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ARTICLE I.—*The Service of the House of God, according to the practice of the Church of Scotland.* By the Rev. WILLIAM LISTON, Minister of Redgorton. Edinburgh: 1858. Pp. 411. 12mo.

Presbyterian Liturgies, with specimens of Forms of Prayer for Worship, as used in the Continental Reformed and American Churches: with the Directory for the Public Worship of God, agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster: and Forms of Prayer for Ordinary and Communion Sabbaths, and for other Services of the Church. By a Minister of the Church of Scotland. Edinburgh: 1858. Pp. 120. 8vo.

IN taking a survey of existing churches, it is curious to observe how far their maturity and strength are from bearing any uniform proportion to their age. While the largest division of the Christian world professes to have come down, almost in its actual condition, from the time of the Apostles, and the "Orthodox Oriental Church" lays claim, with equal justice, to a like antiquity; while the Vaudois place themselves as high upon the scale, and are never placed by others lower than the close of the twelfth century; while all the reformed national churches of Europe—German, Swiss, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Scotch, and English—owe their birth to the great moral revolution of the sixteenth century, and the *Unitas Fratrum* to the

Hussite movement in the one before it; it is nevertheless true that some of the religious bodies now most flourishing and widespread, in America especially, are still comparatively young, and several of the most robust and thriving not yet past the period of infancy. The Independents and the Baptists, as distinct organizations, reach no further back than the seventeenth century; our own church to the beginning of the eighteenth; Wesleyan Methodism to its first half, and American Methodist Episcopacy to its middle; while our New-school sister, although scarcely out of her teens, is already the young mother of at least one hopeful child; and the Free Church of Scotland, one of the most vigorous and fruitful of the same great family, has not yet seen the close of its sixteenth year.

This last allusion vividly recalls that interesting juncture, when the hearts of thousands, even in this country, were absorbed in the exciting movements which preceded and accompanied and followed the Disruption of our fathers' church in Scotland; when our own pages were for some time filled with news and arguments respecting it; and when, with all our cordial sympathy and interest in that most majestic exodus, we could not but lament what seemed to be an irreparable breach, not merely in external bonds and organizations, but in spirit and affection, between these two rival representatives of that united body, which our own church loves to call its mother.

We rejoice to say that these forebodings have been mainly disappointed; that the worst divisions of a later date have been within the bosom of the Free Church, although such as, we sincerely hope, will yet be overruled to her increased prosperity and active usefulness; while on the other hand, so far as we can judge or ascertain at this great distance, the asperity of feeling between that church and the one from which it went out has been gradually softened; and although the points of difference remain unaltered, we no longer hear the charge of Judas-like treachery, and utter destitution of all godliness, alleged against the old kirk, and we do hear very gratifying testimony to the piety, ability, fidelity, and usefulness of some among its ministers, not only from their own communion, but from the two great Presbyterian bodies which have sprung up

by its side, as witnesses against it and co-workers with it. We mean of course the Free and the United Presbyterian churches, out of both which we have heard but one voice in relation to the merits of such men as Caird, Macduff, and McLeod.

Those whom we have just named are already favourably known to many of our readers as religious writers; but the two books placed at the beginning of this article, the latest which have reached us from the Church of Scotland, represent another phase of its religious literature, and one of them at least is symptomatic of a movement more important in itself, and far more interesting here, than either of the books themselves. To what is thus suggested, rather than expressed, we shall advert at some length, after a brief notice of the volumes now before us.

It is a fact, often noted upon both sides of the controversy as to Forms of Prayer, that their existence does not really depend upon their being written, but that even in the absence of liturgical prescription, the devotional performances of every church assume a form peculiar to itself, if not in individual expressions, yet in general tone and character, indefinitely modified of course by personal and local causes, and exhibiting a sensible, though almost indefinable mutation, corresponding to the general change in modes of thought and forms of speech, from generation to generation, and from age to age.

Of no church is this more true than the Church of Scotland, and in no religious body has there been, from the beginning, a more settled inclination to a rigid uniformity, within much wider limits, it is true, and with a far more scriptural and apostolic liberty, than in the Church of England. The tendency of which we speak is even more observable in some of the affiliated churches, both in Scotland and America, for instance, with respect to Psalmody, the use of tables at the Lord's Supper, and especially the multiplied and solemn services by which that ordinance is introduced, accompanied, and followed. But the uniformity to which we now especially refer is that belonging to the ordinary acts of worship, and particularly that of prayer. It is an interesting study to observe how far the Presbyterian worship has remained unchanged for ages, and

throughout the world, without the aid, and with a positive repudiation, of all rubrics and obligatory forms. Of this remarkable phenomenon all travellers are sensible, who visit Scotland for the first time, and attend upon its worship, as established both by law and custom; and who sometimes have expressed the wish, that the impression could be reproduced, however faintly, on the minds of Presbyterians at home.

This end may be promoted, in a limited degree, by such a work as that of Mr. Liston, which was written for the kindred, although very different purpose, of enabling those who are detained from public worship, to go through its customary forms in private, thus affording them, as far as possible, the same advantage that belongs to the members of the Church of England, who have all the prayers of that church in a single volume. (Preface, p. viii.) The only difference, and that a vast one, but arising from the nature of the systems, is that the Presbyterian worshipper, in such a case, can only have a specimen or specimens of what he hears in church, and those dependent on the piety and judgment and devotional experience of the writer who affords them. Still, regarded even as mere samples, they are interesting, both as proofs of the essential uniformity of Presbyterian worship, and as indications of the differences which it does exhibit.

It is only from a prefatory notice to this volume, that we learn the fact of its being a republication of another, which has been "long out of print, and in great demand" (p. xv), and also that it was the first book of the kind prepared in Scotland, with the single exception of a small work published in 1802, as "*The Scotch Minister's Assistant*," and again in 1822, as "*The Presbyterian Minister's Assistant*," after the death of its reputed author, the late Rev. Dr. Ross. This adds still further to the interest of the volume, as a specimen of what is going on from Sabbath to Sabbath in the Church of Scotland, and of which we now propose to give our readers a condensed account.

