

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JULY, 1855.

No. III.

John W. Alden

ART. I.—*The Zurich Letters; or, the Correspondence of several English Bishops, and others, with some of the Helvetican Reformers, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.* Chiefly from the Archives of Zurich. Translated from authenticated copies of the autographs, and edited for the Parker Society, by the Rev. Hastings Robinson, D. D., F. A. S., Rector of Great Warley, Essex, and formerly Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. Second edition, chronologically arranged in one series.

WHAT will be the ultimate destiny of the established Church of England, it is perhaps impossible to foretell, and therefore, vain to conjecture. We know of no book, however, which throws so much light upon its origin, genesis, growth and complicated structure, as the one before us. It completely exposes the hypothesis lately put forth by D'Aubigné, that the English Reformation proceeded primarily from the people, and was a purely religious Revolution. It is equally at variance with the opposite sentiment, that it was nothing more than a political change dictated by the pride or the policy of her rulers. The truth is, as usual, to be found in the mean between the two extremes. The circumstances of the times were, unquestionably, favourable to the progress of the Reform-

ART. V.—*Eutaxia; or, the Presbyterian Liturgies: Historical Sketches.* By a Minister of the Presbyterian Church. New York: M. W. Dodd, Brick Church Chapel. 1855. pp. 260.

IT is a very prevalent impression, that the use of liturgies in public worship, is one of the peculiarities of prelatical churches. Not only Episcopalians, but many Presbyterians are in the habit of specifying episcopacy, confirmation, and the use of a liturgy, as intimately associated, and as the distinguishing characteristics of prelacy. As to confirmation, it is true that considered as a sacrament, or a rite conferring grace, it is peculiar to the ritual and hierarchical system. The grace conferred in baptism is, according to that system, confirmed and increased by the imposition of the bishop's hands in confirmation. For such a service there is no warrant in Scripture; and it is entirely incompatible with the whole evangelical theory of the Church, and of the method of salvation. But confirmation, as a solemn service, in which those recognized in their infancy as members of the Church, on the faith of their parents, are confirmed in their church standing, on the profession of their own faith, is retained in form or in substance in all Protestant Churches. In the Lutheran, and in most of the Reformed, or Calvinistic Churches on the continent of Europe, children baptized in infancy, when they come to years of discretion, are publicly examined as to their knowledge of Christian doctrine, and, if free from scandal, are called upon to assume for themselves their baptismal vows, and are recognized as members of the church in full communion. In most Presbyterian churches in Great Britain and Ireland, and especially in this country, something more than competent knowledge and freedom from scandal being required, in order to admission to sealing ordinances, baptized youth are not as a matter of course admitted to the Lord's supper, on their arrival at the years of discretion. It is our custom to wait until they are prepared to make a credible profession of a change of heart. When this is done they are confirmed; that is, they are recognized as members of the church in full communion, on their own profession. The same examination as to knowledge, the same profession as to faith,

the same engagements as to obedience—in short, the same assumption of the obligations of the baptismal covenant, and the same consequent access to the Lord's table, which in other churches constitute confirmation, in ours constitute what we are accustomed to call admission to sealing ordinances. The only difference is, that we require more than knowledge and freedom from scandal as the condition of confirming baptized persons as members of the church in full communion. It is a great mistake, therefore, to represent confirmation as a prelatical service. In one form or another, it is the necessary sequence of infant baptism, and must be adopted wherever pedo-baptism prevails.

It is a still greater mistake to represent liturgies as an adjunct of episcopacy. The fact is, that the use of liturgies was introduced into all the Protestant churches at the time of the Reformation, and that in the greater number of them, they continue in use to the present day.* As Calvin's liturgy is the basis of those adopted in other Reformed Churches, we think our readers will be glad to see so much of it as is given in the work before us.

“THE FORM OF CHURCH PRAYERS.

“On week-days the minister uses such words in prayer as may seem to him good, suiting his prayer to the occasion, and the matter whereof he treats in preaching. “For the Lord's Day in the morning is commonly used the Form ensuing. After the reading of the appointed chapters of Holy Scripture, the Ten Commandments are read. Then the minister begins thus:

“**INVOCATION.**—Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth. Amen.

“**EXHORTATION.**—Brethren, let each of you present himself before the Lord, with confession of his sins and offences, following in heart my words.

* In the instructive and well written work, whose title stands at the head of this article, there is given an account of the liturgy introduced into the Church at Geneva by Calvin; of the Geneva liturgy as adopted in France; of the liturgy of John Knox, introduced into Scotland; of the liturgy of the German Reformed Church, or of the Palatinate; of the Dutch Reformed liturgy; and of the liturgical forms prepared and reported to the old Synod of our Church, by the Committee to whom was referred the revision of the Directory for Public Worship, published in 1787. This committee consisted of the Rev. Drs. Rodgers and McWhorter, and the Rev. Messrs. Alexander Miller and James Wilson. The Synod did not adopt them, Dr. Green, as he informs us in his Life, being one of those who voted in favour of their adoption.

