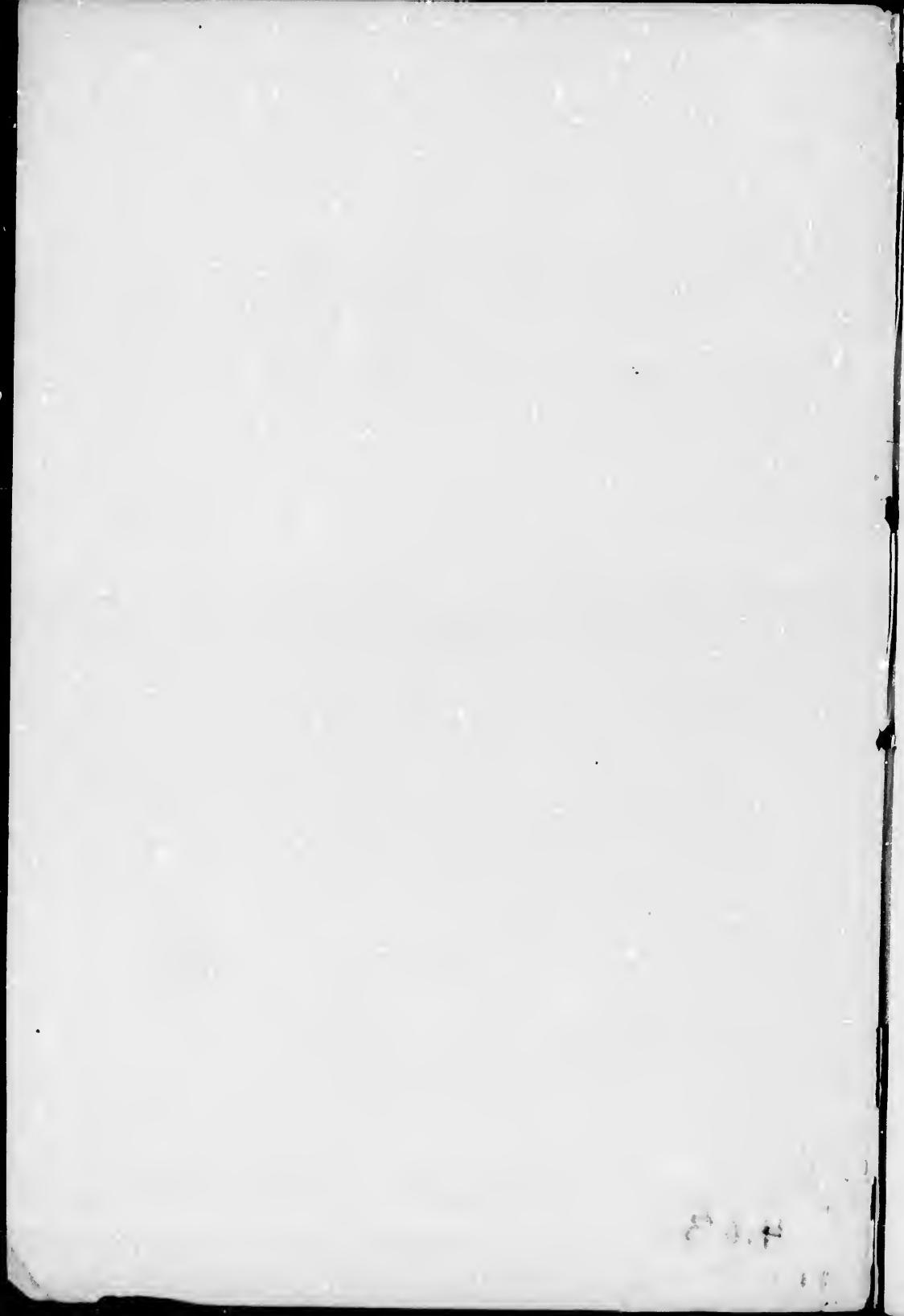
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