The author's plan is to exemplify the usual service in the country churches during the winter season, when the two discourses are delivered at a single "diet" or meeting for worship;

whereas in the summer, and throughout the year in large towns, the two services are separate, as among ourselves.

For the sake of some variety and interchange, the author gives a service for three Sabbaths, perfectly alike as to the parts and order, although different of course in form and substance. Under each, the first place is assigned to the morning prayer, which in all three cases—and the same indeed may be affirmed of all the prayers here given—is of reasonable length, devout and reverential, and distinguished by that copious use of Scripture phrases, which is characteristic of all genuine Scotch prayers, but which is never so impressive upon paper as when uttered *viva voce* and *ex animo*, especially when void, as in the present case, of all extraordinary warmth or unction in the prayers themselves.

This is followed by a "Lecture," or expository sermon on a passage of some length, (here the parable of the virgins, Matt. xxv. 1-13,) which is also a fixed feature of the Scottish worship, almost rubrical in constancy and uniformity, but eminently useful in making the whole service scriptural, and giving to the people their extraordinary knowledge of the Bible, not in scraps and patches merely, but in its original connection. As our purpose is rather to describe the service than to criticise the specimens here given, we shall merely say of this, and of the other sermons in the volume, that they are correct in style, and suited to be practically useful, though without pretensions to originality or eloquence, or even that experimental light and heat which may accomplish more than either. This homiletical deficiency, however, though a literary blemish, really enhances the value of the work, considered not as a mere personal performance, but an average example of a large and most important class. The lecture is followed by the "intermediate prayer," so called as separating the discourses and the two parts of the double service. This prayer, according to the rule propounded in the Preface (p. ix.) is not, like the morning prayer, a general supplication, but has reference to the subject of the preceding lecture or discourse, pressing it home, in the form of a direct address to God, on the hearts of the audience, and concluding with a glance at the subject to be treated in the subsequent sermon. That subject, on the first

of the three Sabbaths, is the omniscience of our Saviour, as a proof of his divine commission (John i. 48, 49.) The "public or concluding prayer," which follows, is described by the author as containing "public prayers or supplications for public blessings" (Preface, p. x.) This completes one Sabbath, and the other two presenting only different examples of precisely the same service, we shall merely mention that the subjects of the second and third lectures are the parable of the talents (Matt. xxv. 14-30,) and our Lord's description of the judgment (Matt. xxv. 31-46,) the three thus forming a continued exposition of the chapter. The subjects of the second and third sermons are the sempiternal existence of Christ (Rev. i. 18,) and his ascension (Mark xvi. 19.) This choice of subjects shows at least an orthodox belief in the divinity of Christ, and a correct appreciation of his true position as the centre of the Christian system.

Having thus exemplified the ordinary Sabbath service, Mr. Liston does the same with the communion-service, as conducted in the Church of Scotland, and including, in addition to the day of actual celebration, what is called the "Preparation Sabbath," and the "Fast Day," but omitting what takes place on the ensuing Monday, as to which there may have been a change of usage, although this was formerly by some regarded as the great day of the feast. For the Preparation Sabbath we have, first, an appropriate morning prayer; then a sermon on the character and office of John the Baptist (Luke i. 76); then a public or concluding prayer; and lastly, an address, announcing the Lord's Supper and a previous day of prayer and fasting. The services for this day are a general or morning prayer; a sermon on Christ's being sent to bless us by turning us from our iniquities (Acts iii. 26); an intermediate prayer; another sermon on the love of God in sending his Son to be a propitiation for our sins (1 John iv. 19); and a concluding prayer, as usual. For the actual communion we have, first, a morning prayer; then a sermon on the duty of washing our hands in innocency in preparing to approach God's altar (Ps. xxvi. 6); an intermediate or specific prayer; and then the "fencing of the tables." This, which is well-known as one of the most cherished usages of old Scotch Presbyterianism, con-

sists in an address to the communicants, stating the required qualifications, and excluding such as are without them, whence this part of the communion service takes its name. After this a psalm is sung, and while it is singing, the minister descends from the pulpit, and, the psalm being finished, reads the words of institution; the elements having in the mean time been set upon the table by the elders. Then comes the "first table service," which includes the "consecration prayer," and the first administration of the ordinance, and is followed by the 103d psalm, and four other "table services," including the administration to as many successive companies. In some churches each of these concludes with a psalm, in others, only the first and last, immediately before the "exhortation or concluding address," and the "prayer after the communion," which is here followed by a second sermon on the duty of bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus (2 Cor. iv. 10,) and the "public or concluding prayer."

The Ordination Service, as here given, opens with a morning prayer, followed by a sermon on the fear of the Lord as the only principle of a good life, (Ps. xix. 11,) and the act of ordination, which agrees precisely with our own familiar practice, except in what relates to patronage and presentation, and is therefore necessarily peculiar to established churches. The ordination prayer and the right-hand of fellowship, are followed by an address (or what we call a charge) to the minister, another to the people, and a public or concluding prayer. The service for the ordination of elders comprehends the questions to the candidates, the ordaining prayer, and two addresses to the "intrants" and the people.

The Baptismal Service, after morning prayer, contains a sermon on the sacrament of baptism, (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19,) followed by an address to the parent, only one being mentioned, either here or in the preface, where the author speaks of it as interesting to the pious mother to peruse this service, "at the same moment that her husband is taking upon himself, in the house of God, the baptismal vows in behalf of her young infant" (p. xii.) This may refer, however, only to the case of unavoidable detention, which the author has in view throughout the volume. The address is followed by a prayer, in the midst

of which the act of baptism is performed, as with us, the only variation here observable being the use of the plural pronoun *you* in reference to a single subject. There is, however, one variation in the practice of the Scottish church itself, as to the unimportant question, whether the child shall continue to be held by the parent during the address, or returned to the nurse after presentation till the moment of actual baptism, which last is preferred by the author as more ancient and expedient, since the other may prove inconvenient "from the noise which the child sometimes makes," (p. 336.) The Marriage Service is extremely simple, consisting of a prayer and short address, with a few rubrical directions as to postures and certificates.

