

THE REVISED LITURGY.

A HISTORY AND CRITICISM

OF THE

RITUALISTIC MOVEMENT

IN THE

German Reformed Church.

BY

J. H. A. BOMBERGER, D.D.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Philadelphia, Oct. 29th, 1866.

REV. J. H. A. BOMBERGER, D.D.:—

Rev. and Dear Bro.:—The undersigned, Elders of the German Reformed Church, and in part members of the late Synod at York, Pa., being desirous of publishing a full and fair statement of the nature and bearings of the Liturgical movement now agitating our Church, for the information and benefit of all concerned, respectfully request you to prepare such a statement for our use, and for general circulation.

It would meet our views to have a historical account of the whole movement from the beginning of it, with the points of difference between yourself and the other members of the Committee on the Liturgy, distinctly brought out, and their merits candidly discussed.

By complying with the above request you will greatly oblige us, and we think confer a benefit upon our Church.

Yours in Christian bonds,

R. F. KELKER, Harrisburg, Pa.,
FREDERICK ACHEY, Baltimore, Md.,
WM. E. SCHMERTZ, Pittsburg, Pa.,
GEORGE BESORE, Waynesboro, Pa.,
DAVID ESHBACH, Limestoneville, Pa.,
CHRISTIAN GAST, Lancaster, Pa.,
ABRAHAM BAUSMAN, Millersville, Pa.,
J. M. FOLLMER, Milton, Pa.,
JOHN ERMENTROUT, Leinbach, Berks Co., Pa.,
GEORGE GELBACH, Philadelphia, Pa.,
CHARLES WANNEMACHER, Philadelphia, Pa.,
JOHN WIEST, Philadelphia, Pa.

THE REVISED LITURGY.

As may be seen from the preceding request, the present tract is prepared and published in compliance with the earnest solicitation of a number of Elders of the German Reformed Church. Their names will be recognized as those of Brethren who have long taken a lively interest in the cause of the Lord among us, and who have shown commendable zeal and liberality in founding and supporting our various literary and charitable institutions. No one can doubt their sincere and profound concern for every thing which may affect the present or prospective welfare of the Church. Their position and circumstances, also, are such as eminently to fit them for forming a just and an intelligent judgment of the views and feelings of our membership in general, in regard to a subject like that upon which they desire me to write, as well as in regard to the probable influence and effects of such a movement as they wish to have described in its history and character. It is not improper, therefore, to regard them as representing a large portion of the laity of the Church. Moreover, they are all esteemed personal friends. So that on these accounts, the preparation and issue of this tract may be fully justi-

fied. They have a right to know the facts after which they inquire, and the true nature of the ritualistic movement which is now striving with such energy and pertinacity to work itself into favor, and to secure ecclesiastical sanction and enforcement. And they have a right to ask that the Church at large shall be told, truly and kindly, but without reserve, what the movement contemplates and means.

It is, however, not merely to obey what is considered a reasonable request, that this tract is written and sent forth. Other and weightier considerations demand its publication. The ritualistic movement, which came to a head in the presentation of the *Revised Liturgy*, for acceptance and approval, and even for conditional or presumptive adoption, to the recent Synod of York, is invested with momentous intrinsic and relative importance. Viewed in its own character, no such book was ever before offered to an Evangelical Church for favorable regard or formal endorsement. The histories of ecclesiastical synods and councils will be searched in vain for a parallel to it. Instances are recorded, in which such judicatories have been asked, and persuaded, to change established usages and acknowledged doctrines, in single points. But in this case it is believed the German Reformed Church has been solicited to sanction and introduce what amounts to a complete repudiation of many of her most distinctive customs and fundamental doctrines, and to substitute in their place usages and dogmas obviously at variance with her traditions

and her creed. Considered in its relative bearings, this movement involves a liturgical and doctrinal revolution, the influence and effects of whose success cannot be measured or described. With the authors of the movement in its extreme form, we readily believe, that its triumphant issue, would tell with overwhelming power upon the constitution and life of the entire American Church.

Such a movement should not be allowed to press on towards a victorious consummation without hinderance or exposure. Now that its import and aim are fully developed as they were not before, and now that it has become unmistakably manifest, that the execution of the measure involves radical modifications of established evangelical ordinances and doctrines, it becomes the plain and imperative duty of those who believe the movement to be revolutionary and pernicious for the Church, to publish their convictions and sound the alarm. Were the Church thought to be in peril of falling into the errors of Socinianism, Unitarianism, or Deism, the watchman intrusted with a post of responsibility upon her walls, would be counted and condemned as faithless and false, if he neglected or refused to give loud warning of the threatening evil. Why should his responsibility be less solemn and imperative in regard to perils as imminent and serious as those now couching in the midst of the Church?

When her pleasant places were supposed to be in danger of devastation from the inroads of fanatical

New Measures, twenty-five years ago, the author of "*The Anxious Bench*" was approved and applauded in the main, for the courage and fidelity with which the errors and evils of that system were laid bare and denounced. His voice was heard, and his warnings were heeded. And although a very large number of the most active and zealous pastors of our Church, with their congregations, had become entangled in the system, and were, to a greater or less extent, under its power—its meshes were broken, and its bondage was burst. If evils as disastrous, spiritually, as those of the discarded Anxious Bench system, though of an extremely opposite form and character, are now putting in great jeopardy the priceless blessings inherited from our Fathers, and intrusted by past generations to our sacred custody, does it not rest as a most solemn duty upon those who are honestly convinced of the existence of such peril, to keep silence no longer, but proclaim their fears, and the grounds from which they spring? Is the hard yoke of the bondage of formalism which, in their judgment, is being prepared for our necks, less to be deprecated and denounced, than the fetters of fanaticism? Was it right to warn us against the fiery furnace, and shall it be wrong to warn against the lion's den? It was avowed love for the Church of our Fathers, and avowed zeal to have her restored to her ancient faith and her traditional usages, or saved from being further robbed of her inherited possessions, which prompted the alarm-cry in the one case. Why

should not that same love constrain to like fidelity and courage now?

There is, moreover, special reason for the discharge of this duty, unpleasant and painful as it may be in some respects, in view of the *misapprehensions which exist as to the reality and nature of the evils* to which, in our belief, the Church is just now exposed. Many have been persuaded to think that a false alarm has been raised. They cannot bring themselves to believe that evils like those hinted at or openly proclaimed should flood the Church from such sources, or that her life and character should be put in jeopardy by such hands. They naturally shrink from preferring what is indignantly repelled as implying, apparently, a charge of ecclesiastical conspiracy. So do we. We bring no such accusation against any one. But it must be remembered that all the deplorable *effects* of a conspiracy may be realized even where there has been no pre-concerted and craftily devised plot, and even no antecedent purpose to produce them. Men may deserve no blame for bad and mischievous intentions and schemes, in devising and proposing great changes in the Constitution of the Church or the State. Nay, they may merit praise for pious and honorable designs. And yet the changes they advocate and seek to introduce may be radical and revolutionary. Aaron, the high-priest of Israel in the desert of Sinai, had, probably, no thought of subverting the true worship of Jehovah, when he gathered the jewels, and

moulded and set up the calf. Nevertheless, he had favored the introduction of an abominable idolatry, and brought the congregation of the Lord to grief. So even the best of men may err in their judgment, and propose unwise and hurtful measures. To disapprove of such judgment, and to condemn or expose the mischief of such measures, does not involve a charge of a guilty conspiracy against them. At the same time, however, their innocence of any wrong purpose will not neutralize or lessen the bad consequences of a successful execution of their plans.

