

**THE SPIRIT OF THE BOOK OF COMMON
PRAYER, AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE
SACRAMENTS, AND OTHER RITES AND
CEREMONIES OF THE CHURCH, ACCORDING
TO THE USE OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF
ENGLAND AND IRELAND; PP. 10-120**

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A CLERGYMAN

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1846.



INTRODUCTION.

THE whole service of the United Church of England and Ireland consists of the Book of Common Prayer, the Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church; the Bidding Prayer and the Sermon, Lecture, or Homily, together with the Psalter or Psalms of David, printed as they are to be sung or said, and a few Hymns.

And this whole service of the United Church is made up of sentences of Holy Writ; of adoration to the Deity in the form of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving; together with the confessions of faith, the confessions of sins, and the absolutions.

But in this portion of the comment of the Spirit of the Book of Common Prayer no notice will be taken of the Psalter, or of the Hymns, or of the Bidding Prayer; for although the Bidding Prayer is a prayer of high con-

sideration, yet, as the Morning and Evening Services are deemed to be concluded void of this prayer, and because at those times when there is no sermon, lecture, or homily; it cannot be used on this account it would be out of order as under the head of any particular service. So also the Hymns and the Psalter are passed over for the present, as consisting of praise and thanks, rather than of prayer in its abstract sense of petition and entreaty.

Of the confessions of faith as contained in the Creeds, these will merit much attention in due course.

With regard to the Litany, it always was and is intended to be a separate service, and therefore the Litany will be treated of as such; and the Holy Communion or the Administration of the Lord's Supper, the Administration of Public Baptism of Infants, the Administration of Private Baptism of Children in houses, the Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years and able to answer for themselves, the Catechism, the Order of Confirmation, the Form of the Solemnization of Matrimony, the Order of the Visitation of the Sick, the Communion of the Sick, the Order of the Burial of the Dead, the Thanksgiving of Women after Childbirth, the Commination, Prayers to be used at Sea, the Form of Prayer to be used on the Fifth of November, as also

those to be used on the Thirty-first day of January and on the Twenty-ninth day of May, the Form of Prayer on Accession to the British Throne; all these separate services, or connected with parts of the Morning Service, will be subjects of consideration hereafter.

With the above Services and Forms the members of the Church of England and Ireland at times find themselves united as attendants: as for instance, by being called upon as sponsors at the baptism of their relations or friends, or at the grave, although not by any means regular in their attendance upon the public worship of their God and Saviour either on the Sabbath or upon other days appointed to be observed by the Church. Hence, therefore, it will be well to extract *the spirit* of the separate services and forms in order to quicken and enliven what may not be improperly termed the dormant spirit of nominal Christians; whilst it is far, very far from the Author of the Spirit of the Book of Common Prayer, in any words he may use, to "cry aloud and spare not," when he says it is to be feared that many church-going persons are in the habit of repeating the Prayers of the Church as from custom, thus making the service a mere labial performance, the powers of the mind being absent from actual service required, and that others are content with the joining in the response of Amen.

For such reasons, therefore, does the Author venture to intrude this little work upon the Public for the reading and meditation of the members of the Church of England and Ireland, that every one in his vocation and calling, when they hear the Prayers read, may, in such wise, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that all may pray with the spirit and with the understanding, with such powerful effect as to bring down the Divine blessing in aid of the power to obtain those things which are necessary both for the soul and body.

And it will be to notice in this place that no observations will be made with regard to the period when the whole or any portion of the several services of the Church of England and Ireland were framed, or by whom the Prayers were composed, how collected, or by what authority published; nor any comment introduced as to the orders given for the directions of the Minister in the use of them; for so many questions having arisen of late respecting the Forms of the Established Church and the administration of her services, that the words of our blessed Saviour may truly be applied here, "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof;" so also sufficient is it to bring to the recollection of the members of the Catholic Church that it is the spirit of the prayer which is so greatly needed in the present day, by which its members can alone hope for the blessing of God Al-

mighty on both the priesthood and the laity; that the spirit of prayer is that which heightens the supplication, elevates the offering, and in truth and effect and in very deed constitutes the essence of prayer. Hence laying aside all hypocrisy, as new-born babes let every member of the Holy Catholic Church desire the sincere milk of prayer, that all may thereby grow in the grace of our holy religion.

few minutes ere the Minister rises from his seat: for, be it remembered, that all the sentences which are in use upon these occasions when the congregation arise from their seats reverently to hear THE WORDS which the Minister may pronounce, are not merely to be reckoned as the expressions of men, but as the WORDS OF GOD, given by inspiration; or the Divine breathing or impression upon the minds of holy persons; and are profitable for instruction in righteousness. Nor are they to be received otherwise than as sentences uttered by the Ministers of God's holy catholic Church; who, in their high calling, whilst in the immediate service of the Church, become the appointed servants to awaken you, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who may be about to make one of a congregation, to a true sense of your own condition—your actual course of life—your common conversation—your follies, weaknesses, errors, and that general body of sin so common to humanity: yes, of that portion of sin only conceived in thought, as well as of that portion brought into action; thereby expelling from the mind all worldly considerations; and by such process preparing it for heavenly aspirations. Hence it must be mockery of the highest stamp before HIM, the OMNIPOTENT and OMNISCIENT, whenever any one of the congregation exhibits inattention or levity of behaviour whilst in that house dedicated to the solemn worship of the Almighty, and called THE HOUSE OF PRAYER,† at any hour, but especially so when the service of that Church has commenced, in which the people assembled present themselves as willing members of the universal household of faith, and amongst whom, if there be only two or three*

* 2 Timothy, iii. 16.

† Isaiah lvi. 7.