“**CONFESSIO**N.—Lord God! Almighty and Eternal Father: We acknowledge and confess before thy holy majesty, that we are miserable sinners; conceived and born in guilt and in corruption, prone to do evil, unfit for any good; who, by reason of our depravity, transgress without end thy holy commandments. Wherefore we have drawn upon ourselves, by thy just sentence, condemnation and death. But, O Lord! with heartfelt sorrow we repent and deplore our offences; we condemn ourselves and our evil ways, with true penitence beseeching that thy grace may relieve our distress.

“Be pleased then to have compassion upon us, O most gracious God! Father of all mercies; for the sake of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And in removing our guilt and our pollution, grant us the daily increase of the grace of thine Holy Spirit; that acknowledging from our inmost hearts our own unrighteousness, we may be touched with sorrow that shall work true repentance; and that thy Spirit, mortifying all sin within us, may produce the fruits of holiness and of righteousness well-pleasing in thy sight: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

“This done, shall be sung in the congregation a Psalm; then the minister shall begin afresh to pray, asking of God the grace of his Holy Spirit, to the end that his word may be faithfully expounded, to the honour of his name, and to the edification of the church; and that it be received in such humility and obedience as are becoming.

“The form thereof is at the discretion of the minister.

“[Prayer which the ministers are accustomed to make.]

“**FOR ILLUMINATION**.—Most gracious God, our heavenly Father! in whom alone dwelleth all fulness of light and wisdom: Illuminate our minds, we beseech thee, by thine Holy Spirit, in the true understanding of thy word. Give us grace that we may receive it with reverence and humility unfeigned. May it lead us to put our whole trust in thee alone; and so to serve and honour thee, that we may glorify thy holy name, and edify our neighbours by a good example. And since it hath pleased thee to number us among thy people: O help us to pay thee the love and homage that we owe, as children to our Father, and as servants to our Lord. We ask this for the sake of our Master and Saviour, who hath taught us to pray, saying: Our Father, &c.

“ At the end of the sermon, the minister having made exhortation to prayer, beginneth thus :

“ INTERCESSION.—Almighty God, our heavenly Father! who hast promised to grant our requests in the name of thy well-beloved Son: Thou hast taught us in his name also to assemble ourselves together, assured that he shall be present in the midst of us, to intercede for us with thee, and obtain for us all things that we may agree on earth to ask thee. Wherefore, having met in thy presence, dependent on thy promise, we earnestly beseech thee, O gracious God and Father! for his sake who is our only Saviour and Mediator, that of thy boundless mercy thou wilt freely pardon our offences; and so lift up our thoughts and our desires toward thyself, that we may seek thee in a manner acceptable to thy holy and reasonable will.

“ FOR RULERS.—Heavenly Father! who hast bidden us pray for those in authority over us: We entreat thee to bless all princes and governors, thy servants, to whom thou has committed the administration of justice; and especially * * * May it please thee to grant them the daily increase of thy good Spirit, that with true faith acknowledging Jesus Christ, thy Son our Saviour, to be King of kings and Lord of lords, unto whom thou hast given all power in heaven and on earth—they may seek to serve thee and exalt thy rule in their dominions. May they govern their subjects, who are the creatures of thy hand and the sheep of thy pasture, in a manner well-pleasing in thy sight; so that as well here as throughout all the earth, thy people, being kept in peace and quiet, may serve thee in all godliness and honesty; and that we, being delivered from the fear of our enemies, may pass the time of our lives in thy praise.

“ FOR PASTORS.—Almighty Saviour! we pray for all whom thou hast appointed pastors of thy believing people, and intrusted with the care of souls and the dispensing of thy holy Gospel. Guide them by thy Spirit, and make them faithful and loyal ministers of thy glory. May they ever hold this end before them: that by their efforts, all poor wandering sheep may be gathered in and made subject to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, and in him daily grow up and increase in all godliness and truth. And, O Lord!

deliver thy churches from the mouth of ravenous wolves and hirelings, who seek only their own ambition or profit, and not the exaltation of thy holy name, and the safety of thy flock.

“FOR ALL CONDITIONS OF MEN.—Most Gracious God, Father of all mercies: We beseech thee for every class and condition of our fellow-men. Thou who wouldst be acknowledged as the Saviour of all mankind, in the redemption made by thy Son Jesus Christ: Grant that such as are yet strangers to thy knowledge, and in the darkness of captivity to ignorance and error, may, by the enlightening of thy Spirit and the preaching of thy word, be led into the right way of salvation; which is to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. May those whom thou hast already visited with thy grace, and enlightened with the knowledge of thy word, grow daily in all godliness, and be enriched with thy spiritual gifts. So that we all, with one heart and one voice, may ever praise thee, giving honour and worship to thy Christ, our Lord, Lawgiver and King.

“FOR AFFLICTED PERSONS.—God of all comfort! We commend to thee those whom thou art pleased to visit and chasten with any cross or tribulation; the nations whom thou dost afflict with pestilence, war, or famine; all persons oppressed with poverty, imprisonment, sickness, banishment, or any other distress of body or sorrow of mind: That it may please thee to show them thy fatherly kindness, chastening them for their profit; to the end that in their hearts they may turn unto thee, and being converted, may receive perfect consolation, and deliverance from all their woes.

“FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS.—More especially we commend to thee our poor brethren scattered abroad under the tyranny of Antichrist, who are destitute of the pasture of life, and deprived of the privilege of publicly calling on thy holy name. We pray for those who are confined as prisoners, or otherwise persecuted by the enemies of thy gospel. May it please thee, O Father of mercies! to strengthen them by the virtue of thy Spirit, in such sort that they faint not, neither fall away, but constantly abide in thy holy calling. Succour them, help them as thou knowest they may need; console them in

their afflictions; maintain them in thy safe keeping; defend them against the rage of devouring wolves; and augment within them all the graces of thy Spirit, that whether in life or death, they may glorify thy name.

“FOR THE CONGREGATION.—Finally, O God our Father! Grant also unto us, who are here gathered in the name of thy Holy Child Jesus, to hear his word [and to celebrate his holy Supper], that we may rightly perceive our lost estate by nature, and the condemnation we have deserved and heaped up to ourselves by disobedient lives. So that conscious that in ourselves there dwelleth no good thing, and that our flesh and blood cannot inherit thy kingdom, with our whole affections we may give ourselves up in firm trust to thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, our only Saviour and Redeemer. And that he, dwelling in us, may mortify within us the old Adam, renewing us for a better life, wherein we shall exalt and glorify thy blessed and worthy name, ever, world without end. Amen.

“THE LORD’S PRAYER.—Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name: Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

“THE CREED.—Lord, increase our faith.

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

“THE BLESSING,

“Which is pronounced at the departure of the people, according as our Lord hath commanded in the Law.—*Numbers* vi. 23.

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;

“The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

“The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

“Whereunto is added, to remind the people of the duty of alms-giving, as is it customary upon leaving the church,

“Depart in peace: remember the poor: and the God of peace be with you. Amen.”

We give also the form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

“THE MANNER OF CELEBRATING THE LORD'S SUPPER.”

“Note, that on the Sabbath before the Supper is to be celebrated, it must be announced to the people, in order that each may prepare and dispose himself worthily to receive it. Also, that children be not brought to the Communion until they have been well instructed, and have made profession of their faith, in the Church. And again, that strangers, who are yet rude and ignorant, may come to be taught in private.

“On the day of the celebration, the minister in the conclusion of his sermon adverts to it, or else, if the matter be in hand, refers his whole discourse to the same, expounding to the people what our Lord would say and signify by this mystery, and after what manner he would have us receive it.

“The following prayer is to be added to the usual prayer after the sermon:

“THE LORD'S PRAYER.—Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name: Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

“THE INVOCATION.—Most gracious God! we beseech thee that as thy Son hath not only once offered up his body and blood upon the cross for the remission of our sins, but hath also vouchsafed them unto us, for our meat and drink unto life eternal: So thou wilt grant us grace, with sincere hearts and fervent desires, to accept this great blessing at his hands. May we by lively faith partake of his body and blood, yea, of himself, true God and man, the only bread from heaven, which giveth life unto our souls. Suffer us no longer to live unto ourselves, according to a corrupt and sinful nature; but may he live in us, and lead us to the life that is holy, blessed and unchangeable for ever. Thus make us true partakers of the new and everlasting testament, which is the covenant of grace.

And thus assure us of thy willingness ever to be our gracious Father; not imputing unto us our sins, but providing us with all things necessary for our good, that we may magnify thy name by our works and words. Fit us, O heavenly Father! to celebrate at this time the blessed remembrance of thy beloved Son. Enable us profitably to contemplate his love, and show forth the benefits of his death: That so receiving fresh increase of strength in thy faith and in all good works, we may with greater confidence call thee our Father, and evermore rejoice and glory in thy name. Through Jesus Christ thy Son, our Redeemer. Amen.

“THE CREED.—Let us now make profession of our faith in the doctrine of the Christian Religion, wherein we all purpose by God’s grace to live and to die.

“I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

“Then the minister maketh this

“EXHORTATION.—Attend to the words of the institution of the holy supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are delivered by the Apostle Paul.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you: That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and

drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

“We have heard, brethren, in what manner our Lord celebrated the Supper among his disciples; whence we see that strangers, who are not of the company of the faithful, may not approach it. Wherefore, in obedience to this rule, and in the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, I excommunicate all idolaters, blasphemers, despisers of God, heretics, and all who form sects apart, to break the unity of the Church; all perjurers, all who are rebellious against fathers and mothers, and other superiors, all who are seditious, contentious, quarrelsome, injurious, adulterers, fornicators, thieves, misers, ravishers, drunkards, gluttons, and all others who lead scandalous lives; warning them that they abstain from this Table, lest they pollute and contaminate the sacred food which our Lord Jesus Christ giveth only to his faithful servants.

“Therefore, according to the exhortation of St. Paul, let each of you examine and prove his own conscience, to know whether he have true repentance of his sins, and sorrow for them; desiring henceforth to lead a holy and godly life; above all, whether he putteth his whole trust in God's mercy, and seeketh his whole salvation in Jesus Christ; and renouncing all enmity and malice, doth truly and honestly purpose to live in harmony and brotherly love with his neighbour.