Besides, there are many in the Church whose minds have been confused by contrary and conflicting statements, in regard to the real points at issue. Because some of us have resisted tendencies towards what we deem extreme ritualism and high churchistic modes of worship, and doctrinal phrases, we have been sometimes represented and regarded as opposing all liturgical forms, and all churchly views of truth. And on the other hand, because those from whom we so decidedly differ, have exposed and denounced the anti-liturgical and the unchurchly elements prevailing in some portions of Protestant Christianity, and have been devoting themselves to the theoretical and practical correction of these errors, it has been supposed or assumed, that they aimed at nothing, and would recommend nothing but such a correction, and such alterations, as were demanded by the doctrinal and devotional standards of our Church, and were in full, essential harmony with them.

Both these views are erroneous. And the misapprehensions from which they arise, need to be corrected. Such correction is due, not only to the parties concerned, but to the Church at large. Their correction, by a full and fair statement of all the facts in the case, and by an impartial criticism of the Revised Liturgy, as the best practical exposition of the views and purposes of those Brethren from whom we differ, is the chief design of this tract.

In the nature of the case, our essay wears a strongly controversial character. This is not our fault. The controversy, so far as this is one, has been forced upon the Church. Either the innovations proposed must be allowed to invade the Church unchallenged, or they must be exposed and resisted. In a dilemma like this, those best acquainted with the history and nature of the entire movement, and who were honestly convinced that it involved the Church in peril, as well in regard to purity of evangelical doctrine as to purity of evangelical practice, could not hesitate in their determination. It might be painful for them to fall out with their Brethren by the way. But better this, even, than to lose an inheritance deservedly dearer to them than a fellow's friendship or a brother's love.

At the same time, however, though thus forced into something like a controversy with those from whom we are constrained to differ, it is hoped that none of the bitter spirit or angry denunciations which frequently mar and dishonor such discussions, will

offend the eye or heart of any Christian who reads these pages. Their high and only aim is truth and equity; and our ruling desire in writing them, is to be instrumental, in consistency with the holiest charity, in defending the Church which we believe above all others to be apostolic and evangelical, in its fundamental, historical doctrines and customs, against all attempts, however honest and sincere, materially to change those customs, and essentially to alter or modify those doctrines.

In the prosecution of this purpose, the various statements made shall be fortified by proofs, or what are regarded as proofs, from the public official records of the Church, or from documents acknowledged to be authentic and authoritative. These sources of proof are accessible to those from whom we differ, as well as to ourselves. Should we misquote, or quote unfairly from those records, which we shall not do designedly, it will be easy to show wherein we have erred. Should we misinterpret the authorities, it will be equally easy to expose such misinterpretations, and to correct them. Only it is hoped that this will be done with the same candor and fairness by which we shall strive to be governed.

Of those who may favor these pages with a perusal, we ask nothing but unprejudiced impartiality. If they are members of the Reformed Church, let them be pleased to keep in mind that we are merely pleading for the maintenance of the full integrity of the Church of our fathers, in all her legitimate doctrines

and time-honored customs. The tract is written from a German Reformed point of view, by one who acknowledges as authority in doctrine and practice, no theory, no school, no party which is not in material and essential harmony with, and subordination to her standards,—because those standards are, under God and His Word, our rule of faith. And thus written, it is addressed mainly, with affection and respect, to those who profess subjection to the same rule, and by whom, therefore, our purpose and argument should be greeted with cordial approval and acceptance.

To secure greater clearness of statement, and ease of reference, the matter of this tract will be presented in four sections. The *first* will be a brief historical sketch of the recent Liturgical movement in the Church. In the *second* may be found a criticism of the Revised Liturgy. In the *third* we shall point out the obvious and probable effects of the adoption and introduction of that work. And in the *last* suggest a remedy for the difficulties and perils in which this movement, in its present posture, has involved the Church.

SECTION I.—HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.

Rightly to estimate the nature and phases of the Liturgical controversy now agitating the German Reformed Church, we must go back to the causes which started the movement, and note the circumstances of its origin.

For nearly a century after the first establishment

of the Church in this country, she maintained her distinctive peculiarities with resolute steadfastness, and almost undeviating uniformity. In regard to doctrine, she was moderately, but decidedly Calvinistic, on the basis, and in the spirit of the Heidelberg Catechism. Her peculiar customs consisted in the regular observance of those six leading festivals (Christmas, New-Year or the Circumcision, Good-Friday, Easter, the Ascension, and Pentecost or Whitsunday,) on which are commemorated the most prominent and central facts and events of Christianity; in catechization, and confirmation as the mode of admitting members, baptized youth or adults, to the benefits of full communion; and in the *free, occasional use* of simple, non-responsive liturgical prayers, at the regular Lord's day service, commonly on the pulpit, and the stated use of prescribed forms in the administration of the ordinances (such as the Holy Sacraments, the rite of confirmation, ordination and installation, the burial of the dead.) The regular Lord's day service was prevailingly conducted after the following order: The minister, taking his place at the communion-table, commenced with the words: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" or, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein." A hymn was then announced, and sung by the congregation. Then the general prayer was offered; this was mostly a free prayer, though that of the Liturgy or Directory of Worship

might be used. At times this prayer was offered in the chancel, before the communion-table, but mostly the minister ascended the pulpit during the singing of the first hymn, and offered this prayer there, often concluding with the Lord's prayer. This was followed by the sermon. On ordinary Sundays the text might be taken from the Gospel or the Epistle for the day, but there was no rule binding to this, as the details of the Church-year were not enjoined in the Reformed Church, and were not at all rigidly observed. After the sermon followed a short prayer, commonly free, excepting that the Lord's prayer was used, if it had not been previously connected with the general prayer. It should be added, however, that sometimes the general prayer *followed* the sermon. At the service preparatory to the Holy Supper, the prescribed form of confession of sin and declaration of pardon, which will be found in a subsequent page of this tract, was used. In the service for the Lord's Supper, the Apostle's Creed was repeated by the minister, in which the congregation may sometimes have joined in a low voice. 95-

Such, in all its material and essential features, was the mode of worship in the German Reformed Church in this country for nearly a hundred years succeeding 1730, and such the customs by which she was distinguished during that period.

Subsequently, however, great and in some respects radical changes were introduced. By a combination of causes which it is unnecessary to enumerate, ex-

cepting that the so-called "New Measures" were among the most prominent and active of them, some of her most distinctive principles and usages were set aside, and made wholly to disappear from some portions of the Church. To some degree the tone of fundamental doctrines was lowered. In many congregations the leading Festivals were neglected or despised. For the earnest catechetical instruction of youth, and such as sought admission to full communicant membership, other means were substituted—means strange and uncongenial. In a word, whilst she still retained the ancient name, the Church had, in districts where these innovations prevailed, lost well nigh all resemblance of form and features, as well as of inner life, to that founded by our fathers.

As a natural consequence of these innovations, great diversities in customs, in the mode of conducting public worship, and in the manner of administering the ordinances, began to prevail. Previously, any one acquainted with the character and usages of the Church, could at once identify her, whether he attended service in town or country, in the East or in the West. Now all was changed wherever the "New Measures" obtained ascendancy, and a member of the Church from one district would feel himself a stranger, among a strange people, if he visited the churches of another district. Whatever else they might seem to be, he would scarcely imagine that they could be German Reformed.