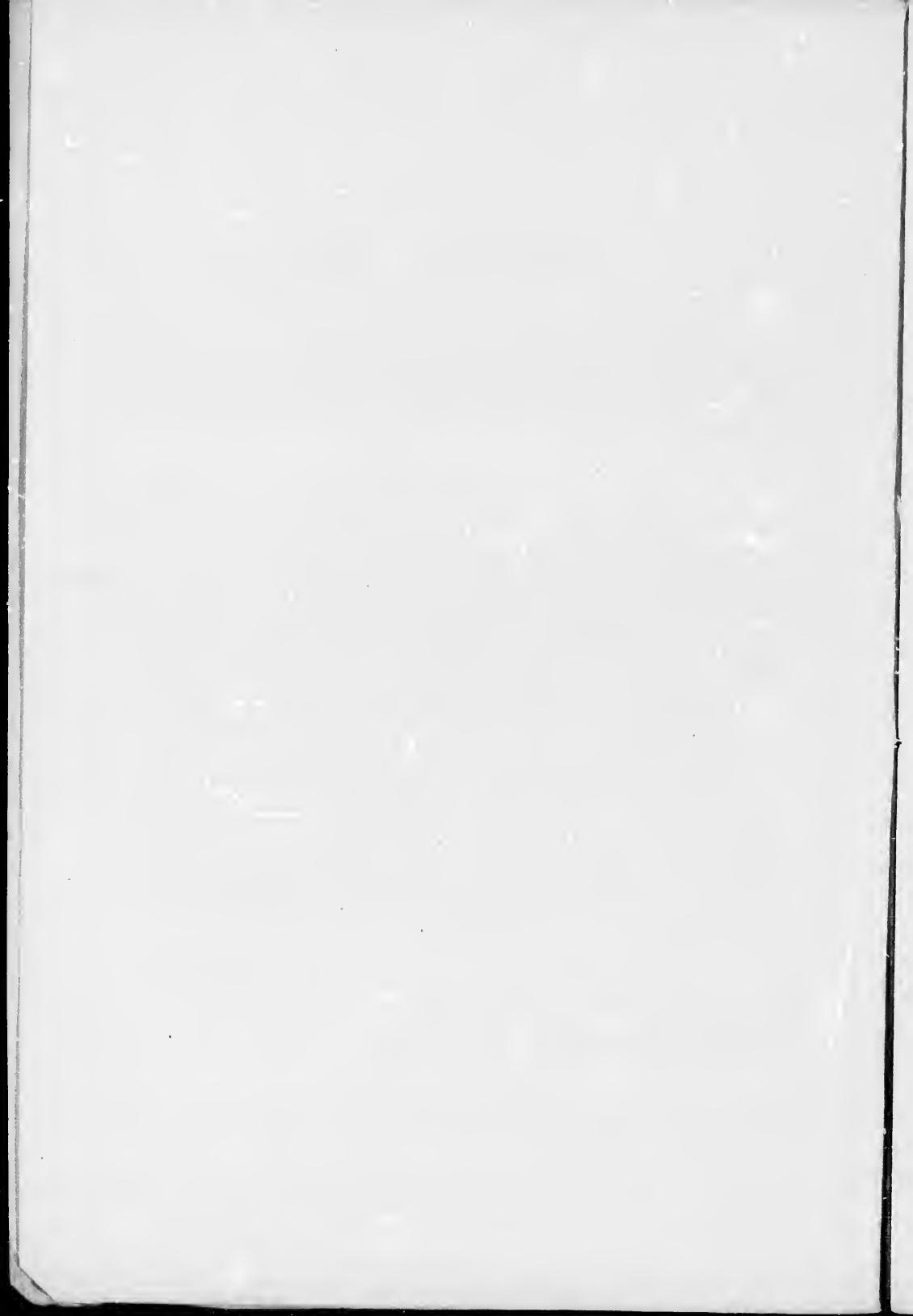
A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