The remainder of Mr. Liston's volume contains three occasional sermons, which were not in the first edition, and appear to have been actually preached in the course of his official ministrations. The first is a funeral sermon, on the death of the Rev. Dr. Taylor of Tibbermore, (Ps. xc. 12;) the second a national fast-day sermon, on account of the Crimean war, (Isaiah i. 19, 20;) the third a national thanksgiving sermon for the peace which followed, (Ps. l. 17—23.)

The book which we have been describing, unpretending as it is, deserves the praise of being one and homogeneous, the simple unmixed product of respectable old-fashioned Presbyterianism, in its most sedate and least eccentric form, and therefore well entitled to be called, although not actually called, a "Presbyterian Liturgy." In this respect it differs greatly from the volume which does bear that name, and which we have associated with it. This is no less remarkable for want of unity, and the crude mixture of incongruous materials, implying a deficiency of clear and strong convictions on the part of the compiler. The comparison is easier and the contrast stronger from the fact, that the third division of the book, comprising the last ninety-four pages, is precisely on the plan of Mr. Liston's, and in execution so much like it, that it might have passed for a continuation, or a second series, but for its nearly simultaneous appearance, and a few points of difference in the arrangement. For example, it begins just where the other ends, with

Marriage, giving very much the same forms, or rather the same substance in another form, and then proceeds to the Baptismal service, with the same peculiarity of noticing the father only, but without the plural pronoun in the form of baptism. The Funeral Service is a single prayer, to be offered at the house, either before or after "the distribution by attendants of the customary refreshment handed round to those who are inclined to partake of it." Although we are reporting not reforming, we venture to suggest that this venerable usage is at least as dangerous as that of praying at the grave, which all Scotch Presbyterians seem to hold in such abhorrence as a Popish superstition. The "Sabbath Service," in this book, is only for a single day, and gives no samples of the lecture or sermon, merely indicating their position in relation to the prayers, which are exemplified, and strike us, on a hasty glance, as very similar, in tone and sentiment, to those of Mr. Liston, but with somewhat less of the accustomed Scripture phraseology, and somewhat more that tastes like rinsings of the Litany and Collects, which are never less acceptable to us than when they are diluted or acidulated by too weak or too strong an infusion from written or unwritten "Presbyterian Liturgies."

The Communion Service differs in this book from that of Liston in a very significant and symptomatic manner, by omitting the Preparatory Sabbath and the Fast Day, as belonging to a system of observance, of which "some there are who think that there is a spirit of formalism in these preliminary arrangements;" which may all be very true, but not the less suggestive of this writer's own position in comparison with Liston's. A communion-sermon is inserted on the Death of Christ (John xix. 30), followed by the "Fencing of the Tables," and four "Table Services," with prayers annexed or interspersed, and an afternoon communion-sermon on the "House of many Mansions" (John xiv. 23), with a general Concluding Prayer.

Besides forms for the Ordination both of Ministers and Elders, very similar to those in Liston, this book gives us one for the Licensing of *Probationers*, a term which we should like to see revived in our own usage, as exactly descriptive of the thing, and suited to correct the growing disposition to con-

found probation and possession, or the preliminary trial of a man's gifts with their permanent official exercise.*

We have now described the last part of this book, corresponding to the whole of Liston's, with a few slight variations, some of which, however, seem to indicate the author's stand-point, as a little doubtful between strict and liberal Presbyterianism. This impression is confirmed by his introducing, in the middle of his volume, the entire Directory for Public Worship, as prepared by the Westminster Assembly, and adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1645. There is, of course, nothing unpresbyterian in this, except the want of any reason for its publication, and the vague suspicion thence arising, that the writer thought it an approximation to those "Presbyterian Liturgies," which seem to have unsettled his convictions and associations, without absolutely doing them away. This doubtful state of mind is still more visible in the first division of the book, which we have now reached in our backward march, and which seems to be the reprint of an article on Mr. Baird's volume, as edited in England by the Rev. Thomas Binney, and contains large extracts both from that work and the *Mercersburg Review*, in the shape of liturgical attempts and samples; while the *Scotch Reviewer* seems to halt between the Old and New Light, denying the primitive use of written prayers, and the expediency of their coercive or exclusive use, and yet apparently distracted by a vague desire to get at them, though he knows not how. His state of mind, and no doubt that of many others, in relation to this matter, may be shadowed forth or symbolized by an occurrence in the Church of Scotland, which we now learn for the first time from the book before us, and which seems to have a sort of typical significance. We refer to the fact, that the old Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh, where the National Covenant was signed in 1638, and which has ever since been visited by strangers, as the monument of that event and those connected with it, has been lately turned into a modern gothic structure, full of

* In both these volumes we observe the inexact expression, *concio ad clericos*, as if *clerus* meant a *clergyman* (confounding it with *clericus*) and not the *clergy*. The correct form (*concio ad clerum*) is still current, both in Old and New England.

painted windows, without gallery or pulpit, with a platform something like an altar, written prayers, responses, kneeling at prayer, and standing up at praise, *the service in the forenoon almost wholly devotional, the sermon, which has hitherto occupied so prominent a place in Scottish worship, being reserved for the afternoon*; all which is understood by Dr. Robert Lee, the pastor, to be strictly in accordance with "the spirit of the Westminster Directory"! Not one of these things is unlawful; but how pitiful they look just there, among the graves of the Scotch martyrs, with the old ungainly outside of the church which, we are glad to hear, is insusceptible of renovation. If there is anything on earth that is lawful but not expedient, it is such a violation of historical congruity as this, the utter disregard of what a nation or a church has been becoming through a course of ages, and the effort all at once to make it something else, no matter how much finer or more beautiful. Such taste is really as barbarous as its opposite, the old iconoclastic vandalism which defaced and demolished, but for conscience' sake. Let old Greyfriars, with its new interior, still remain a witness of what was, and a prophetic sign of what is yet to be, within the bosom of the Scottish Kirk. Our nameless author does not praise this revolution; he begins as if he meant to blame it; but before he gets so far, his courage fails him, and he begs to be excused from saying what he thinks, but owns that some reform is needed. "The '*preaching*,' the '*hearing*' of so and so—the manner in which the worship of the Almighty, which ought ever to be gravely and decently conducted, is too frequently compressed into a corner, that greater scope may be afforded for a sermon of extreme length, too often places the instruction, nay even the pandering to a false and vicious taste on the part of the hearers,—in the foreground; while in many congregations, from want of proper training and help, the only portion of the service in which the congregation can as yet take part, is miserably ill-conducted" (p. 5.) This inelegant and only half-intelligible sentence is entitled to attention solely as a poor translation into words of the idea more effectively expressed by Dr. Lee's removal of the sermon from the morning service at old Greyfriars, namely, that the Pulpit is a movable appendage to the Altar and the