“If we have this testimony in our hearts before God, we may not doubt that he adopteth us for his children, and that our Lord Jesus addresseth his word to us, admitting us to his Table, and presenting us with this holy sacrament, which he bestows upon his followers.

“And notwithstanding that we feel many infirmities and miseries in ourselves, as namely, that we have not perfect faith, and that we have not given ourselves to serve God with such zeal as we are bound to do, but have daily to battle with the lusts of our flesh; yet, since the Lord hath graciously been pleased to print his Gospel upon our hearts, in order that we may withstand all unbelief; and hath given us this earnest

desire to renounce our own thoughts and follow his righteousness and his holy commandments: therefore we rest assured, that our remaining sins and imperfections do not prevent us from being received of God and made worthy partakers of this spiritual food. For we come not to this Supper to testify hereby that we are perfect and righteous in ourselves; but on the contrary, seeking our life in Jesus Christ, we acknowledge that we lie in the midst of death. Let us then look upon this sacrament as a medicine for those who are spiritually sick; and consider that all the worthiness our Lord requireth of us, is that we truly know ourselves, be sorry for our sins, and find our pleasure, joy, and satisfaction in him above.

“First, then, we must believe these promises, which Jesus Christ, who is infallible truth, hath pronounced with his own lips: That he is truly willing to make us partakers of his body and of his blood, in order that we may wholly possess him, and that he may live in us, and we in him. And although we see here only the bread and wine, let us not doubt that he will accomplish spiritually in our souls all that he outwardly exhibits by these visible signs; he will show himself to be the heavenly bread, to feed and nourish us unto life eternal. Let us not be unthankful to the infinite goodness of our Lord, who displays all his riches and his wealth at this table, to distribute them among us. For in giving himself, he testifies that all he hath is ours. Let us receive this sacrament as a pledge that the virtue of his death and passion is imputed unto us for righteousness; even as though we had suffered in our own persons. Let none perversely draw back, when Jesus Christ doth gently invite him by his word. But considering the dignity of his precious gift, let us present ourselves to him with ardent zeal, that he may make us capable of receiving it.

“And now, to this end, lift up your minds and hearts on high, where Jesus Christ abideth in the glory of his Father, whence we expect his coming at our redemption. Dwell not upon these earthly and corruptible elements, which we see present to our eyes, and feel with our hands, to seek him in them, as if he were inclosed in the Bread or in the wine. For then only shall our souls be disposed to receive food and life from his substance, when they shall thus be lifted up above

worldly things, even unto heaven, and enter into the kingdom of God, where he dwelleth. Let us be satisfied to have this bread and this wine for witnesses and signs; seeking spiritually the truth where God's word hath promised that we shall find it.

“This done, the ministers distribute the bread and the cup to the people, having warned them to come forward with reverence and order. Meanwhile a Psalm is sung, or a portion of the Scripture read, suitable to what is signified by the Sacrament. The Supper being over, is used this or the like

“**THANKSGIVING.**—Heavenly Father! we give thee immortal praise and thanks, that upon us poor sinners thou hast conferred so great a benefit, as to bring us into the communion of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord; whom having delivered up to death for us, thou hast given for our food and nourishment unto eternal life. Now, also, grant us grace, that we may never be unmindful of these things; but rather carrying them about engraven upon our hearts, may advance and grow in that faith which is effectual unto every good work. Thus, may the rest of our lives be ordered and followed out to thy glory and the edification of our neighbours: Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who with thee, O Father! and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Godhead, world without end. Amen.

“Then, all the congregation standing, is sung the Hymn of Simeon, after which the minister dismisses the people with

“**THE BLESSING.**—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.”

The liturgy prepared by Knox for the Church of Scotland, and which continued in more or less general use for a century after the Reformation, was framed after the model of that of Geneva.

Why has the use of liturgies by the Reformed Churches been either wholly, as in the case of the Scotch and American Presbyterians, or partially, as in the case of the Dutch Church in this country, been laid aside? The reasons are various, and some of the most influential peculiar to Presbyterians. One reason, no doubt is, the general dislike to be trammelled by forms; which dislike is the natural product of