I beg most respectfully to dedicate these pages to our beloved Lord Bishop of Toronto, to my Brethren of the Clergy in this Diocese, and, in fine, to all who "love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

I have endeavoured to "speak the truth in love," and nothing but my most solemn conviction of the truth of what I have written could induce me to *seem* to run counter to the feelings and prejudices of those whom I so highly esteem—I mean my Brethren of the various religious denominations. But, our blessed Saviour prayed for the UNITY of His Church, "*that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me.*"—(St. John, xvii., 21). And feeling, as I do, that the Episcopal is the form most Scriptural and Apostolic, and the best fitted for propagating the religion of Christ in this world, no one can blame me for expressing my convictions, and shewing the many advantages of our truly Evangelical Communion—even that Church which is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone."

T. L. HANSON.

THE PARSONAGE,
Pine Grove, June, 1870.



ADVANTAGES

OF A

LITURGY, &c.,

"Let all things be done decently and in order."—1 Cor. xiv. 40.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—1 Thess. v. 21.

God has made man with a body as well as a soul. His body, therefore, which is God's, he is bound to exercise in the service and worship of God, as well as the spiritual part of his being.

But this can only be done by *external forms*.

Religion must express itself in *acts*. The life of the soul—its feelings—its passions—must be manifested by certain acts and deeds, as the life of the *body* is manifested in a similar manner.

Religion consists in certain acts which express ideas.

The soul speaks through the senses.

Man has three faculties—1. Understanding. 2. Imagination. 3. Sentiment.

Corresponding to these are—1. Words. 2. Images. 3. Acts.

Now to forbid these—to forbid the soul the language of *signs and symbols*, is to do violence to nature; and, in fact, to destroy *thought* and *feeling*. To destroy *thought* inasmuch as it is conceived, developed, and preserved by *signs*. To destroy *feeling*, because it cannot live, nor perpetuate, nor even communicate itself, without its offspring, *gesture*.

Religion being the link between God and man, demands expression. We have thoughts, hopes, fears, desires, which must, somehow, have a mode of utterance. In what manner? In the right mode of using observances or ceremonies, *i. e.*, in a *Form* or *Ritual*. And do we not find this in ordinary life? Has it not its Ritual too? Are there not certain laws and rules in society which every man must observe, if he would be a member of that society? And are there not certain rites and ceremonies of Religion, to which all must conform, if they would have the true expression of the worship of the soul, and unite with one heart and voice to serve their Maker?

It is plain, then, there *must be Ritual*. God Himself commanded it most minutely and particularly in the Old Testament; but, even if this were not so, *Nature* herself would teach us that it is necessary—a certain form or

mode of religious worship being found among all nations, even the most uncivilized.

But, more than this : Reason, the "lamp of God" within us, teaches that this body of ours, which belongs to God, should bow before Him in acts of prayer and religion.

Calvin, with reference to this, says, "In that decorum here prescribed, there is bending of the knee in worship of Almighty God."

A greater than Calvin, even St. Paul, says, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Now, as a proof that outward signs and acts in ordinary life are expressions of inward feeling—if the outward be absent, or withheld from us, do we not question the existence or truth of the inward feeling (*i.e.*, supposing there is no insuperable barrier to their manifestation ?)

For example, if a person professed great friendship for us, and yet treated us with marked neglect, I ask would we believe in his sincerity ? And so, if any one either withholds from God altogether, or lightly esteems the devotion of the outward man, do we not regard him as deceived, and as a self-deceiver and a hypocrite ?

So much is this law, of having a certain outward form in our daily actions in life, the law of our very existence, that the most ultra body of religionists, *i.e.*, the Society

of Friends, or Quakers, unconsciously testify to its necessity and force by their conventional dress, by their distinctive mode of speech, and by their manner of reckoning the days of the week and the months of the year. In all these ways, and others, too, they plainly prove that they *really have a form of their own, and that they adopt a certain distinctive ritual of type and manner, while rejecting outward forms altogether.*

Now in every other body of Christians the rule of outward form is acknowledged, and the Church of England has so uniformly recognized and acted upon it that the word "Ritual" has come to be used in a narrower and secondary sense as the mode of worship prescribed by the Church—the law of worship fixed by authority, and given to her members in the Book of Common Prayer.