Reading Desk, which has become too prominent, and must be pushed aside or back into its proper place. This is the plain Scotch or English both of this and of a dozen other tentative approaches to the same point from as many different directions upon both sides of the water; and we therefore think it no unseasonable process to examine it with some deliberation and attention, both in the light of history and argument, both as a question of experience and principle. We do not mean at present to reopen the discussion as to Forms of Prayer; we do not ask attention to the quality and method either of our Prayers or Preachings, but to their mutual relation as integral parts of Public Worship, and to the truth or falsehood of the dogma which would make the one exclude the other.

If it be true, as some affirm and more believe, that Preaching is a foreign and intrusive element in Public Worship, which may well be tolerated for the sake of some advantages attending it, but when it seems to interfere with our Devotions, must be checked as an excess, if not abated as a nuisance; we may naturally look for some expression of this mutual relation in the early history of our religion. We may certainly expect, at least, to find the solemn public service of the church, from the beginning, represented either by express description, or, if that be wanting, by the incidental use of names, implying that its character and purpose are essentially Devotional, and not Didactic. But is this the case?

We shall not push our inquiry back into the old economy, the ceremonial character of which might be not unjustly thought to detract from its authority as an example for our spiritual worship. It may not be useless to observe, however, even in passing, that among the most peculiar features of the Mosaic ritual, is the almost total absence of liturgical forms of speech, and indeed its almost unbroken silence with respect to prayer, as forming any part, or even a required accompaniment of the ceremonial service. But as this is no less true of preaching, it affords us no aid in our present inquiry.

In the Gospel History, or Life of Christ, we find the Synagogue extremely prominent, both as a Jewish institution, and a means used by our Lord himself for gaining access to the peo-

ple. We are far from being satisfied with what has now become the stereotyped doctrine in relation to the origin of the Synagogue, to wit, that it arose in the Babylonish Exile, as a succedaneum for the temple worship, and was afterwards maintained by the restored Jews in the Holy Land. We cannot see how a purely spiritual service could replace one purely ceremonial, nor believe that the older Jews, when not in actual attendance at Jerusalem, were wholly without public worship. We are strongly inclined to the opinion, that the Synagogue was originally nothing but the ordinary *meeting* (συναγωγή) of the people for this purpose, in their several neighbourhoods, and under the direction of their local elders; that this obvious and almost indispensable arrangement was a part of their religious system *ab initio*; that it was carried with them into exile, and there, of course, assumed somewhat more of a distinct organization, which perhaps continued after their return; but that the minute and complicated system of government and discipline, now found in Jewish books, and regarded by some Presbyterian writers, more especially since the days of Vitranga, as the model of our own organization, is of later date than the destruction of Jerusalem, and had its birth in the exclusion of the Jews from Palestine by that event and those which followed in the reign of Adrian. If this be so, the present Synagogue arrangements furnish no conclusive proof of what existed in the time of Christ; and yet it is only from these later Jewish customs and traditions that we know anything of public prayer as forming part of the old Synagogue Service. We have not the least doubt of the fact, or of the truth of the tradition as to this point; but we think it a remarkable and interesting circumstance, though purely negative and therefore not at all subversive of the proof just cited, that although our Saviour is so often represented in the Gospels as attending at the Synagogue, and although the reading of the Scriptures is distinctly mentioned upon one occasion, and his preaching upon many, there is not the least allusion to the act of prayer, as forming part of the accustomed service.* We are sure, as we have said

* See Matt. iv. 23, ix. 35, xii. 9, xiii. 54; Mark i. 21, iii. 1, vi. 2; Luke iv. 15, 16, vi. 6, xiii. 10; John vi. 59, xviii. 20.

already, that it did so; but this omission in the record, even if it be entirely fortuitous, is very far from showing, that in the worship of the Jews at that time, Prayer was every thing and Preaching nothing.

But the ministry of Christ himself, and by necessary consequence the history in which it is recorded, belong not to the new but to the old dispensation, of which they are indeed the winding up, and at the same time an immediate preparation for the new economy or Christian church, which dates from Pentecost. We have but one contemporary history of this church in its first stage of developement and progress; but happily for us, that one is not only authentic but inspired. Now, in this authoritative narrative (the Acts of the Apostles) we may naturally look for something to confirm the postulate, so hastily assumed by many in our own day, that the ordinance of Preaching forms no part of Christian worship, but is only an appendage to it, which may be contracted or dispensed with, at the pleasure or discretion of the church, without impairing the integrity of her divinely sanctioned institutions. In search of some such confirmation, we go back to the beginning of the history, and there find prayers not only mentioned as an everyday employment,* but in two instances formally recorded,† yet of such a character as shows that they formed no part of ordinary Christian worship, but had reference to special and unique occasions, which accounts for their insertion in the narrative. On the other hand, a much larger space is occupied with Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost, and on several subsequent occasions,‡ besides incidental statements of a general kind, which show that this was one great function of the apostolical office, from and after the effusion of the Holy Ghost.§

Such is the tenor of the history in reference to Prayer and Preaching, till we reach the sixth of Acts, and the first recorded institution of a Christian office after that of an apostle, and as such affording promise of some welcome light upon the question now before us. In connection with this

* See Acts i. 14; ii. 42.

† See Acts i. 24, 25; iv. 24—30.

‡ See Acts ii. 14—36; iii. 12—26; iv. 8—12; xix. 20; v. 30—32.