During the prevalence of this defection from the

traditional principles and customs of the Church, a partial effort to oppose them, and provide a remedy for the spreading evil, was made in the preparation of a new Liturgy by a committee appointed for that purpose, of which the Rev. Lewis Mayer was chairman. This committee reported their work accomplished in 1837. The Liturgy thus prepared by Dr. Mayer, was adopted by the Synod, and recommended to the churches. Unhappily, instead of having been constructed after the pattern of our older Liturgies, it was too much of an accommodation to the spirit of the times, and failed of its design. It may have served to prepare the way for a full return to the ground which had been forsaken. As a barrier to the further progress of the innovations, however, or a proper correction of existing evils, it proved comparatively ineffectual. (See Minutes of Synod for 1837; for 1838, p. 32; 1839, p. 74; 1840, pp. 22, 68, 69; 1841, p. 65; 1842, p. 67.)

But this state of things could not continue long, without arresting earnest attention, exciting distrust and dissatisfaction, and awakening serious apprehensions for their consequences to the integrity and prosperity of the Church. They were not denounced as only and altogether evil. How could they be, when many beneficial results were seen to flow from them, or to be in some way at least connected with them; when just those congregations which had to a greater or less extent come under their influence, furnished the men by whom, largely, our institutions were

founded and our most active operations were carried on, and the chief portion of the means by which they were primarily endowed and sustained. But whilst those innovations were allowed the credit of having done no little good to our Church, they soon came to be regarded, even by those who had at one time zealously advocated them or used them, as being inherently wrong, liable to fanatical abuse, and pregnant with mischief. These convictions were deepened and diffused by the publication of the treatise on "The Anxious Bench," by the Rev. J. W. Nevin, D.D., in 1842.

A decided reaction ensued. Among the first effects of this reaction, was a revival of regard for the historical character and distinctive features of the Church, and earnest inquiries after the old ways. These, in their true excellence, had been portrayed in contrast with the obvious faults and defects of the innovations; and all who had departed from them, were loudly admonished to return to them again. Only, the return was to be to the true, legitimate, time-honored precepts and practices of our fathers. *The object professedly aimed at, and made exclusively prominent, was, the restoration of the Church to her proper foundation and her authorized religious customs.*

Simultaneously with this reaction, and avowedly in full harmony with it, the so-called Mercersburg school of theology was founded, Dr. Nevin being its first and chief head. This fact is mentioned here,

because of its bearings upon subsequent events, connected with the Liturgical movement.

Once aroused to a sense of the unhappy consequences of the Anxious Bench innovations, and to an intelligent conviction of the proper vocation and work of the Reformed Church, as well as of the surest means for her advancement and edification, her members soon felt a desire that the diversities which had become so prevalent might be abolished, *and that greater uniformity, on the basis of her original principles and customs*, might be restored. This desire revealed itself in numerous instances and under various forms.

To its influence, mainly, must be traced the measure inaugurated in 1847 in the Classis of East Pennsylvania, and by which the subject was brought directly to the notice of the Synod of Lancaster. From the minutes of that Synod, (pp. 23, 68,) we learn that the action of the Classis expressed dissatisfaction with the Liturgy then in partial use, (the Mayer Liturgy,) and requested the Synod to have *the Old Palatinate Liturgy* reprinted, or to make arrangements for the adoption of another, more congenial with the spirit of our Catechism than the Mayer Liturgy. In regard to this request, the Synod took the following action:

"*Resolved*, That the whole subject of the revision of the Liturgies, so as to secure one which is, (may be,) adapted to the wants of the whole Church, and the

general use of which can be enforced, be referred to the several Classes for their consideration."

Upon this reference, the following action of the Classes is reported in the Minutes of Synod for 1848, (pp. 20, 21:)

"The Classis of East Pennsylvania recommends Synod to adopt immediate measures for the formation of a New Liturgy. Other Classes express themselves as feeling the want of another Liturgy, and seem to favor the movement of Synod in this direction, the Classis of North Carolina alone excepted." "The Classis of Philadelphia recommends to Synod the reinstatement and reprinting of the Old Liturgy, (the Palatinate, as used by the former ministers of the German Reformed Church in this country, and by those of the Reformed Dutch Church,) with such improvements as may be necessary."

At this Synod, the subject was made the special order for the seventh day of its sessions, and after a brief discussion it was:

"*Resolved*, That this whole subject, with the action of the Classes upon it, be referred to a special Committee, to report at the next annual meeting of Synod."

In accordance with the duty thus assigned, a somewhat full report was submitted to the Synod of Norristown, 1849, (see Minutes, pp. 79—82.) The body of the report is occupied with a vindication of Liturgical forms, *such as were known to be peculiar to the German Reformed Church, at least in its earlier his-*

tory, against anti-liturgical views and objections. It does not contain a single expression which, by any fair interpretation, can be construed in favor of a responsive order of service, or of material changes of any kind from our established principles and usages, either in regard to order or pervading doctrinal spirit. On the contrary, the suggestions with which the Report closes, give most distinct and unambiguous prominence to *such "Liturgical forms as were recognized by our fathers," and to "the Old Palatinate Liturgy as our true ideal, and as furnishing the larger portion of the material needed in the preparation of a new work."*

There are two reasons for so emphatic a statement of this fact. One is, that the tenor of the above Report has more than once been utterly misrepresented by advocates of the extreme style of Ritualism now urged upon our acceptance. The other and more important reason is, that in the adoption of this Report, (and we believe it was almost unanimously adopted,) after a long and interesting discussion, the Synod, and through it the Church, gave the first formal expression of its judgment upon the character of the Liturgy desired, and subsequently ordered to be prepared. The nature of this judgment will still more clearly appear from the following resolution, which was adopted at the same time:

"*Resolved*, That a Committee shall be appointed, to whom shall be referred the whole subject of the proposed Liturgy, *who shall report at the next meet-*

ing of Synod, a Plan or Schedule of a Liturgy, embracing an outline of such a work as is proposed in the end to be produced. It is expected, therefore, that this Committee will thoroughly examine *the various Liturgies of the Reformed Churches*, and other works published on this subject *in later times*, and specify, as far as this may be done, the particular forms that are believed to be needed, and furnish specimens, also, such as may be regarded as called for in the circumstances of the Church in this country.

The following persons were made to constitute this Committee:

Rev. John W. Nevin, D.D.; Philip Schaff, Ph.D.; Elias Heiner; Bernard C. Wolff, D.D.; J. H. A. Bomberger; Henry Harbaugh; Joseph F. Berg, D.D.; and Elders, William Heyser, John C. Bucher, Dr. Caspar Schaeffer, and George C. Welker.

Could the original purpose and design of the Synod, in entering anew upon the work of providing service for the worship of the Church, have well been more plainly and distinctly enunciated, than they are in this whole action? It furnishes a definite basis upon which the entire work was to proceed, and that basis was most decidedly made to rest upon the old Liturgical foundations of the German Reformed Church. No room is left for misapprehension. With a clear consciousness of its traditional character, and a reverential regard for its obligations to maintain that character, the Church declares her solemn pur-

pose to adhere to her ancient, authorized usage, or to have them restored so far as they may have fallen into neglect. But there is not the remotest hint of a desire for any thing beyond this, or of a thought of any change, least of all, of any material change, in the usages of the Church, or in her mode of worship.