the spirit of liberty, which is inseparable from the principles of Presbyterianism. The consciousness of the essential equality of all in whom the Spirit of God dwells, and the conviction that those whom Christ calls to the ministry, he qualifies for the discharge of its duties, naturally produces a revolt against the prescription by authority of the very words in which the public worship of God is to be conducted. Those who can walk are impatient of leading strings. It cannot be doubted that the theory of Presbyterianism is opposed to the use of liturgies. In the ideal state of the Church—in that state which our theory contemplates, where every minister is really called of God, and is the organ of the Holy Ghost in the exercise of his functions, liturgies would be fetters, which nothing but compulsion could induce any man to wear. How incongruous is it with our conception of the Apostolic Church, that John, Paul and Peter should be compelled to read just such and such portions of Scripture, to use prescribed words in prayer, and to limit their supplications and thanksgivings to specified topics! The compulsory use of liturgies is, and has ever been felt to be, inconsistent with the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. It is inconsistent with the inward promptings of the Spirit of God, as he dwells and works in the hearts of his people. As no genuine, living Christian can bear to be confined to a prescribed form of prayer in his closet, so no minister, called by the Spirit to the sacred office, can fail to feel such forms an impediment and a constraint. They are like the stiff, constraining dress, imposed on the soldier, for the sake of uniformity and general effect, which he is glad to throw off when in actual service. The Scriptures, therefore, which in all things outward, conform to what is the inward product of the Spirit, do not prescribe any form of words to be used in the worship of God. There are no indications of the use of liturgies in the New Testament. There is no evidence of the prevalence of written forms during the first three centuries. They were gradually introduced, and they were never uniform. Every important Church had its own liturgy. The modern Anglican idea of having one form of worship for all churches, never entered the minds of the early Christians. We fully believe, therefore, that the compulsory use of a liturgy is inconsistent with Christian liberty; and that the disposition to

use such terms, as a general rule, decreases with the increase of intelligence and spirituality in the Church. Without questioning or doubting the sincere and eminent piety of hundreds and thousands of the ministers and members of churches which continue in the trammels of prescribed liturgical forms, we still believe that one of the causes why the Church of Scotland never submitted to the authoritative imposition of an unvarying form of public worship, and gradually dispensed with the use of a liturgy altogether, is to be found in its superior intelligence and piety.

Another cause of the fact in question, is to be found in the essential or unavoidable inadequacy of all forms. They are not only inconsistent, when authoritatively imposed, with the liberty of Christians, but they are, and must be, insufficient. Neither the circumstances, nor the inward state of the Church, or of any worshipping assembly, are always the same. It is true, adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication, and intercession, are always to be included in our addresses to God; but varying inward and outward circumstances call for different modes of address, and no one uniform mode can possibly satisfy the spiritual necessities of the people. Sometimes the minister goes to the house of God burdened with some great truth, or with his heart filled with zeal for some special service in the cause of Christ, the conviction of sinners, the edification of saints, the work of missions, the relief of the poor; but he is forbidden to give utterance to the language of his heart, or to bring his people into sympathy with himself by appropriate religious services. Sometimes general coldness or irreligion prevails among the people; sometimes they are filled with the fruits, and rejoicing in the presence of the Spirit; sometimes they are in prosperity, sometimes in adversity. It is as impossible that any one form of worship should suit all these diversities, as that any one kind of dress should suit all seasons of the year, or all classes of men; or that any one kind of food, however wholesome, should be adapted to all states of the human body.

Besides these general causes there are others, perhaps still more influential, of a specific character, which produced the distaste for liturgies in the minds of the Presbyterians of Great

Britain and America. The real question in their case, was not liturgy or no liturgy, but whether they should submit to the use of the liturgy of the Church of England. Besides, therefore, the general objections to any prescribed, unvarying form of public worship, all the specific objections entertained by Presbyterians against the services of the English Church operated in this matter. The English liturgy was framed on the avowed principle of departing as little as possible from the Romish forms. It was designed to conciliate those who were yet addicted to the papacy. It retained numerous prescriptions as to dress and ceremonies, to which conscientious objections were entertained by the majority of Protestants. It required the people to kneel in the reception of the Eucharist, which was so associated with the worship of the host, that many left the Church of England principally on that account. Its baptismal service could not be understood in its natural sense otherwise than as teaching the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. It required the minister to commit to the grave all baptized persons who did not die by their own hand, or in a state of excommunication, "in the sure hope of a blessed resurrection," no matter how heretical or how profligate they may have been.* It was constructed on the platform of the Romish Calendar. Not only the great Christian festivals of Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter, which Protestants on the continent continued to observe, were retained, but particular services were prescribed for a multitude of holy days. There was a special service for the first, second, third, and fourth Sundays in Advent; then for Christmas, and the first Sunday after Christmas; then for the circumcision of Christ; then for the Epiphany; then for the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth Sundays after Epiphany; then for Septuagesima; then for the second and first Sundays before Lent; then for each of the Sundays during Lent; then for Good Friday, Easter, and the five Sundays after Easter; then for Ascension-day; then Whitsunday; then Trinity Sunday, and each of the twenty-five Sundays after Trinity; then St. Andrew's-day; St. Thomas's day; Purification of the Blessed Virgin; St. Matthias, St.

* This objectionable feature of the English liturgy has been removed from the Book of Common Prayer, as adopted by the Episcopal Church in this country.

Mark, St. Philip, St. James, and the Apostles, St. Barnabas; Nativity of St. John the Baptist, St. Peter, St. Bartholomew, St. Matthew, St. Michael and all Angels, &c. &c., All Saints, the Holy Innocents, &c. How foreign is all this to the simplicity of the gospel! It would seem impossible to live in accordance with the spirit of the English service-book without making the Christian life a formality. In perfect consistency with these and similar objections to the English service-book, as a whole, we feel bound to say, that we fully and cordially agree with the celebrated Robert Hall, at least as to the Morning and Evening Prayers, that for evangelical sentiment, fervour of devotion, and majestic simplicity of language, it is entitled to the highest praise. And as to the Litany, which is at least a thousand years old, and no more belongs to the Church of England than the Creed does, we know no human composition that can be compared with it. These excellencies, however, which, in a great measure were derived from forms already drawn up by the Reformers on the continent,* do not redeem the character of the book considered as a whole.