§ See Acts ii. 40; iv. 31; v. 28, 42.

great transaction, it may not be wholly useless to observe, that although the principles on which the church and ministry were to be organized had been determined and revealed from the beginning of the new dispensation, the actual organization was effected by degrees, to meet emergencies as they arose. The basis of the system was the Jewish Eldership, the only permanent essential office of the ancient church, which was tacitly transferred from it to the new, without express or formal institution, except in Gentile churches, where no such office had a previous existence.*

On the other hand, the office of a stated Pastor and official Preacher seems to have been gradually introduced during the itinerant ministry of the Apostles, and of the Prophets and Evangelists, who under their direction did the work of preaching for the first generation of believers, but whose places, as they died off one by one, appear to have been filled by that ministry which still continues, and which really existed from the first in the bosom of the local eldership, though not developed as a distinct office until rendered necessary by the disappearance of the inspired preachers, who began the great work of enforcing and diffusing the new doctrine.

So too the Diaconate, or permanent provision for the charitable functions of the church as a society, appears to have been instituted in an emergency, arising from the jealousy between the two antagonistic races of Hebrews and Hellenists, or native and foreign Jews, a jealousy not wholly left behind by those of either class who were converted to the Christian faith and helped to constitute the primitive or mother church. When this spirit found expression in relation to the daily distribution of assistance to the widows of the new society, the Twelve, in the exercise of their authority as organizers of the church, directed the selection of seven persons by and from the body of believers, who should take charge of this delicate and interesting business, while the Twelve themselves should be exclusively employed in more essential functions. "But we," as distinguished from the Seven to be designated under

* Compare Acts xi. 30 with Acts xiv. 23.

their direction, "will give ourselves (literally, stick fast, constantly adhere) to prayer, and to the ministry (or dispensation) of the word,"* the Christian doctrine, or the gospel, in a wide sense, as denoting the whole system of divine and saving truth, contained in the New Testament or Christian Revelation.

The antithesis or contrast here implied, or rather expressed by the adversative conjunction (*ἀλλὰ*), settles an important question as to the priority or relative importance of teaching and alms-giving, or bodily and spiritual nourishment, as functions of the church and ministry, and thus prospectively determines a dispute which has been needlessly revived in later times by some who, not contented or perhaps imperfectly acquainted with the apostolical decision, would if possible reverse it, and at least by implication cast a censure on the Twelve themselves for not leaving praying and preaching to their helpers, and devoting their own time to the more urgent task of "serving tables," or supplying men's temporal necessities.

But what do we here learn as to the other question of precedence which has been suggested, namely, that respecting the comparative importance of the two great functions, which the Twelve put in opposition to the ministry of tables, and to which they express their resolution to devote themselves, as something more incumbent upon them than charitable distribution? These functions are described as "Prayer" and the "Ministry of the Word." The former cannot mean mere personal devotion, secret prayer, any more than the latter can mean private study of the Scriptures, or even a less public exposition of them, but must necessarily denote the work of preaching in the highest and the widest sense, as appears not only from the nature and the circumstances of the case, but from the use of the word "ministry" or "ministration" (*διακονία*), which originally signifies the service of the table, or the furnishing and distributing of food, and in its figurative application to religious duties, necessarily implies both public and official action, which by parity of reasoning must extend to the other act or function

* Acts vi. 4.

here in question, and determine it to be the conduct of the Common Prayer or joint worship of the people; so that both together are descriptive of that worship in its two great parts or aspects, the DIDACTIC and DEVOTIONAL, the latter comprehending Praise, whatever may have been the form in which it was presented.

But while it is thus evident that the Prayer and Ministration of the Word, to which the Twelve so solemnly devote themselves, were public functions of their office, it by no means follows that the corresponding private duties are excluded, as less urgently required or less morally incumbent, but rather, on the contrary, that these are presupposed, as the invisible or less apparent springs from which the others were to flow as constant and abundant streams; in other words, that they must meditate and search the Scriptures, and commune with God in secret, that they might in public give themselves, with more effect, to Prayer and to the Ministration of the Word. This appears again, not only from the nature of the case, and from the necessary mutual relation of the private and the public duties here in question, but from the recorded practice and example of the apostles who, like their Master, sought for opportunities of personal devotion, and whose preaching was not only in the great congregation, but from house to house.*

Let it also be observed that this expressed determination of the Twelve has reference, not to extraordinary temporary functions of their office, not to miracle or inspiration, not to that immediate attestation of Christ's life and death and resurrection, which could only be afforded by that single generation,† but precisely to those duties which are common to the apostolic body with the permanent and uninspired ministry, of whom the terms employed are no less predicable, and who are equally entitled and required, in their place and in their measure, to repeat them.

This consideration makes it not a curious speculation, or a mere historical inquiry, but a practical question of some interest and moment, what is the mutual relation of these two great

* Compare Acts x. 9, xx. 20, xxii. 17, &c.

† Compare Acts i. 8, 21, 22, ii. 32, iii. 15, iv. 33, v. 32, x. 41, 42, &c.

ministerial duties? Is it one of absolute equality, or one of primary and secondary rank? And if the latter, upon which side is the dependence or inferiority? There is nothing, as we have already mentioned, in the words which we have quoted (Acts vi. 4), or their context to resolve this doubt. The question of precedence there is not between Praying and Preaching, but between these, viewed as one, and the sacred but more secular employment of relieving the necessitous. We are clearly taught by apostolical example, that the latter must not take precedence of the former; but we are not here taught to discriminate at all between the two great parts of worship, the Didactic and Devotional. That the question is not settled by the order of the words, or by the fact that Prayer is mentioned first, is clear from Paul's inversion of that order, when he speaks of every creature being "sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. iv. 5).