And that there is an absolute necessity for "Ritual" of some sort in worship, is further evidenced by the manifest deficiencies, not to say absurdities, of free or extempore prayer, used by those who will not be guided by the rules of authority, and claim freedom of private judgment in such matters. But, practically, they who abjure forms of prayer, *have a form of their own.* How so? They fall into a *stereotyped* mode of presenting their petitions to the Most High, so that the prayer, though it may not be word for word the same every Sunday, is yet substantially the same—whether the subject of petition be the Congre-

gation, the Sick, the Queen, the Parliament, &c., &c. This cannot fail to have struck every one of thought and observation.

We see, then, that even those bodies of Christians cannot get free from the necessity of a form, who most cry out against it. And here the question narrows itself to a point: ("I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say.") *If there is to be a form*, why not have a good one at once? What is worth doing at all is worth doing well. And since the service of God is the noblest and highest exercise in which man can engage, the Church has provided with especial care for the right and due observance of all acts of worship, that "all things may be done decently and in order," and not only so, but with the most scrupulous attention to dignity and decorum.

Now, I ask, is not this far better than the substitution in fact of *self*, and the rule of a man's *own taste, comfort, and edification*, for the *honour and glory* of God and the *real good and devotion* of the worshippers?

The great and grand idea is this : The Church of God—the Holy Catholic or "Universal" Church—merges the *individual in the office*, so that the Minister or Clergyman is *but part of a vast system*. In public worship, it is not *his act—his prayer—his reading and exposition—no, nor his fancies, his whims and interpretations of Scripture,*

but he must follow and witness to the rules and customs of the Church Catholic—doing as others have done for eighteen hundred years before him.

What a splendid guarantee this is in the Episcopal or English Church for correctness of form and purity of doctrine!

I come now to consider the *uses* of a Liturgy or Form of Prayer, and these may be viewed as three-fold:—

1. *For securing the Suitable Worship of Almighty God.*

So long as we are here on earth we must worship God with respect to our present state, and therefore, of necessity, have some definite and particular time in which to perform that worship.

To His peculiar people, the Jews, God Himself appointed their set times of public devotion, commanding them to offer up two lambs daily, one in the morning, and the other at even: (Exodus xxix. 39). And so our Church takes care, at any rate, to provide in the Prayer Book for morning and evening prayer, every day all the year through, following the copy or pattern given by God to His Church in former ages.

2. But again, another use of a Liturgy, Form of Prayer, or Ritual, is, *for exciting reverence in Man.*

Let us not be afraid to use the last word, as there is a wide difference between "*Ritual*" and "*Ritualism*."

Ritual is the fair and honest exposition and observance of the Rubries of the Prayer Book ; Ritualism is the adding of forms, rites, ceremonies, either not in the Prayer Book, or not contemplated by it.

But we should guard against the mistake of slighting and undervaluing Ritual whilst we exhibit a just opposition to Ritualism. Oh, let none of us swerve in our allegiance to our Scriptural and Apostolic Church, because of some slight blemishes and imperfections.

It is an old and popular saying, "England, with all thy faults, I love thee still!" and so, "My Church, with all *thy* faults, I love thee still."

Rally round and defend the Church so long as she is a witness for God, His truth, His Word, and His Sacraments !

Oh ! grand and glorious institution ! Coming down from the past—hoary with age—ever sublime ! Thy Chants rolling like waves of harmony through the magnificent Cathedrals of my Fatherland ; thy Creeds the bulwark of doctrine ; thy Articles the exponents of eternal truth ; thy Liturgy all comprehensive in its petitions, adapted to every want and woe of man ; thy Collects the most beautiful, concise, and expressive—every line a prayer,

and almost every word a thought;—what, I ask, even from the confession of our opponents themselves, can be more adapted to edification, instruction, and devotion.

Ritual, then, or a Form of Prayer, or a Liturgy, is not only beneficial in that by or through it we give to God the *outward* worship and service of our body, but, moreover, it confers a positive benefit on ourselves, inasmuch as it fosters and increases (which experience plainly shews) *internal* reverence and devotion of the heart and mind.