All this, moreover, was only in harmony with the avowed aim of the efforts which had been made by some prominent members of the Church, to rescue her from the grasp of the Anxious Bench innovations. It was also in unison with the general position taken in the theological discussions of Mercersburg, during the same period. The school known by that name had volunteered its services to the Church, as a bold and zealous advocate of conservative principles and measures, and especially of whatever in doctrine or in practice was truly and legitimately Reformed. As such, its learning and its zeal were hailed, and its proffers of fealty were accepted by a grateful and confiding Church. To it were turned many anxious eyes and hearts, as towards the hand which could, and, in accordance with loud and solemn protestations of devotion to her time-honored character and right, would aid the Church in reasserting her true, legitimate identity, and regaining the position of evangelical purity and ardor, in doctrine and practice, which had been partially abandoned. Because of this hearty confidence, the institutions at Mercersburg were regarded with the warmest affection, and those who had them in charge were held in the sin-

cerest esteem. They were men whom the Church delighted to honor. Well nigh unbounded influence was awarded them. We had never been noted as a Church for large liberality in sustaining objects of public interest. But such was the strong hold gained by those who filled the chief seats in Mercersburg, upon the heart of the Church, that the amount of money freely given in response to their appeals for the proper endowment of the Seminary and College, was an amazement to herself. The Centenary offerings of 1844; the Plainfield Bond scheme; the much larger Ter-centenary contributions of 1863, have all, to a great extent, been appropriated to these objects. And these things were mainly a demonstration of personal regard for those intrusted with the control of our institutions, and of confidence in their ability and their devotion to the Church. Suspicions, indeed, were entertained and even openly expressed by some, and fears were felt, and at times betrayed by more. But by the Church at large, such suspicions were denounced as unjust, and such fears derided as groundless. Had not Mercersburg freely proffered a friendly hand to help the Church out of the flaming thicket by which she seemed to be encompassed? and why should not that hand be trusted, even though some nervous seer might ominously point towards bogs and quicksands on the other side? Had not Mercersburg bound itself by a constitutional obligation like unto a solemn oath, to make the doctrines of the Church, as "contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the basis of all their instructions,

and faithfully maintain and defend the same, in its preaching and writing, as well as in its instructions" (see Constitution, Art. 19); and was not this, especially when taken in connection with the clearly implied moral obligations of its position, a sure and sufficient guarantee, that the Church was safe in committing itself to the guardianship of such a custodian?

Such, then, was the seeming outer and inner harmony between the Church and Mercersburg, in reference to all our ecclesiastical interests, when the recent Liturgical movement was formally initiated by the Synod of Norristown. There was every reason, therefore, to expect that Mercersburg, in its chief representatives, would promptly and efficiently co-operate in the execution of the purpose proposed, and cordially aid in the production of such a work as was declared to be needed and desired.

Accordingly, there was good reason to hope that our great want in this direction, would be speedily and satisfactorily supplied. It was no new field the Committee was directed to enter. Skilful husbandmen had already cultivated it. In the course of successive years of partial neglect, some weeds and rubbish might have accumulated upon it. But it was familiar ground, and richly covered, underneath this accidental rubbish, with sheaves of ripened grain. Of this there appears to have been so entire a persuasion in the mind of Synod, that the Committee was expected to be able to report considerable progress at the end of a single year, as is stated in the

resolution above quoted. The Synod had declared very distinctly what it desired. The Committee understood its meaning, and appeared to acquiesce in its views. Ample means for accomplishing the work, as it was intended it should be done, were at hand.

But when the time set expired, the Synod of Martinsburg (1850) was doomed to disappointment. There was, indeed, a report from the Committee (Minutes, p. 74); that report, however, was not only unsatisfactory, but must have been ominous of trouble. It runs as follows: "The Committee appointed to commence the preparation of a new Liturgy, respectfully report, that after such attention as they have been able to give to the subject, and *in view of the general posture of the Church at the present time, they have not considered it expedient as yet to go forward with the work.* Should it be felt necessary on the part of Synod to bring out at once a new formulary for public use, it is believed that the most advisable course for the present would be *to give a translation simply of the old Liturgy of the Palatinate*; although the Committee are by no means of the mind, that this would be the best ultimate form in which to provide for the great interest here in question. Altogether it is felt, however, that other questions of vital moment now before the Church need first to be settled, in order that it may become important really to bestow any full and final care on this question of a new Liturgy."

Respectfully submitted.

JOHN W. NEVIN, *Chairman.*

In the general substance of this report those members of the Committee who attended its sessions held in Mercersburg during the preceding summer, acquiesced, though some of them did so with great reluctance and regret. Could they have foreseen the consequences of their acquiescence, it would certainly not have been given. Had they at all surmised what now seems to have been the real import of the reasons for not at once proceeding with their work, they would probably have summoned courage, even then already, to resist this course, and present another view of the case to Synod. But the power of a Chairman in such Committees is well known. Besides, in this case that Chairman was Dr. Nevin, with another highly respected Professor at his side, whilst the other acting members of the Committee present were comparatively young men. And yet (we speak from memory now) opposition was made to this refusal to discharge what was a plain, and what ought to have been no very difficult duty. The Synod had not asked the Committee to investigate anew the subject of ecclesiastical ritualism; to take into consideration the *expediency* or the advisableness of going forward with the preparation of suitable forms; to inquire into the present posture of the Church; or to raise other similar side issues. All these points were assumed to be settled. In adopting the Report presented to the Synod of Norristown, "after a discussion continued throughout several sessions," the Synod had declared "*that the present would be as*

favorable a time for making the requisite provision in the case, as any which may be anticipated in the future."

This was the first instance in the history of this Liturgical movement, in which the Committee, through the influence of its leading members, set up its own opinions and wishes, in opposition to those of the Synod and the Church. Unhappily it was not the last.

No further action was taken upon the subject by the Synod of Martinsburg, excepting to receive the Report, and continue the Committee. Not having been present at that Synod, we cannot state the circumstances under which this was done, or whether any discussion arose upon the subject.

At the subsequent Synod, held in Lancaster, Pa., 1851, the Committee simply reported that no further progress had been made in the work assigned them. Thus the purpose of the Synod was thwarted for another year, and the hopes of the Church were disappointed anew. It is due to Dr. Nevin to state here a fact which does not appear on the minutes of this Synod, viz: that he resigned the chairmanship of the Committee. This resignation led to the appointment of Dr. Schaff in his place. At the same time the Rev. T. C. Porter, Professor of Natural Sciences in Marshall College, was added to the Committee. Thus re-organized, it was *instructed "to report as soon as possible."*

Here let it be kept distinctly in mind that *the de-*

sign and purpose of Synod as to what should be the character of the new Liturgy remained unchanged. The instructions of the Synod of Norristown continued in full force. A new chairman had been appointed, but no new directions were given. One thought, one aim should rule the Committee now as before. "Go and prepare for the Church a Liturgy which shall suit its history, its doctrinal spirit, its true traditional character; one which shall be mainly modelled after its older services, especially taking that of the Palatinate of 1563 as your pattern and ideal, and using as much as possible of its substance and matter. Let it be in doctrine and in spirit, in its order and its structure, truly and genuinely German Reformed, so that it may promote among us greater unity, and uniformity, and serve for the strengthening and edification of the Church upon the Apostolic basis of the Reformation, and in the evangelical faith and practice of our fathers." This in fair paraphrase, was the injunction of the Synod to the Committee at the outset, and this injunction was still in force.