If then we would make this invidious distinction, we must find its ground and warrant elsewhere. But how are we to find it, even elsewhere, in the Word of God? The Apostolical Epistles make perpetual allusion both to Prayer and Preaching, but with this distinction, that the latter, *ex vi termini*, invariably implies some measure of publicity, whereas the former, with a very few exceptions, may be understood, in all these passages, of private prayer or personal devotion, and even in the few referred to as exceptions, there is no limitation of the public act to any class or order, as its proper and exclusive function.*

When we turn from the Epistles once more to the Acts, we find the two things either joined, as in the case already cited (Acts vi. 4), so as to seem one and indivisible; or one is evidently put for both, as if they must of course suggest each other. The only deviation from our own familiar usage in the dialect of this book is, that whereas we are accustomed to describe the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. x. 25) by the name of Public Worship, the Scripture usually makes the act of Preaching, or Religious Teaching, or the Word, consi-

* See 1 Cor. xi. 4, 5, xiv. 14, 15; 1 Tim. ii. 8. The other cases are too numerous for citation, but may be collected by the aid of a Concordance.

dered as its source and subject, the more prominent idea. It would be easy to evince this by a copious induction of particulars; but want of room, and some regard to the patience of our readers, will constrain us simply to refer in a foot-note to a number of the most important passages, which go to prove the general proposition, that although the Sacred History mentions a multitude of Christian assemblies, and although there can be no doubt that every one of these was sanctified by prayer as well as by the word of God, there is perhaps not more than one case of the many now referred to (*viz.* Acts xx. 36,)* in which prayer is even casually mentioned, whereas preaching is invariably represented as the prominent transaction.† This may prove, what we have no doubt is the truth, that Prayer was so essential an ingredient in Christian worship as to need no formal record; but it cannot prove that Preaching was a mere subordinate or incidental service, which might or might not have been added to the more important service of Devotion.

Such, so far as we know, is the sum and substance of the information which the Word of God affords us, with respect to the priority of Prayer and Preaching in the primitive assemblies, namely, that the first is scarcely ever mentioned, while the other is continually used to designate the whole of what we now call Public Worship. That this usage long survived the Apostolic Age, and even lasted through the first six centuries, is a proposition which we verily believe, and could easily establish from original as well as second-hand authorities; but hampered as we are by want of time and space, we must again content ourselves with a general reference to the best books upon Christian Antiquities, and with a summary assertion, that from Justin Martyr and Tertullian to Origen and Cyprian, from these to Chrysostom and Augustine, and from these to Leo and Gregory, both called the Great, Preaching continued to give name and character to Christian Worship;‡ that the first two writers

* Acts iv. 24 may be added, although scarcely a specimen of ordinary public worship.

† Compare Acts viii. 25, 35, ix. 20, x. 42, xi. 19, 20, 26, xiv. 1, 7, 21, 25, xv. 35, xvi. 6, 10, xvii. 2, 17, xviii. 4, 11, xix. 8, xx. 7, 20, 31, xxviii. 31.

‡ The Greek verb from which *liturgy* is derived, and which occurs in Acts xiii. 2, is there explained by Chrysostom to mean *preaching*.

just named, in their description of that worship, make it prominent; that all the others practised it incessantly; that Ambrose represents it as the great office of a bishop; that the church at Rome was censured in the East at one time for appearing to neglect it; that so far from being generally slighted, every possible variety of preaching which has since been known, expository, textual, doctrinal, rhetorical, and practical (except perhaps political, or preaching to the times) was constantly familiar to the ancient church, and carried to a high degree of relative perfection; that this great engine of instruction and conversion, far from being a mere adjunct or appendage to the Prayers, was rather treated as an independent and coequal part of Worship, with appropriate and brief prayers of its own, distinct from the more formal Liturgy, when this had once been introduced; and lastly, that the same surprising disproportion in the frequency with which the two are mentioned in the Scriptures may be traced in the writings of the most illustrious Fathers, so that even in Augustine's days, when liturgies had so increased, the Psalms and Lessons, from which Preaching was inseparable, are mentioned perhaps fifty times in his *Sermones*, where the public prayers are mentioned once.*

The turning point or critical transition in this matter must be sought in the pontificate of Gregory the Great, who, though himself a powerful and constant preacher, represents that juncture in Church History, when doctrinal discussion gave way to liturgical observance, and when much of the attention which had previously been given to the settlement of great theological disputes, began to be expended on Gregorian Chants and Canons of the Mass. It is not perhaps till then, and as a necessary consequence of this great revolution, that we find the Pulpit severed from the Altar, or removed to one side as a species of incumbrance, and retaining that position through the Middle Ages. But even in that period of prevailing darkness, the remaining representatives of earnest zeal and Augustinian

* We refer the reader, for the proof of these assertions, to that rich storehouse of information on this subject, the fourth chapter of the fourteenth book of Bingham; to Augusti's rearrangement of the same matter both in his larger and his smaller work; and to a clear resumé of the whole in the eighteenth chapter of Dr. Lyman Coleman's "Ancient Christianity."

doctrine were precisely those who, like Bernard of Clairvaux, notwithstanding their gross errors and ascetic superstitions, still maintained the honour of the Pulpit, not only as the great appointed means of propagating truth, but as the central part of Christian worship; so that it may be said of all the earlier reformers, such as Wickliffe, Huss, Savonarola, and a multitude of others, that the Pulpit was their *ΠΟΥ ΣΤΟ* when they moved the world; and that what is written of the first missionaries sent forth from Jerusalem, might be equally applied to them, that in person or by proxy, they "went everywhere preaching the Word" (Acts viii. 3). On the other hand, the disuse or undue depreciation of the Pulpit, as compared not only with the Bench, the Bar, and the Chair of academical instruction, but also with the Altar and the Reading Desk, became one of the surest signs, because one of the most efficient causes, of the general and growing corruption; so that towards the close of the dark ages, preaching had in many parts of Europe been almost forgotten, as a duty which the lower clergy could not and the higher clergy would not undertake;* while in due proportion grew the zeal and the punctilious care, with which the same men went through what was now called the Liturgical part of divine service.