We are all dependent upon *outward* things for our *inward* impressions; *in fact, man is nearly altogether governed by the external world.*

It is in this way that “Ritual” is so powerful. It witnesses to doctrine—it preaches more effectively than the most eloquent of sermons. Why? Because that by its truths are brought before us in a sensible and obvious shape, and the *character* of the truth is expressed—now joyous, now sad; now encouraging, now terrible—following the nature of the various subjects to be enforced. Thus, ceremonial is to truth what words are to thought—its truest and best expression; thus ceremonial gives form, and body, and shape, to that which might linger for ever in the mind, struggling in vain for utterance.

3. Further, *unity* is promoted amongst Christians by the use of a Liturgy, or “Ritual.”

In Acts iv. 24, we are told "that they all" (*i.e.*, the believers) "lifted up their voice with *one accord*, and said, 'Lord, thou art God,' &c. They could not have thus "all joined with one accord" unless either the *words were familiar to them*, or they were under the influence of *direct inspiration*. If the former supposition be correct, then we have an example of a *form of prayer*.

If the latter be preferred, then we see that when a congregation worshipped under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit, the prayer was one in which they joined *audibly*, and was not entrusted to one single individual to whom the rest were to listen in silence. It is obvious that such united prayer can only be obtained, in these times, by the use of a pre-composed form.

I now pass on briefly to notice the *importance* of a Liturgy, or "Ritual." Most impressively, then, it teaches *the presence of God in His sanctuary*, and assists to *realize* that presence. When the whole congregation makes obeisance at the name of Jesus Christ in the Creed (Ep. Phil. ii. 10), by this act they testify their inward humility, profound reverence, Christian resolution, and due acknowledgment that the Lord Jesus Christ is the true eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of the world.

And does not Scripture tell us that whosoever honours the Son honours likewise the Father who sent Him? and

may we not say the Holy Ghost, too?—thus shewing our belief in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, inasmuch as we honour and worship the Father and the Holy Spirit in the person of the Son?

There cannot be too much stress laid on a correct and solemn Ritual, for the services of the Church, when duly celebrated, win the heart.

Religion must put on an outward form to interest man, and be appreciated by him. Our service in the sanctuary of God should be cheerful and attractive, as well as devout.

Ah! as we wend our way along the streets of a great city on cold, dark evenings, and we see the public-houses and gin-palaces flooded with warm, bright light, and sounds of merry music fall on the ear, and then when we think of the poor man's home, the poverty, the squalor, the hunger and the cold, can we wonder where that poor man is to be found?

But why not make God's House attractive, too? Why should we not make men feel welcome and happy guests in their Father's house—His earthly temple here below? One thing is certain: If in any Church there is a crowded attendance, the throngs which fill the place have been drawn thither either by the beauty of the Church or the eloquence of the preacher. If by the latter, then surely

no one will pretend to say that the elegance of the building is any hindrance, that it will deter any persons from coming, impair the efficiency of the Clergyman's ministry, or interfere with the reception of the truth.

We need, then, not only to have public places of worship, specially set apart for the service of God, but a fit and becoming Ritual likewise. For when *ceremonies* disappear, *religion* disappears.

When men grow careless about the *form*, the great probability is that they will lose the *life and power* of Christianity.

Having gone thus far in our consideration of the benefits of a Liturgy or Ritual, we shall now, we trust, be able to shew you its advantages in a still more striking light, by setting forth by way of contrast the disadvantages and unsuitableness of extempore prayer in the public services of the Church.

1. Extempore prayer has been well called an "oblique sermon," for the Minister shews that the leading idea in his mind is to convey to the people the sentiments, the exhortations, the reproofs which *he* wishes to impress upon them—the very nature of the service excluding the idea of really united prayer.

Accordingly, we find that the members of those congregations in which extempore prayer is used, criticize *the prayer*, either favourably or unfavourably (according to their humour), in much the same style as they do *the sermon*—regarding such prayer merely as the intellectual performance of their Minister, not as a work in which they themselves are to bear a part. Hence we often hear such expressions as these—“Oh, what a beautiful prayer ! Oh, what an eloquent prayer, how well composed !”—words, I contend, utterly unsuited to describe true prayer, and which too plainly prove an awful ignorance of its very nature and design. For what, I ask, is prayer ? It is not mere fluency of speech, for that belongs to the intellect, and may be acquired by study and practice ; it is not the stringing together a number of petitions with a certain degree of volubility, for a man through habit may learn to do this almost unconsciously ; it is not fine speaking—it does not consist in magnificent, grand, and strained expressions, distilled with a kind of laborious and painful chemistry, and presented to the Almighty as the incense of our adoration. No, no ! Prayer is not any, or all, of these. It is the worship of the soul—it is the prostration of the whole being in penitence, sorrow, and tears—it is the humble confession of sin—it is the earnest beseeching for mercy—in fine, it is the “ spirit of grace and supplications ” which God has promised to His people, and to pour out abundantly on them in answer to their fervent longings and desires.