This book, so objectionable, as a whole, in its origin, adjuncts and character, was forced on the English Church and people by the civil power, contrary to their will. Bishops, clergy and parliament for years endeavoured to have it rectified, but at last submitted. The attempt to enforce its observance on the Scotch Church, led to one of the most wicked and cruel persecutions the world has ever seen. Is it wonderful, then, that a strong repugnance to the very name of a liturgy, should be roused in the minds of the Presbyterians of Great Britain and of their descendants in America? Of the liturgies of Calvin, of Knox, of the Huguenots, of the German and Dutch Reformed Churches, they knew nothing. A liturgy in their minds meant the Book of Common Prayer, framed for the comprehension of papists, enforced by the will of Elizabeth, rejected at the cost of property and life, by their pious ancestors. It would be contrary to the laws of our nature, if such a struggle as this did not lead to some exaggeration of feeling and opinion on the other side. No candid man can blame the non-Conformists of England, or the Presbyterians of Scotland,

* On the extent to which the English Liturgy is indebted to the continental Reformers, see pp. 187-200, of the work under review.

if their sad experience of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny in enforcing an obnoxious prayer-book, led them to the extreme of denouncing the use of all forms. That one extreme produces another, is the tritest of aphorisms. The extreme of insisting that certain forms should alone be used, begat the extreme of insisting that no forms should be allowed. It is obvious however to the candid, that between these extremes there is a wide and safe middle ground. That safe middle ground is the optional use of a liturgy, or form of public service, having the sanction of the Church. If such a book were compiled from the liturgies of Calvin, Knox, and of the Reformed Churches, containing appropriate prayers for ordinary public worship, for special occasions, as for times of sickness, declension, or public calamity, with forms for the administration of baptism, of the Lord's Supper, for funerals and for marriage, we are bold to say that it would in our judgment be a very great blessing. We say such a book might be *compiled*; we do not believe it could possibly be written. It may be difficult to see why it should be so; but the fact can hardly be doubted, that prayers written by individuals are, except in cases of uncommon religious exaltation, or in times of the powerful effusion of the Spirit, comparatively worthless. A prayer to suit the Church must be the product of the Church. It must be free in thought, language and feeling from everything which belongs to the individual. It must be the product, in other words, of the Holy Ghost. The only way to secure this result is either to take the prayers recorded in the Scriptures, or those which the Spirit, whose office it is to teach us how to pray, has uttered through the lips of the children of God, and which have in the process of ages, been freed from their earthly mixture, and received the sanction of those in whom the Spirit dwells. For a man to sit down and write a volume of prayers for other people to use, and especially a liturgy for the service of the Church, seems to us very much like John Wesley's making his five volumes of sermons a creed.

These two conditions being supposed, first, that the book should be compiled and not written; and secondly, that its use should be optional—we are strongly of opinion that it would answer a most important end. The great objections to the use of liturgies are, that the authoritative imposition of them is

inconsistent with Christian liberty; secondly, that they never can be made to answer all the varieties of experience and occasions; thirdly, that they tend to formality, and cannot be an adequate substitute for the warm outgoings of the heart moved by the Spirit of genuine devotion. These objections we consider valid against all unvarying forms authoritatively imposed. But they do not bear against the preparation and optional use of a Book of Common Prayer.

The advantages which we would anticipate from the preparation of such a book, or of a return to the usage of the early Churches of the Reformation, are principally the following: In the first place, it would be a great assistance to those who are not specially favoured with the gift of prayer, and thus tend to elevate and improve this important part of public worship. We believe that *ex tempore* preaching, when the preacher has the requisite gifts and graces, is the best preaching in the world; without those gifts, in no ordinary measure, it is the worst. So, as we have already admitted, *ex tempore* prayer, when the spirit of prayer is present, is the best method of praying; better than any form prescribed by the Church, and better than any form previously prepared by the man himself. We have also admitted that the disposition to use written forms, as a general rule, decreases in proportion to the increase of intelligence and spirituality of the Church. All this being conceded, it is nevertheless lamentably true, that the prayers are, in general, the least attractive and satisfactory part of our Church services. This may arise partly from the fact that the qualifications for this part of public worship are more rarely possessed than those requisite for acceptable preaching. It is certain that many eminent preachers have been remarkably deficient in the gift of prayer. This is said to have been the case with President Davies, Robert Hall, and Dr. Chalmers. It is evident, that to pray well requires a very unusual combination of graces and gifts. It requires a devout spirit; much religious experience; such natural or acquired refinement as is sufficient to guard against all coarseness, irreverence, and impropriety in thought or language; such inward guidance or mental discipline as shall render the prayer well ordered and comprehensive. These gifts, alas! are not common in their

combination, even among good men. Another reason for the evil in question, is that so little attention is commonly given by our ministers to previous preparation for conducting this part of divine worship. They labour hard to prepare to address the people; but venture on addressing God without premeditation. Dr. Witherspoon says that the Rev. Dr. Gillies of Glasgow, who in his judgment exceeded any man he had ever heard in the excellency of his prayers, was accustomed to devote unwearied pains to preparation for this part of his ministerial work, and for the first ten years of his pastoral life never wrote a sermon without writing a prayer appropriate to it.* This was Calvin's habit, and many of the sermons printed in his works, have prayers annexed; an aid which Calvin found needful, and no man living need be ashamed of employing.