From the very beginning of the great Reformation in the sixteenth century, the restoration of the pulpit to its proper place in Christian worship was a breaking point, a shibboleth, an issue, which divided the two parties. It was by what some would call excessive preaching, it was by what some would call a disproportionate protrusion of the pulpit, so as often to eclipse the fald-stool and the lectern, that the church was under God reformed, and when she needed it, reformed again. This is perfectly consistent with the fact that since the Reformation, Rome, instructed by experience, has stolen an arrow from the quiver of her enemies, and that in some parts of that church, but chiefly in the freer and the more enlightened Gallican communion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the art of pulpit eloquence was not only practised, but advanced almost to the acme of artistical perfection, and that

* See McCrie's *Life of Knox*, p. 15 (American edition).

even in our own day, the same engine has been used with mighty and destructive force by such men as Lacordaire and others, in defence of Romish error, as well as of the truth still mingled with it. But it nevertheless remains true that the Pulpit, the Didactic part of Worship, is less dear than the Devotional, or rather the Liturgical, to the inmost affections of that church, in whose practice, if not in her theory, ignorance is the mother of devotion, and of those in other churches who still breathe her spirit, and whose tendencies in this respect are marked by nothing more distinctly—for example, in the Romanizing party of the Church of England—than by this unprotestant, unscriptural, and anti-apostolical depreciation of that very part of worship, which throughout the New Testament, and the early ages, and the Reformation, was habitually used to designate the whole. Even this, however, might be still a lesser evil, if confined within the definite, and well-known lines of real or mock Popery. But there is ground at least for serious reflection, when we find the same morbid tendencies developed in the purest churches; when even from the bosom, or at least from some remoter members, of the unritual and austere Presbyterian body, there is now and then a voice raised in complaint of the excessive prominence allowed to Preaching in our common worship, and the deficient quantity and quality of what is more immediately and formally devotional. As this is sometimes if not always, the expression of a conscientious and sincere conviction, it may not be useless to inquire for a moment upon what foundation that conviction rests.

So far as we know, all the reasons ever urged in its behalf may be reduced to one, to wit, that that part of a religious service which is addressed to God is, from its very nature and the necessary circumstances of the case, more solemn, more essential, and should therefore be more prominent and more attended to, than that which is intended to communicate instruction, and excite religious feeling, and induce right action on the part of human worshippers.

To that part of the argument derived from the comparative “solemnity” of this or that religious service, we may answer, in the first place, that the word is vague and dubious, conveying more to one mind than to another; in the next place, that the

thing itself, according to the usual acceptation of the term, is a subjective exercise, affection, or impression, and as such unfit to be the measure of our duty; in the third place, that "solemnity," depending as it does upon imagination, taste, and sensibility, if made the rule or standard of religious duty, would infallibly conduct us far beyond what any Presbyterians now contend for; not only to the dim religious light, dramatic forms, and artificial music of the Romish and some other rituals, but also to the fearful scenes presented to the trembling neophyte in ancient mysteries and modern lodges; in a word, to every artificial means by which "solemnity" can be promoted. Nothing indeed can be more clearly symptomatic of erroneous judgment and diseased affection with respect to public worship, than the disposition to approve of any innovation or revived corruption, on the simple ground that it is "solemn." So far as this means any thing susceptible of definition, it is something intrinsically neither good nor evil, something not religious in itself, but owing its religious character, if any such it has, to its association with divine truth, or to an express divine command. We admit, indeed, that both these conditions are complied with in the case of Public Prayer. It is associated with divine truth. It is commanded by divine authority. It has been practised in the church from the beginning. It is known by the experience of ages to be necessary to the life of all religion. It is therefore every way entitled to the epithet of "solemn," in the best and highest sense of that equivocal expression. The only question to be answered is, not whether it is solemn, or whether its solemnity entitles it to be performed with reverential awe, but whether its solemnity is so much greater than that belonging to the act of preaching, or the didactic part of public worship, as to make the latter an inferior appendage or a mere convenience, added by usage or authority to our devotions.

The only ground on which this can be even plausibly alleged is, that our prayers are addressed to God, and our preachings to man. But in the first place, we must take into account not only to but from whom these respective acts proceed. If our prayers are dignified by being uttered at the throne of grace, to Him who sits upon it, are they not degraded, in the same

proportion, by coming from a company of miserable sinners, whose infirmities are aided by the Holy Spirit, it is true, for otherwise they could not pray at all, but whose petitions need another intercession to render them acceptable, that of Him who offers them to God, perfumed and sweetened by the incense of his own exhaustless merit. On the other hand, if Preaching is subordinate to Prayer, because addressed to sinful mortals, is it not dignified in turn, and clothed with a solemnity which may be looked upon as awful, by the circumstance, that all lawfully commissioned preachers are, in a real and important sense, the mouth of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, to sinful, ignorant, and ruined souls, or at the best to souls renewed, but only partially sanctified and made acquainted with the truth? This fearful trust may be neglected or abused; but that cannot change its character or meaning as an Embassy from God to man (2 Cor. v. 20), or make it any the less solemn as a part of worship, even in comparison with Prayer addressed to God himself.

In the next place, let it be observed that solemn as Prayer is, and absolutely necessary both as a duty which we owe to God, and as a means of spiritual progress to ourselves, there is a sense in which it may be said that Public Prayer is not so indispensable, on either of these grounds, as Preaching. In our own experience they are happily inseparable, both as privileges and as duties; but we can easily conceive of their divorce, and no less easily perceive that, although written forms of prayer have sometimes, as in Germany and England, kept alive the popular religion, even after the defection of the clergy, yet apart from these exceptional and temporary cases, and supposing both to be dependent, as they are with us, upon the piety and knowledge of the very same persons, the devotion of our churches could not long survive the silence of our pulpits, for the simple but unanswerable reason, that the truth is indispensable to pure devotion, and that although private prayer might, for a time, and in a case of great emergency, preserve the spirit of devotion, though our public service were didactic only, private study could not long supply the place of public teaching—unless the ministry be quite superfluous. If, on the contrary, it is essential, as a part of the Divine plan for pre-

serving and diffusing and enforcing truth, its place can never be supplied by mere liturgical performances, nor even by genuine devotional approaches to the throne of grace, however humbly made, however graciously accepted. In a word, the want of public prayer could be more easily supplied in private than the want of preaching.