2. Again : Extempore prayer labours under the serious defect of permitting the edification of the congregation to depend on the ability of the minister. Let us just ask the question—Out of the large number of ministers who pray extempore in public every Sunday, what proportion is really fitted to edify the people ? Consider how many are *weak and uncouth* in prayer, incapable of framing any suitable or becoming supplication to the Most High. How many indulge in *odd* or *irreverent* expressions—or else make their prayers a vehicle for denunciation of their enemies, and invocation of God as a patron and abettor of the most contrary and inconsistent schemes and projects. Alas ! such things *have been* and *are*, to the disgrace of the Church and the dishonour of God.

And here I would not be understood as making any exception in favour of the best and most talented ministers of the various denominations, for, when hearing them *preach* and then *pray*, we cannot help feeling what a difference there is between the two performances. After listening to a glowing, eloquent, powerful sermon, instinct with genius, all on fire, sparkling with the scintillations of thought, and radiant with beauty, kindling our souls within us, and bracing to high and holy purposes ;—Oh, how sad to have all these feelings deadened, almost quenched within us, by the succeeding dull, heavy prayer, which, as it were, throws a funeral pall over the scene, and is painfully out of harmony with the preceding, it

may be, brilliant exhibition ! Who is there that has listened to the pictorial and spirit-stirring eloquence of a Chalmers—the burning eloquence of an Edward Irving—or the entrancing, soul-subduing eloquence of a Guthrie—but must have wished that such splendid efforts of oratory might have been prefaced and concluded by one of those beautiful prayers or collects which are the very soul of devotion, the very gems of thought and the very marvels of expression. No congregation whatever should be dependent on the extempore prayers of their minister, which are apt to vary (I might almost say infinitely) with the ever-changing phases of our fickle and inconstant minds.

Besides, there are so many disturbing causes at work—so many hindrances arising from nervousness, low spirits, or ill-health—that no man can promise to himself in what mood he shall come before the Almighty to frame the supplications which may be suited to the wants, sorrows, and desires, perhaps, of a large congregation.

This is truly an awful and responsible position, and which, if duly pondered on, is fitted to appal even the stoutest heart, especially when we reflect what a deeply solemn and weighty matter it is to lay before the Eternal God the cares, necessities, and sins of “the great assembly” of saints and unbelievers.

In corroboration of this, I would quote a passage from the life of that eminent minister, the late Rev. Dr. McAll, of Manchester, England. Describing his method of devotion in the public services of his place of worship, a friend and admirer thus writes :—" At times he was borne away by the fervour of his feelings, and the elevating topics which he introduced ; and there were moments when he almost resembled a seraph bowing in meek but rapturous adoration before the throne." Again, another admirer uses this language :—" His manner, always reverential, was sometimes rapt as if the spirit had found admittance before the throne, and were bending amid the celestial worshippers." " He was not always alike—who is ?—and in a morbidly sensitive temperament such as his, the variations in the frame of his mind, bearing analogy to those in the physical condition of his body, would not fail to be frequent and marked. According to the temporary peculiarities of that frame, the proportions varied in the different departments of his addresses to the Divine Throne, and, throughout the whole, the difference was strikingly perceptible on different occasions, in the surpassing copiousness, ease, and felicity of thought and expression in one compared with another. *His prayers varied according to his state of health ; so that a regular hearer could tell soon after the commencement whether the mind and body were in tune, or deranged, or uncomfortable—a circumstance indicated, too, by the smooth forehead and placid*

look in the one case, and the knitted brow and restless glance in the other."

