

THE WORSHIPING CONGREGATION

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The worshipping congregation by Lucius C. Clark

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By

THE REV. LUCIUS C. CLARK, D. D.



CINCINNATI: JENNINGS AND GRAHAM
NEW YORK: EATON AND MAINS

Dedicated

TO THE DEVOUT WORSHIPERS IN THE
CHURCHES OF EVERY NAME.

PREFACE

THE writer has looked with some diligence for a book that would attempt an answer to some of the practical inquiries which arise from our common Church worship. The Protestant minister will find but little help in his attempt to become effective in the service of worship other than that which has to do with the sermon. Books on pastoral theology have not attempted our task, for they have largely to do with the minister as a preacher. To either supply the deficiency, or make it more apparent, we have undertaken a consideration of some of the topics hitherto neglected. There are items of worship that have to do with the effectiveness of our Church life and are recognized as vital to it, and yet these things have been mentioned in some notable books as the "Humble details of the pastoral method." Careful search in the libraries

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of several theological schools makes it the more apparent that these "humble details" are largely ignored.

The pastoral method, from the viewpoint of the congregation, has received but scant recognition. Nearly all that has to do with our worship is considered from the viewpoint of the minister rather than that of the congregation. If we can put our attention to the topic of the minister as a worshiper, rather than the minister as a preacher, we will have accomplished part of our purpose. The greater aim is to bring a message for the general worshiper by a discussion of his worship. The fundamentals of worship have as much to do with, and are as dependent upon, the man in the pew as the man in the pulpit. The elements of weakness that have taken hold of our Christian life because they are tolerated in our worship should be reckoned with. Christian worship in every community of America is not at its best because we will not see that details of worth can not

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be omitted and those items that work us ill are admitted.

If the scientist can make progress by sitting down and simply watching what and how nature is at work, so we can make progress in the kingdom of grace if we will sit watchfully for a time to see how grace works. No man introduces a new item into the world of nature, but rather appreciates what he finds already there, so we can not and have no desire that any new item shall be introduced into this kingdom of grace. As devout worshipers we would rather come to an appreciation of that we already have.

In the order and conduct of the most sacred work of public worship every man is left practically to be his own master. If there be virtue in trying the untried we have reason to hope for great gain, for every new and novel thing known to the ecclesiastical innovator has been tried out as an item of worship. The beauty of no man's theory can make up for the