But in the third place, even granting that the act of Public Prayer is in itself more solemn, and in the true sense of our Directory for Worship (chap. vi. 4), "more important" than the act of Preaching, it does not follow that in practice, in experience, it is more incumbent or more indispensable. Nothing can well be more fallacious than to measure the immediate claims of different duties by their relative intrinsic moment, irrespectively of circumstances. No one doubts that what we owe to God is higher in its claims than what we owe to man. Yet who would hesitate to interrupt, or even to forego, an act of worship, for the sake of rescuing a human life, or even of allaying human sorrow? The intellectual employments of a public institution, such as a theological seminary, are *per se* inferior in dignity and obligation to its spiritual exercises. Yet the necessary absence of the person who conducts the latter creates less confusion and does less harm than the necessary absence of the person who conducts the former. Why? Because his place may be more easily supplied; because there is a greater number qualified, by previous training or immediate preparation, to perform the higher act of leading men's devotions, than the lower act of giving them instruction. Now what is true of such an institution or society is true, and for precisely the same reason, in the great congregation and the church at large. In other words, that part of worship which is commonly regarded as intrinsically more important and more solemn, may be also more within the reach and the capacity of ordinary Christians than the part which, although less imposing in its form and its pretensions, presupposes a less usual and general preparation. The fact which we have here assumed as true, to wit, that the capacity for public prayer is more diffused than the capacity for preaching, we shall not attempt to argue, but appeal to the experience of multitudes of ministers, who often feel how much their most

elaborate and really successful efforts to expound the truth would be enforced and carried home by the prayers of some among their humblest hearers, rich in faith and practised in devotion. Yet the same men would not for a moment think of yielding their responsible position as expounders of divine truth, even to the most intelligent and eloquent of those committed to their care. These are the rational considerations upon which, in their connection with the previous arguments from history, we venture to dispute the popular idea that the Pulpit, the Didactic and the Hortatory part of worship, is a mere appendage, much less an incumbrance, to the part too commonly regarded as exclusively Devotional.

Having thus theoretically stated what we honestly believe to be the only true corrective of a prevalent and hurtful error, it remains to be considered how it may be usefully applied in practice. As to this point, we appeal to our younger ministers and students of theology. We earnestly advise them to regard the "Ministry of the Word" as the grand distinctive office which they hold or seek; the Ministry of the Word, not in the narrow sense of speaking from the pulpit, but in the noble, comprehensive sense of all official and authoritative teaching on religious subjects. Let the truth of God lie back of all their efforts to promote God's glory and to save men's souls. From this untainted and perennial spring let all the streams of their religion and their influence for ever flow. But while they make this the foundation and the centre of their public ministrations, let it never be divorced, in theory or practice, from its natural concomitant, the work of Prayer. Whatever might be lawful or incumbent in the case of some conceivable emergency, not likely to occur in our experience, and therefore not requiring forethought and provision, the public duty of the working minister is one and indivisible. Prayer and Preaching must accompany and supplement each other; the one must have its root or fountain in the other; the one requires training no less than the other; and he who would conform to apostolical example must give himself to both with equal diligence and equal zeal.

But while all this is true of public ministerial service, it implies and presupposes one more private, and exactly corres-

ponding in its necessary functions. As public teaching will be absolutely worthless without private study, public prayer will be unedifying without prayer in secret. Out of this, if we may here resume and carry out a thought before suggested, as from a hidden but abundant source, the stream of public ministrations must be fed, or it will soon be dry or noxious. Not in public only, therefore, but in private also, ministers must "give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

This recurrence to the words of the apostles on a memorable occasion, and to their concise description of the permanent and spiritual part of their great office, necessarily suggests the thought, that he who does these two things, with their necessary adjuncts, faithfully and fully, both in public and in private, will have no need of additional employment. None of us, without presumption, can expect to do more than was done by the Apostles. And if they could not combine the tasks of serving tables and of preaching Christ; if they devolved the blessed work of charity on others, that they might be wholly given to their spiritual labours; we have small encouragement to hope that our versatility and busy zeal will ever solve the problem which to them remained insoluble, the problem, old but ever new, of doing everything at once, which is continually tempting the ambition and the vanity of Christians and of Christian ministers, and under the delusive hope of doing more for God, and for the church, and for the souls of men, too often leaving them to the disgrace of doing little or the guilt of doing nothing. From a prospect so discouraging the best relief is that afforded by the language and the conduct of the Twelve on the occasion so repeatedly referred to (Acts vi. 4.) The example there held forth is admirably suited both to kindle hope and regulate exertion. On the one hand, the great business of the ministry is here presented; on the other, it is shown to be sufficient to engross their highest powers and their best affections, and to occupy their whole time till the end of life. Let this then be their principle, their maxim, and their watchword. Let them be prepared to say, without a murmur or misgiving, If others can combine this work with secular employments, or with intellectual and literary labour not directly bearing on it, let them do so. If some can conscientiously prefer the secular or cha-

ritable aspects of the work itself, without impugning their sincerity, or sitting for a moment in censorious judgment on their acts or motives, we say, let them do so. To their own Master let them stand or fall. Let others, better than ourselves, do as they will, or as they can, or as they must. But we (let those whom we are now advising say) but we, knowing our own infirmities, would rather cling to apostolical example, and on that ground, if no other, "we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."*

ART. II.—*Three Discourses upon the Religious History of Bowdoin College, during the administrations of Presidents MeKeen, Appleton, and Allen.* By EGBERT C. SMYTH, Collins Professor of Natural and Revealed Religion. Brunswick: published by J. Griffin. 1858.

IN these judicious and timely discourses Professor Smyth has made a valuable contribution to our means of understanding what has hitherto been very imperfectly understood by the public—Religion in Colleges. In our last, we noticed the discourse of Professor Fisher on the History of the church in Yale College, chiefly, however, with reference to its theological bearings. We shall now have occasion to refer to it, along with

* Since this article was in type, we have met with the following illustration of the quarter from which, and the spirit in which, Preaching was depreciated two hundred years ago. It is from a charge by Bishop Leslie, a noted persecutor of our Presbyterian fathers in Ulster. "Preaching amongst you is grown to that esteem that it hath shuffled out of the church both the public prayers which is the immediate worship of God, and the duty of catechizing, and is now accounted the sole and only service of God, the very *consummatum est* of all Christianity, as if all religion consisted in the hearing of a sermon. Unto whom I may say in the words of the apostle, 'What? is all hearing? is the whole body an ear?' or tell you in the words of a most reverend prelate [Laud?], that if you be the sheep of Christ, you have no mark of his sheep but the ear-mark." (See Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 3d ed. vol. i. p. 229.) This witticism, poor at best, is rendered poorer still by the absurd implication, that the ear is used only in hearing sermons.