I have given this passage entire, because it is one of the most striking and forcible that could be selected to illustrate the subject; and I would add, who will not thank God—what member of our Episcopal Church will not be devoutly grateful that “the lines have fallen to him in pleasant places,” and that there is in our communion *a protection to the spiritual liberty of the people*, inasmuch as the minister is not left to *his ever-changing moods*, like the proverbially fickle ocean, but is kept in his proper place, *not as the absolute ruler, but only as the instrumental leader* of the devotions of the congregation.

3. But we must, finally, bring forward another most serious objection to the use of extempore prayer in the public services of the Church, which is this: that a gifted minister—one capable beyond many others of making what is called “an eloquent prayer”—is in great danger of striving to say fine things, to seek for beautiful images, to cull choice expressions—in fine, to strain his utmost efforts after that which is elaborate, strange, and new, in his prayer, in order to gratify the tastes of the hypercritical in his audience, who are drinking in every sentence as it falls from his lips, and giving to each form of thought, each flash of imagination, or each specimen of highly-

coloured fancy, that praise or dispraise which their whim or caprice may dictate at the moment.

It is bad enough if in a *sermon*, a preacher, instead of thinking how he may benefit his hearers, thinks how he may attract their admiration; but surely it is worse if he, in offering prayer, be led away from thinking of God to thinking of his hearers; if he be tempted, instead of praying, to exhibit a *gift of prayer*; and if, while professing to humble himself before God, his mind be occupied in seeking for eloquent terms in which to make profession of his humility.

Such an evil is almost inevitable when extempore prayer is used in the public services of the Church, and I have no doubt that many of our brethren of other denominations, keenly, at times, feel the evil, aye, and would acknowledge it, too, if they were not under the trammels of a system.

It is not long since the Edinburgh correspondent of the "*Watchman and Reflector*," in a letter describing some of the celebrities of the Scottish metropolis, says of one of them:—"His (the preacher's) exceeding volubility and command of language give him a great advantage in prayer; and he pours out his petitions so smoothly and with such happy diction, that one with his eyes closed would suppose him to be reading. *Of course he is not an urgent pleader at the throne of grace; he is rather vague*

and general, and no one would accuse him of offering the most eloquent prayer ever addressed to an Edinburgh audience !!!”

Alas ! what a pity that *occasion* should have been given for such a criticism as this ! What a pity that after such manifest abuses as these, men will not open their eyes to the *unspeakable* advantages of a Liturgy !

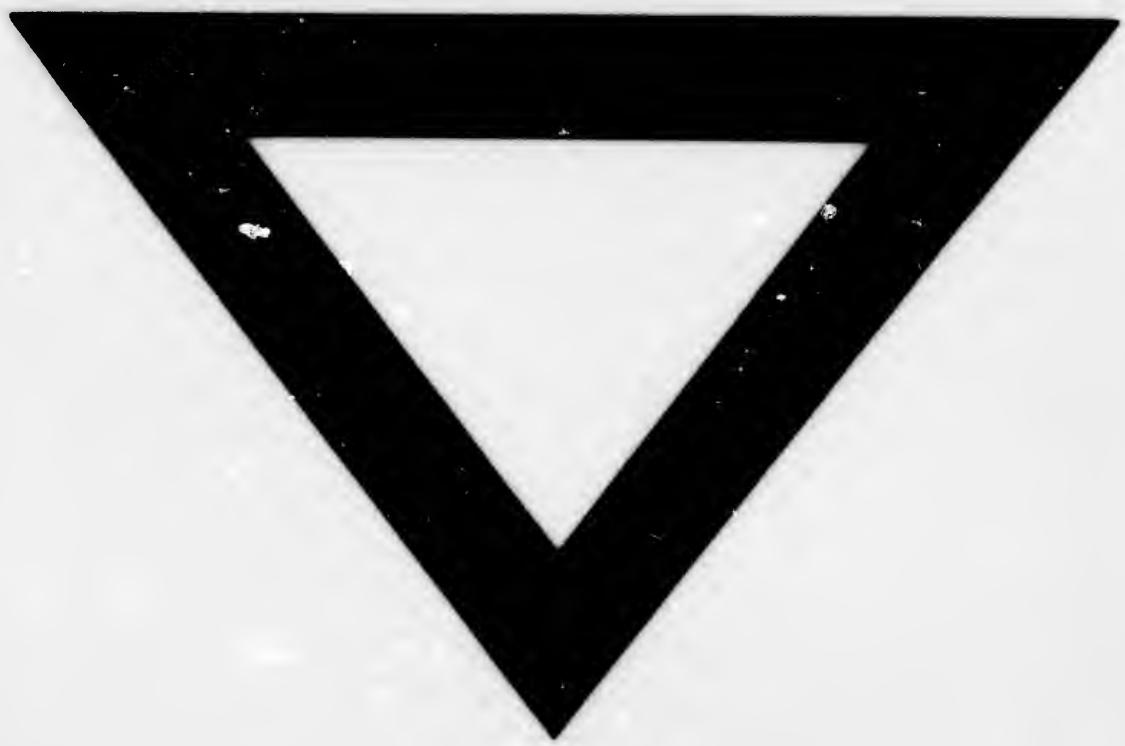
Such dangers to true devotion—such extravagances—cannot arise when a *form of prayer* is used.