In corroboration of this view of the case, another fact may be stated. It was probably understood by most of the clergymen, at least of the Synod, why Dr. Nevin had been unable to carry out the wishes of the Church in the work of the Liturgy, and why he desired to be relieved from all responsibility as chairman of the Committee. But the Synod showed no disposition to modify its views in order to accom-

moderate them to his opinions in the case. Had there been any thought of departing from the purpose and principles at first laid down by the Synod of Norristown, this would have been a fitting time to bring out such a thought. Instead, however, of betraying any tendency in this direction, the Synod held fast to its original design, accepted of Dr. Nevin's resignation, appointed Dr. Schaff in his place, and impliedly said: Now, brethren, we hope you will have no further difficulty in pressing forward rapidly with the work, according to instructions previously given, but be able to report its early completion.

Mean while much precious time had been lost for the real object which the Church had in view. Five years had passed since the movement was started, and not only had nothing been done to secure the desired result, but obstacles not anticipated and really irrelevant had been raised in its way. In one view the Church was further from the end contemplated than at the beginning. But other matters in the Church were not thus dead-locked and stationary. There was progress, there were developments in other spheres. Some of the central forces in the Church were moving, if not the Church herself. Her official centre of gravitation, theologically, was shifting, and though not fully conscious of the real cause, the effects of the change were felt by the Church in various disturbances of her proper orbit. Was she to be wrested from that orbit, and to be set revolving around a new sun? Possibly we shall see.

During the year following the Synod of Lancaster, the Committee, under its new chairman, seems to have addressed itself with vigor to its work. "The members residing in Mercersburg held weekly meetings of conference during the summer of 1852, whilst other members were requested to prepare, in the mean time, certain portions of the proposed Liturgy, and submit them afterwards to the revision of the whole committee." The result of their labors is set forth in the report presented that fall to the Synod of Baltimore. That report, which we did not see until it was subsequently printed, is a most remarkable document, and must receive special consideration. After stating, in the language last quoted, that the Committee had been in active conference during the summer, it announces what must have taken the Synod by surprise, viz: that instead of going earnestly to work, according to the tenor of synodical instructions previously given, they had become deeply engaged in the study of "*the liturgical literature of ancient and modern times*," of "works issued *before and after the Reformation*, which made the *selection* sometimes more embarrassing than the original production." (See Minutes, p. 82, &c.)

Thus, at the very outset of the report, we may discern a spirit of disregard for the expressed wishes of the Synod and the Church, which is offensive, and should have excited apprehensions. Who had directed the Committee to make the study of mediæval or still earlier liturgies and litanies, an essential

part of their work? Who had requested them to make selections of services from "works issued before the Reformation?" Not the Synod. On the contrary, not trusting to what might be taken for granted, the Synod, as we have seen, from the first used the precaution of naming definitely the sources from which it expected the matter of the new Liturgy to be substantially drawn. *These were genuine Reformed Liturgies from that of the Palatinate (1663) onwards.* What then had the Committee to do with the perplexities and embarrassments which the study of earlier, and especially of ante-Reformation works of this class might occasion? Above all, what propriety was there in seeking to involve the Synod and the Church in perplexities, by which, through their disregard of very definite instructions, they had become embarrassed? Neglecting to use the chart and compass put into their hands by the Church, they had become entangled in the wilderness. Why seek to entice the Church into that same wilderness, not to help them out, but to lodge or wander there with them?

It must not be overlooked, however, that reasons for all this are furnished in the report. Now let us mark well one of these reasons. It is set forth in these words: "*The peculiar position of our own communion, which seems to be just now in a state of transition.*" From the connection in which this passage stands, and the known state of things at Mercersburg about this time, the significance of this re-

markable statement is sufficiently obvious. It contains a truth and an error. The truth is, that owing to certain developments at Mercersburg, our Church was getting into a peculiar position. The error is, that *the Church is assumed to have been in a state of transition*, in consequence of what might be taking place at Mercersburg. We cannot stop now to dwell upon this error, in its full conception and extent. But it is, in our judgment, a mistake which those of our Brethren whose sympathies are wholly or in a large measure with the peculiarities of the so-called Mercersburg School have been continually making. Without charging them with the presumption of regarding themselves as the Church, they have been constantly assuming that their peculiar views, and their progressive development of those views, are shared, embraced and followed by the Church at large; that she has not only grown, but grown in their direction; that she has not only attained to a fuller consciousness of her proper character and life, but has adopted their conceptions of both; in a word, that she has let herself become thoroughly pervaded and imbued with their theory of Christianity and the Church.

And it is not hard to see how they have come under this delusion. They form, so to speak, a school, a literary theological community or party within our Church. Without a formal organization, they are nevertheless so united upon the leading tenets of their system, and under a dominant head, that they possess and exercise many of the powers and functions

of an organization. And now, because they are thus united among themselves, in holding the peculiar doctrines of their school, and have in the course of many years, during which the Theological Seminary at Mercersburg has had the training of our ministry, considerably increased in numbers, they deceive themselves into the belief that the great body of the Church is with them. From slight premises the most sweeping conclusion is drawn, and they grasp the persuasion that Mercersburg has absorbed the Church. It may seem strange to many that such a persuasion should be cherished in the face of palpable facts to the contrary, the sum of which may be stated in a single sentence, viz: that with all the influence wisely or unwisely awarded to it, and with all the potent agencies brought to bear, directly and indirectly, upon the Church, through the annually multiplying disciples of that school, it has not succeeded practically in getting the Church to adopt its peculiarities either in doctrine or customs, excepting to an exceedingly small extent. And even in the very few instances in which single congregations here and there, at the most one in a hundred, have accepted to any large extent of those peculiarities, it has been done mainly through the influence of the pastor and a few prominent members, and without any previous desire for them or proper knowledge of what all was involved in such acceptance. For we feel assured, that if it had been understood that the new views and modes thus introduced had no authority in the

past faith and practice of the German Reformed Church, but rather were at material variance with them, the number of our congregations now tolerating the intrusions would be even smaller than it is.

It is the more surprising that the Report now under consideration should have fallen into this error, when we remember the year in which it was written. For at that time the school at Mercersburg was still in its embryo state. It was only in the process of formation. And that was most emphatically a process of which the church, in the nature of the case, could know next to nothing. Indeed, to speak unreservedly, it did not know certainly itself what it would be. And yet this part of the Report goes upon the contrary assumption. Because Mercersburg is "dissatisfied" with any existing Reformed Liturgy, it is said the Church is dissatisfied. Because Mercersburg "calls loudly for a book of public devotion which should embrace the best portions of older works of the kind," it is asserted that the church demands this. And all in the face of positive declarations to the contrary by previous Synods. Now it is by just such assumptions as these, quietly introduced into the Report, likely not to be distinctly noticed in the public reading of it before the Synod, and yet in a general way seemingly recognized by adopting the paper, that the Church becomes exposed to subsequent embarrassment. From the Minutes of the Synod of Baltimore, it appears that the paper was read and acted upon at the same session. There was no time taken to weigh its import. There was no dissection of its severa

parts, no discussion of its pregnant propositions. With all the saving, modifying clauses which we shall show it contains, it cannot be denied that it proposes great departures from the original design and purpose of the Synod. These departures might mean one thing to some minds, and something quite different to other minds. They might be carried out in an ultra, or in a moderate and conservative sense. In any case they concerned matters of vital and fundamental importance, and doing so, deserved more careful and earnest consideration than any subject ever before presented to the church. But no such consideration seems to have been given to them. All we know is, that the paper was read and adopted without reference, that some specimen forms were read, and that the names of the Rev. D. Zacharias, D.D., Elders George Schafer and John Rodenmayer were substituted for those of the Rev. J. F. Berg, D.D., Elders J. C. Bucher, and Dr. Caspar Shafer, the Rev. S. R. Fisher, D.D., added to the committee, and then a brief resolution passed.

