

**OUR LITURGY AND ITS
HISTORY; A MANUAL
FOR CHURCHMEN**

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Our Liturgy and its History; a Manual for Churchmen by Anonymous

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"No doubt from God it hath proceeded, and by us it must be acknowledged a work of His singular care and Providence, that the Church hath evermore held a prescript Form of Common Prayer."—Hooker.

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PREFACE.

THE object of this Manual is to give a concise and connected view of the leading facts of the History of the Book of Common Prayer. The amount of misconception, and the general want of information on this subject, would seem to indicate the necessity for such a work. Among the sources from whence the materials were derived, the following are brought under the notice of the reader, as suggestive of a profitable course of studies to those who seek a more extensive acquaintance with the subject.

Palmer's *Antiquities of the English Ritual*,

Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v.

Wheatly on the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Cardwell's *History of Conferences*.

Collier's *Ecclesiastical History*.

To which authors, as well as to Burnett and the Editor of Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, the writer acknowledges his indebtedness; doing so here, in preference to incumbering the text with numerous and perplexing references.

CONTENTS.

Chap.	Page.
I. Remarks on Liturgical Services in general.	1
II. Notice of some early Liturgies	11
III. First attempts at reforming Liturgy of English Church	21
IV. Edward's First Book	27
V. Edward's Second Book	37
VI. The Reign of Queen Mary	47
VII. The Prayer Book of Elizabeth	56
VIII. Conference at Hampton Court	67
IX. Charles and the Commonwealth	73
X. The Last Review	79
XI. Conclusion	92



CHAPTER I.

REMARKS ON LITURGICAL SERVICES IN GENERAL.

BEFORE entering on the main subject of this work, we have deemed it necessary to make a few preliminary remarks on the nature and advantages of Liturgical Services, and briefly to examine how far Scripture lends countenance to the imposition of set forms of prayer.

This investigation is considered necessary for two reasons; first, to put it in the power of members of our Church "to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason" for their adherence to set forms; and secondly, because objections to prescribed Liturgies are the ones most frequently put forward by dissenters to justify their separation from the Church.

Now that God intended that Christians should unite in worshipping Him, appears from the nature of our circumstances, and from Scripture; from the nature of our circumstances, inasmuch

as that in the worship of God, we, as men, have common ground to stand upon—common bonds to bind us. No matter to what extent we may be classified or separated by national, political, or social arrangements, in the presence of God, all these distinctions are abolished; with Him “there is no respect of persons:” if, therefore, men can unite in anything, they can in His worship: and it appears from Scripture, in that the Jewish Church had its stated public services; and in the New Testament, we find mention made of gatherings of the Disciples on the first day of the week, and the Apostle Paul exhorting us not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together.”

If God then is to be worshipped publicly in the assembly of His Saints, how is the worship to be conducted? Is it by extemporaneous prayer and praise, or in a precomposed form? Here the controversy hinges. We propose therefore, to submit some reasons for deciding that the latter is the acceptable mode of worship; reasons, which, while they satisfy and confirm the Churchman, should make the dissenter pause, ere he unqualifiedly condemn Liturgies as unscriptural and absurd.

Before noticing the Scripture arguments in favor of set forms of prayer, we will submit five considerations arising out of the nature of the case, which may help us to form a right decision.

1. While engaged in worship conducted by one person who prays extemporaneously, the mind must be in two distinct attitudes, an intellectual and a devotional; that is, it must attentively listen to the words as they drop from the speaker's lips, examine them, and decide whether it can approve of them or not; and then it must—for not until then can it—appropriate the ideas conveyed by the words, and offer them up at the Throne of Grace. Now, we contend that ordinarily tutored minds, such as form the majority in an assembly, cannot, at the same time, and in an equal degree, exercise these two faculties; the grasp of either will be let go; and a man must on the one hand, blindly adopt as his own, the intemperate, and perhaps indecent, expressions of an unknown speaker; or, on the other, must prostitute his religious emotions to the intellectual exercise of his judgment, and dissipate in criticising the tone and temper of the speaker's words, the attention which should be employed whole and