Nowhere in Scripture, nowhere in Ecclesiastical history, do we find that in the public services of the Church the minister is to be everything and the people nothing : that he is to pray, to read, to exhort, to preach, and they to sit still and listen, and take no part whatever in the service (except, perhaps, the singing), and thus, by degrees, fall into the habit of supposing that in the solemn and heart-stirring devotions of the sanctuary they are to be merely passive recipients—well pleased enough if the doctrine which their minister sets forth passes muster for that Sunday, and excites no unpleasant feelings or misgivings with regard to its orthodoxy.

In conclusion, we say that Calvin left his disciples a Liturgy ; Luther composed for his followers a Liturgy ; Knox prepared a Liturgy for the Scottish Presbyterians ;

Baxter compiled a Liturgy for the Nonconformists. Twice in the Scottish Kirk did the Presbyterians adopt a Liturgy. At this moment *all* the German Protestant Reformed Christians alike use a Liturgy ; and to the *disuse of a Liturgy* may be attributed in great measure *the Socinianism which has infected the Genevan Church for the last two hundred years, and which has sprung up in every Presbyterian unliturgical Church in the world.*





March 1st, by Rev. William McCann, on "The Bible."

April 5th, by Rev. Father Carberry, on "The Jesuits in America."

June 7th, by E. J. Hearn, Esq., on "A Visit to the Lakes of Killarney."

August 21st, by Rev. Francis Ryan, P.P. of St. Michael's Cathedral, on "Books, and How to Read Them."

October 4th, by Rev. Father Dollard, on "The Church in Ireland."

December 6th, by Rev. Father L. P. Minehan, on "The Infallibility of the Pope."

This branch has been instrumental in placing many of the publications of the Parent Society in the bookstores of this city. I have been informed also that the Rev. Father William McCann has under special instruction several persons who are desirous of joining the Church, as a result of the work of this Society.

I would like very much if the convener of each committee would throughout this year keep a more correct account of the number of publications distributed and other work done, and that the same be inserted in the minutes of each meeting of the Society, so that at the end of the year proper reports of the Society's work can be issued. I need not ask the members of all committees to do their duty well, as I am sure they will do so zealously. As I cannot devote the time to the Society that I should, and that I desire to, I respectfully ask you once more to give me the best assistance in your power, and to attend the meetings regularly. If you do this the St. Mary's branch of the Catholic Truth Society at the end of 1898 will show a record that will be the envy of all other branches of the Society. I think it absolutely necessary, in order to make the work more effectual, that some form of amalgamation should take place between the branches in the city, and I would suggest that a committee be appointed from this branch to confer with the committees of the other branches to this end. I think the scheme that Ottawa has adopted of having a central council is the more workable, with the exception that the central council should, in my opinion, be composed of only delegates from the branches, say one delegate for every branch having fifty members, or under that number, and one delegate for every fifty members or major fraction of fifty above that number.