Under these circumstances it is very significant that the action of Synod is expressed in such cautious terms. "Resolved, That the specimens presented be referred back to the committee, with instructions to carry out *the suggestions made at the close of their report.*" (Minutes, p. 86.) The "suggestions" here referred to, are "that Synod appoint a committee with instructions to print, as soon as the nature of the work will admit, a *specimen Liturgy*, for the in-

spection of the Church." (The *italics* are in the original copy.)

Thus it is seen that hastily as this important Report was disposed of, there is no such endorsement of its peculiar sentiments, no such committal even to the general basis and plan of Liturgy now proposed, or to the proposed departures from the first purpose and aim of Synod in this whole movement, as should be considered sufficient to bind the Synod and the Church to all the details of the Report, or to debar all modifications and objections which subsequent reflection might suggest. And it was perfectly natural and reasonable that this should be so. How could a Synod, to which the altered scheme presented in the Report was new, new in its principles and in its details, take up, examine, and pass an intelligent judgment upon it at a single session, and amidst all the press and distraction of other business claiming its attention? That Report was the result of much previous study on the part of those members of the committee who had participated in its preparation, or of the chairman. How could the members of the Synod at once acquaint themselves sufficiently with its contents to know and intelligently approve, in a full official sense, of all its sentiments? It proves the wisdom of the body, therefore, that it spoke with so much official reserve upon the subject. *The Report was simply adopted, without any expression on its merits*, and then the resolution passed which has been given above.

But even suppose the pound of flesh is rigorously exacted, and the Synod held relentlessly to the letter of the bond. What does that bond allow the holders of it to demand? Let us carefully and candidly examine its items; but, since others are determined to press what we deem a hard bargain, let us do it strictly, and sternly, too. Let them have what they contend was promised—but if they grasp at more, they must forfeit all—the bond is broken. What now, at the utmost, does the Report, regarding it as adopted in full by Synod, call for or allow? Let us note the items:

1. As to the *general basis*. This is to be obtained from “the *liturgical worship of THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH, as far as this can be ascertained* from the Holy Scriptures, the oldest ecclesiastical writers, and the Liturgies of the Greek and Latin Churches of the third and fourth centuries.”

Now will the Committee have the courage to come forward and say that in executing their trust, they have kept faithfully and closely to this condition? We know they will not. They cannot affirm that the order of service in the Revised Liturgy, or even the first Lord's Day service in the Provisional Liturgy, is constructed as nearly as possible upon what they could ascertain was the usage of the *Primitive Church*, unless they use the term *primitive* in a latitude not commonly allowed to it. They will not, they cannot affirm, that the worship of the Apostolic Church, as indicated by numerous statements in the

Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles, furnishes any real basis for such Preparatory, Lord's Supper, and Baptismal services, as may be found in the Revised Liturgy. And as for liturgies of the *third* and *fourth* centuries, no one need inform the Committee that they betray palpable and serious departures from Apostolic rules, and from strictly primitive practice, which the Synod did most assuredly not authorize them to adopt. In the services of the Revised Liturgy we do, of course, find the Lord's Prayer, the Decalogue, Apostolic salutations and benedictions, and some selections from the sacred Scriptures. But beyond this we challenge the Brethren to point to any thing material excepting the Apostles' Creed, for which they can furnish early authority, or which will prove that they made the Liturgical worship of the *primitive Apostolic Church* the basis of their work. On almost every page of the principal services, and most notably of the sacramental services, the book bears evidence of having been constructed, *not on the basis of the worship of the Primitive Church*, but rather on that of the worship of nearly *three centuries* later, and when the Church is known to have lost much of her Apostolic purity in faith and practice, and to have become marred and tainted by the introduction of many heathen errors and superstitions. This is most painfully observable in the *propitiative* sacrificial view of the Lord's Supper, in the *vicarious* view of the Church, and in the *sacerdotal* view of the Gospel ministry, by which the Re-

vised Liturgy is characterized. In what offices of the Primitive Church, or in what doctrinal grounds for the functions of those offices, did the Committee find any authority for the offensive peculiarities in reference to these points, which are incorporated with their work, and so thoroughly pervade some of its leading services? Was this adhering faithfully to the letter of the Baltimore compact? Was this conforming conscientiously to the spirit of that compact, even so far merely as the *general basis* of the new Liturgy is concerned?

2. But let us pass on to another item in the Report. As a *second principle* on which, according to the Committee, the new Liturgy should be constructed, and by which it is maintained the Synod bound itself, the following is laid down: "*Among the later Liturgies special reference ought to be had to the Old Palatinate and other Reformed Liturgies of the Sixteenth Century.*"

Here there is a distinct, though somewhat reserved, acknowledgment, that the standard works referred to were entitled to authoritative consideration. Such must have been the impression produced on the mind of Synod. And it was perfectly natural that a concession like this should have been made to those old and treasured heirlooms of the Church, which had ever been regarded, and justly regarded, as among the most precious things bequeathed to us by our pious ancestors. Moreover, this principle thus announced contained an implied recognition of the in-

structions of previous Synods upon the subject, and a pledge that the purpose originally contemplated would be kept clearly in view. It formed a living link, binding the movement as now started afresh, to the antecedent chain. And there were many and strong reasons why constant and careful regard should be paid, at every step in their progress, to the statute thus proposed for their government. It was not merely to be an incidental thing. It was a *principle*, and it required them to have not occasional, not general, but "*special reference*" to the spirit, the structure, the doctrinal character "*of the old Palatinate, and other Reformed (not Episcopal) Liturgies of the sixteenth century.*" But was this done by the Committee? Will any be bold enough, with the Revised Liturgy before them, and the old Palatinate aside of it, to affirm that the Committee paid any such regard to the latter, or to any German Reformed Liturgy of that period, as is demanded by the above cited principle? No two books of devotion, making any pretension to be evangelical or Protestant, could be more unlike. In their whole spirit, in their order, in their leading doctrines, in their structure, and in their details, they are most essentially dissimilar. And none know this better, few know it so well, as the members of the Committee themselves. They will not assert that in preparing the forms of the Revised Liturgy, they paid any ruling, subordinating regard to German Reformed Liturgies like the old Palatinate. They will not say that in determining the order of service for the regular Lord's day they

were governed to any considerable extent by the genius, or the structure, of any corresponding service found in such works of historical and classic authority in the Reformed Church. We have not the works at hand to enable us to institute an accurate comparison, but we doubt whether the two services for the Lord's day, the Preparatory and Communion services, in a word, the principal services of the Revised Liturgy, contain six prayers derived from those Reformed sources.