We have assumed that as a general thing the public prayers in our churches do not meet the desires and exigencies of the people. We have felt this so often ourselves, we have heard the feeling expressed so often from all classes, that we presume the fact will not be denied. The late venerable Dr. Miller, whose long and wide experience gave him the opportunity of correct judgment, was so sensible of this evil, that he devoted the last labours of his useful life to the preparation of a work on Public Prayer. Of the faults which he laments, he says, in his fourth chapter, he will mention only a few, and then enumerates no less than eighteen! Among these are the following: the frequent occurrence of set phrases; ungrammatical, or low colloquial forms of expression; want of order; minuteness of detail; excessive length; florid style; party or personal allusions; humorous or sarcastic expressions; turning the prayer into a sermon or exhortation; extravagant professions; want of appropriateness; want of reverence, &c., &c. If such evils exist, it is a sin to disregard them. It is a sin not to labour to correct them. As one means of such correction, not the only one, and perhaps not the most important one, would be a collection of prayers for public worship of established character, sanctioned by long approbation of the people of God, and by the authority of the Church; something sanctioned and not prescribed, as in the case of our Book of Psalms and Hymns. Such a book would afford models, guides, and helps which we

* See Dr. Miller's "Thoughts on Public Prayer," p. 294.

all need. It would be something which those who felt their weakness could fall back upon, and which even the strongest would in hours of depression be glad to resort to. It has often been said that there is no more propriety in a minister's using prayers prepared to his hand, than in his using sermons written by others. If he is fit to preach, he is fit to pray. There is, however, very great difference between the two cases. In preaching, the minister is not the organ of the people, in prayer he is. They listen to his preaching, they join in his prayers. It is of great importance to their spiritual edification and comfort that there should be nothing with which they cannot sympathize, or which offends or disturbs their feelings. If the preacher offends them, that is one thing, but when they themselves draw near to God, and are made to utter incoherent, wandering, or irreverent prayers, it is a very grievous affliction.

It is, however, quite as much in the celebration of the sacraments, and in the marriage and funeral services, as in public prayer, that the evils Dr. Miller complains of, are experienced. The sacraments are divine institutions intimately connected with the religious life of the Church, and inexpressibly dear to the people of God. A communion service properly conducted and blessed with the manifested presence of the Spirit of God, is like an oasis to travellers in a desert. It is not merely a season of enjoyment, but one in which the soul is sanctified and strengthened for the service of God. How often is the service marred, and the enjoyment and profit of the people hindered by the injudicious and unscriptural manner in which it is conducted. We do not now refer to the tedious length to which it is often protracted, or to the coldness or deadness of the officiating minister, but to the inappropriateness of the exercises. The true nature of the sacrament is lost sight of; incongruous subjects are introduced, and the communicant is forced either to strive not to listen to what the minister says, or to give up in despair all hope of really communing. Very often the introductory prayer is just such a prayer as might be offered in a prayer-meeting. It has no special reference to the Lord's supper. It includes such a variety of subjects—petitions for young and old, converted and unconverted, for revivals, for temporal

blessings—that it is absolutely impossible for the people to keep their minds on the service in which they are about to engage, and no less impossible that they should be in a proper frame of mind for it. Such a prayer is frequently soon followed by an address on any topic which happens to suggest itself; any truth of Scripture, or any duty, no matter whether it has any special reference to the Lord's supper or not. Sometimes in the very midst of the service the minister undertakes to explain the ordinance—to refute the doctrine of transubstantiation, or to establish the true doctrine concerning Christ's presence—or, he sets forth the qualifications for acceptable communion, and calls upon the people to examine themselves—or to do something else which is absolutely inconsistent with their doing what they then and there ought to do. The service is often ended with protracted prayer, embracing all the usual variety of topics and carrying the mind far away from the proper object of attention. We know from our own experience and from the testimony of innumerable witnesses, that this is a common and a very sore evil. The people of God are defrauded of their spiritual nourishment. They sit down to the table of the Lord, only to have the food withdrawn or withheld, and other things offered in its stead. This produces almost a feeling of resentment. It seems such a wanton injury.

It is absolutely essential to the proper and profitable celebration of the sacraments, first, that their true nature should be apprehended; and secondly, that the unity and harmony of the service should be preserved; that is, that nothing should be introduced into the prayers, or other portions of the service, which tends to divert the attention of the people from the one object before them. The celebration of the Lord's supper is an act of worship. It is an approach to God in Christ; it is a drawing near to the Son of God as the sacrifice for our sins. The soul comes with penitence, faith, gratitude, and love to the feet of Jesus, and appropriates the benefits of his death, and spiritually feeds on his body and blood. To disturb this sacred communion with the Saviour, by inappropriate instructions or exhortations, is to frustrate the very design of the ordinance. It produces the same effect upon a devout mind as is produced by sermonizing prayers, which render devotion impossible. It

is a very mistaken zeal for our Church, which leads any man to deny or to defend these frequent blemishes in her sacred services. The Presbyterian order of worship does not need such apologists.