Thus, in this case again, was the compact violated by those who proposed it. And must the Synod and the Church be held as iron-bound to its incautiously adopted terms? Has only the Jew his rights in such a covenant, and not the Christian?

3. We must proceed, however, to still another item. It may be found in *Principle 4* of the Report. That principle says: "*Those portions of the Liturgy which are most frequently used, as the regular service on the Lord's Day, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, should embrace several forms, some shorter and some longer, some with and some without responses, with a view to avoid monotony, and to adapt them the more readily to the condition and wants of our various ministers and congregations, which are evidently not prepared for an entire uniformity.*"

And how does the Revised Liturgy conform to this principle? *By presenting but one form for each of the services on the Lord's Day, and one form for the administration of the Lord's Supper, and THESE FORMS EXTREMELY REPONSIVE.*

4. One more item may be noticed, and we think this will suffice to show that we have fully made our point, viz., that as the Committee has not abided by the terms of the Baltimore Report, it is most unjust and unreasonable to hold the Synod by them. The item is furnished by *Principle 7*. "*A Liturgy ought not to interfere with the proper use of extemporaneous prayer, either in public or in private, but rather to regulate and PROMOTE it. Sufficient room ought to be left for its exercise in connection with the Sunday afternoon and evening services, as well as in weekly Bible lectures, social prayer meetings, catechetical exercises, and on special occasions.*"

To ask how far the Revised Liturgy has been framed with regard to this principle, would be the sharpest irony. It not only makes no provision for free prayer at any service, but leaves no room for it. Nay, the basis on which it rests, and its ruling spirit utterly excludes it. Where its theory of worship fully prevails, there no free prayer can be allowed, either at the regular services of the Lord's Day, or at the Lord's Supper, either at Bible lectures, or in social prayer-meetings, (social prayer-meetings in unison with such a system—it excludes the very thought of them!) either in public or in private.

Such glaring contradictions show themselves between the very principles to which the advocates of the extremes now urged upon the acceptance of the Church are wont so triumphantly to appeal, and the work they profess to have produced in accordance

with those principles! How will they escape from the dilemma in which these contradictions involve them? For whilst, as must be evident, the Synod of Baltimore could not have meant to let its hands, or those of the Church, be tied by the hasty adoption of the principles in question, it is true, on the other hand, that *the Committee was bound to honor them*, so far at least as not to go beyond them in the direction of extreme ritualism. By their own confessions that Report, with all its limitations, proposed very great changes in the Liturgical policy of the Church. Surely they should not have taken advantage of the latitude assumed to have been granted, by grasping at more. Several times during the last few years we have been told in somewhat arrogant and defiant language, that "the Church would stultify herself if she refused to accept what the Committee had prepared." We dispute the right of any man or of any Committee, to address such language to the Synod or the Church. But how will the Committee escape the reproach and confusion of such *self-stultification*, in the face of its open and palpable contempt of its own favorite principles and scheme?

Altogether, therefore, those Brethren may be cheerfully allowed whatever comfort they may now derive from their Report to the Synod of Baltimore, and from the Synod's action upon that Report. We cannot but think, however, that they would have much more to console them amidst the trials of their present situation, had they kept their hearts more warmly to the sentiment expressed in the paragraph

immediately following the enunciation of those fundamental principles. It was as follows: "*If these principles be conscientiously and wisely carried out, it is hoped, that by the blessing of God, a Liturgy might be produced at last which will be a bond of union both with the ancient Catholic Church and the Reformation, and yet be the product of the religious life of our denomination in its present state.*"

It is more than doubtful whether any such hope would have been realized from the most faithful and perfect execution of such a scheme. But the principles, even such as they were, have not been carried out. They have been grossly violated. And what now? The answer will depend upon the success or the failure of their scheme. Should it succeed,—of which, however, we have no serious apprehensions, if the ministry and membership of our Church can only get to understand what all it involves,—there *may be* established a bond of union between those Brethren and the Catholic Church of the 4th and 5th centuries; but it will widen the breach between those who come under the spell of their delusion and the Apostolic Primitive Church, as well as that of the Reformation. And, so far as their influence may prevail, it will rend in twain every ligament of unity by which the Church of our fathers in this country has been thus far kept in fraternal harmony and concord.

The history of the Ritualistic movement in connection with the Synod of Baltimore, has detained us longer than we wished. But the detention was un-

avoidable. This point has ever been regarded by the advocates of the extreme measures as an impregnable citadel of their strength. And unless its weakness had been exposed, they would have taken refuge behind it from any other argument which might be urged against their scheme.

Notwithstanding the encouragement supposed to have been given by what occurred in Baltimore, the work of the Committee again came to a pause. No reports were received from it by the Synods of Philadelphia, 1853, or of Lewisburg, 1854. At that of Chambersburg, 1855, signs of vitality once more appear. It is true, that in the mean time the Chairman had visited Europe. But this can hardly be claimed to have furnished a sufficient cause or excuse for so long an interval of inactivity. In the report of 1855, the Synod was informed that the work, though interrupted, was progressing, and that the Committee hoped "to be able to have all the contributions printed before the next annual meeting of the Classes." It then adds, that "a growing sense of the great difficulty and responsibility of the task intrusted to their care, and of their insufficiency satisfactorily to perform it, has brought them to the conclusion strongly to dis-advise any final action of Synod for some time to come, on this subject, which is so intimately interwoven with the most vital and sacred interests of the Church, and which is just now beginning to be seriously agitated also in various other Protestant denominations of our country. Their intention is simply to

furnish, according to the best of their ability, a *provisional* liturgy, including a sufficient variety of forms for *examination* and *optional* use, until the Church be fully prepared by *practical experience*, to bring it into such a shape and form as will best suit the wants of our ministers and congregations, and make it, under the blessing of God, a rich fountain of sound piety and fervent devotion for many generations." (The *italicising* as in the original.)

This is not the place for a criticism of some outside statements introduced into the above report, nor would our space allow of it. Otherwise just exception might be taken to the disposition so often shown in these papers presented by the Committee to Synod, to transfer their own personal (subjective,) difficulties, doubts, troubles, and fears, to the church at large. Whereas, we contend that our Church in general, was not disturbed or agitated by any of the things referred to, beyond the limits of Mercersburg, where for us they originated, and its school. So also of the statement in regard to "various other Protestant denominations." Why should occasional and isolated instances of a restless individual here and there, whether a minister or a professor, be magnified into "serious agitations?"

But let us notice in this report what more directly concerns our subject, under the following points:

1. Notwithstanding the full schedule presented to the Synod of Baltimore, the Committee found itself discouragingly embarrassed.

2. They intimate that they do not expect to be able to submit any result to the Church which will be likely to prove fully satisfactory.

3. They declare their intention to furnish merely a *provisional, optional*, work, including a *variety* of forms, that is, of course, *variety* in regard to the *responsive* or *non-responsive* character, and to other matters of detail.

4. It is plainly implied that the Church should be left at full liberty to approve or reject what might be thus submitted, that she would not be bound by any thing that had been done or adopted unqualifiedly, and without modification, to accept of the Committee's work, and that she would not expose herself to any just charge of *stultification*, if their work should not at last be fully and unhesitatingly endorsed. This, too, was only a reasonable admission, and should be regarded as in force to this day.