The same general remarks are in a measure applicable to the mode of celebrating marriage and of conducting funerals. Our ministers and people feel the need of some practical directory and appropriate form for these solemn occasions, which are often rendered unimpressive and unedifying by the manner in which they are conducted.

One great advantage, therefore, which we think would attend the introduction of such a book as has been described, is the improvement it would tend to produce in the conduct of public worship, and in the celebration of other religious services. There is another advantage of scarcely less importance. There are literally thousands of occasions on which public worship should be conducted and the dead buried, when no minister is at hand. In vacant churches, destitute settlements, in the army, the navy, in merchant vessels, there is a demand for some authorized forms. For the want of a Presbyterian work of the kind intended, the English Prayer Book is used in all parts of the world. Our army and navy officers, when there is no chaplain, and when disposed to secure for those under their command the benefits of religious worship, no matter what their denominational connection, almost universally resort to the liturgy of the English Church. That book, therefore, has gone wherever the English language is used; and it will continue to be resorted to, even by Presbyterians, until their own Church provides a book better suited to their necessities. We are not unmindful of the excellent "Manual for Sailors and Soldiers" published by our Board; but it is evident we need a work of a wider range, and one having the sanction of antiquity and Church authority.

In the purity of our doctrine, in the scriptural character of our ecclesiastical polity, in the simplicity of our mode of worship, the Presbyterian Church has an exalted position, and a hold on the affections of her people, which nothing can destroy. But she has suffered more than can well be estimated from those faults in the conduct of her simple services, which our

most venerable ministers have so often pointed out, and from failing to supply her scattered children with those aids for religious worship which their exigencies demand. We do not desire to see anything introduced which would render our public services less simple than they are at present—but merely that means should be taken to secure that what is done should be done well. If God would put it into the heart of some man of large experience in the pastoral life, who has dwelt long upon the mount; a man familiar with the literature of the subject, and with the high intellectual gifts the work demands, to compile a book containing prayers for public worship, and forms for the administration of the sacraments, marriage and funerals, he would do the Church a great service, whether the book ever received the sanction of our ecclesiastical judicatories or not. As public attention, among Congregationalists, the Dutch Reformed, the German Reformed, and Presbyterian Churches, has become more or less turned to this subject, it is hoped that something may be done which shall be for the interest of the great non-episcopal portion of the Protestant communion.

It is a very common impression that any attempt to construct a Book of Common Prayer would be playing into the hands of the Episcopalians. First, because it would imply a concession in favour of liturgies; secondly, because no book which could now be framed, would be likely to compare favourably with the English Prayer Book; and thirdly, because it would be impossible to give to any new book the authority and sacredness which ages have conferred upon that. We cannot believe that anything which would really improve our public service, could operate unfavourably to the interests of our Church. There would be no concession to Episcopal usages, even if Presbyterians should return to the custom of their forefathers, and introduce a liturgy into all their churches. But this we regard as impossible and undesirable. We might as well attempt to restore the costume or the armour of the middle ages. There is a very great difference between the uniform and universal use of a form of prayer, and the preparation of forms to serve as models, and to be employed when no minister is present. As to the second consideration above mentioned, we are not disposed to admit the unapproachable excellence of the English

forms. The best parts of the English Prayer Book are derived from sources common to all Protestants. We believe a book could be prepared without including anything not found in the liturgies, framed by the continental Reformers, which, as a whole, would be far superior to any prayer-book now in use. As to the want of the sacredness which belongs to antiquity, this, of course for the time, is an unavoidable defect. The most venerable tree, however, was once a sapling. It is no good reason for not planting a tree, that it has not, and cannot have, the weight of centuries on its boughs. No man objects to founding a new college because it cannot at once be an Oxford or a Harvard. Besides, this objection would be in a measure obviated, by including in such a book nothing which had not been in the use of the Protestant Churches ever since the Reformation. Let it be remembered, that we have not advocated the introduction of a liturgy, but simply the preparation of a book which may be used as the occasion calls for it.

Thos. Hodges.

ART. VI.—*The General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church met in the First Presbyterian Church, Nashville, Tennessee, at eleven o'clock, A. M., May 17th, 1855, and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. H. A. Boardman, D. D., Moderator of the last General Assembly, from 1 Tim. iii. 1: "This is a true saying, if a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."

After the sermon, the Moderator proceeded to constitute the sessions with prayer.

On motion, a Committee on Elections was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Gildersleeve, James Wilson, and Judge Fine, to whom any cases of informal commissions and want of commissions, should be referred in the organization of the Assembly.

The sermon of Dr. Boardman was, by a vote of the Assembly, referred to the Board of Publication to be published as a Tract.