5. It is conceded that any ultimate shape which the work might take should be such as *would best suit the actual wants of our ministers and congregations* at the time, and in the judgment of those *congregations* and ministers themselves. There is not the least intimation of the insidious scheme which has been more recently proposed, of paying little regard to what the now living and acting Church may desire, but of *educating* the children and youth of the Church into the new order of things which some are so zealously striving to introduce.

The report closes with recommending: "1. That pro-

vision be made at this meeting of Synod, to defray the expenses for the publication of this *provisional* liturgy; 2. That a committee of revision be appointed with instructions to solicit and receive from the several Classes, as well as from individual ministers and lay members, suggestions and modifications, omissions, and additions, regarding the Liturgy thus published, and with the help of these suggestions, and all other means within their reach, to improve the work, and in proper time lay it before Synod for final action."

The first item was complied with, the second was deferred until the next meeting of Synod; that meeting was held in Reading in 1856. There was no report from the Committee, and no action taken. The Liturgy had not been submitted to the Classes during the previous spring.

But finally, at the Synod of Allentown 1857, the Committee reported their provisional work completed and in the printer's hands. A statement of what are regarded as the distinctive peculiarities of that book, and because of which the whole Committee, with personal reservations, could unite in presenting it, will be found on pages 66-73 of this tract. In the report they reiterate emphatically that the work was only provisional, and to be sent forth as an "*experiment*." The report was adopted, and resolutions of devout gratitude to God, and warm thanks to the Committee upon the completion of the work were passed. But, excepting, if we remember, some pages of revised proof sheets, the Synod had no opportunity of examining into the merits of the book itself.

Thus the Provisional Liturgy was issued. Of course, the Synod or the Church had not at all endorsed it; had not been asked to do so. It had simply permitted it to go forth for trial and optional use, in part or in whole, according to the prudent judgment of all concerned. Even should it be found impracticable in its existing form, a contingency which the Committee thought possible, they comfort themselves with the belief "that their labor had not been thrown away."

No time was fixed by Synod during which the provisional use of the Liturgy should be allowed. But as a contract had been made by the Committee with the publishers of the work for ten years, it was assumed that the experiment might run for this period.

At the Synod of Frederick, Md., 1858, (Min., p. 104) a request was made by the Classis of E. Pennsylvania to have the Provisional Liturgy translated and published in the German language, so that the German portion of the Church might have an opportunity of learning its true character. In accordance with this request a Committee of five persons was appointed to prepare the desired translation. The work, however, was never satisfactorily completed.

In 1859 a preamble and resolutions were offered at the Synod at Harrisburg, having reference to the omission in the Provisional Liturgy of certain questions required, by the Constitution of the Church, to be put and answered affirmatively by adults baptized,

and by those admitted by confirmation. The paper was referred to a special committee.

A few years trial, however, proved sufficient to convince many in the Church of several things in regard to the Provisional Liturgy.

1. It was found to be in a large measure unmanageable. Many of the leading forms were too long, and too complicated, and many phrases and expressions, which it had been thought might be easily modified or passed over, were so interwoven with the texture of the forms in which they occurred, that they occasioned confusion and embarrassment in actual use.

2. That portion of the book which represented the more extreme ritualistic element and principles, met with but very little favor among the congregations, and could not be introduced into legitimate practice.

3. Instead of promoting unity and uniformity of worship, in the Church, the diversity which characterized the Liturgy, by its more complicated and its simpler forms, threatened, to a small extent at least, to spread in the Church. And there arose the more reason to apprehend evil results from this source, by reason of the zealous efforts made by those who favored the responsive and corresponding peculiarities of the work, to propagate their views, and secure the more general use of those forms.

4. Considerations like these prompted the desire for *an early revision of the work*, according to the recommendation of the Committee to the Synod of

Chambersburg, 1855, but which that Synod had deferred to the next year, and which had then been overlooked.

Although this early revision had thus been originally proposed by the Committee, now that it was urged especially by those who desired what were deemed objectionable peculiarities in the book to be modified or omitted, the attempt to procure it was resisted. Nevertheless, the Synod of Lebanon, 1860, passed an action referring the work to the Classes for examination and an expression of opinion both in regard to its character and to the matter of revision.

The course of this narrative is at this point interrupted by a remarkable phenomenon, having relation to the general movement, which appeared during the year 1861. It had for some time been a favorite idea of the advocates of the extreme ritualistic innovations, that in order to carry the Church with them, *she must be educated into their scheme*. They had plainly discovered during the four years' trial of the Provisional Liturgy, since 1857, that the great mass of the actual communicant membership of the Church, those who were constituting its real life, would not welcome or admit the peculiarities of that work. Those members and congregations could not be so easily persuaded to abandon customs consecrated by ages, and dear to them by most hallowed associations, nor allow themselves to be made the instruments even of honored professors, in revolutionizing the Church of their fathers, and making a wholly new

and strange thing of her. They were too earnestly and honestly fixed in their attachment to Protestant, evangelical Reformed principles and usages, to be so easily moved by the wind and tide which issued from the disturbed sea in Mercersburg.

But was there not another way of accomplishing the purpose? *Might not the children of the Church be reached and trained into the new ways?* Children and youth are pliant and unsuspicious. They can be taught and moulded to any thing. Under the tuition of a skilful Romish priest they might be gotten to worship saints or say Ave Marias. Why should they not be taken hold of and be early bent to this new order of things in the German Reformed Church? It might be done through a Sunday School Hymn Book. Many objections existed against such as were in common use, and advantage might be taken of this fact without exciting any suspicions. A new book, skilfully devised, *called a Hymn Book*, but furnished with prefatory ritualistic services, well supplied with responses, &c., &c., might be introduced through the influence of pastors here and there. Even superintendents, not suspecting any mischievous design, but taken with something new and fresh, might be enlisted as auxiliaries. Thus, what might not be effected in the course of a single generation? The children would become men and women, full communicant members, and could carry whatever point they pleased. The craft of the policy is transparent. Accordingly, such a Hymn Book was prepared by the

Rev. Dr. Harbaugh, a member of the Liturgical Committee, and was sent forth on its Jesuitical mission. We have nothing to add in the way of comment upon the scheme.

Let us resume our narrative. In the minutes of the Synod of Easton, 1861, pp. 34-38, the result of the reference of the Provisional Liturgy to the Classes is given. The following Classes expressed themselves in favor of an early revision and of modifications of the work in the way of diminishing its responsive features, and changing certain doctrinal expressions: Maryland, Philadelphia, Mercersburg, E. Susquehanna, Lancaster. Opposed to revision, Zion's, Clarion, E. Pennsylvania, W. Susquehanna, St. Paul, Goshenhoppen. The Classis of Lebanon expressed its willingness to have the Liturgy run the term of years (ten) originally proposed, but passes no judgment or the merits of the work. The Classis of New York declined to act upon the matter, as the Liturgy was not before them in the German language. From the Classes of Virginia and North Carolina, there are no reports.

Thus it appears that five Classes, representing one hundred and nine ministers and twenty thousand, nine hundred and thirty-six communicants, were favorable to a revision, and to important modifications in the work. Adding to this sum the number of ministers and members of Lebanon Classis which simply gave its consent to the revision, we have the total of one hundred and twenty-seven ministers and

thirty-two thousand, nine hundred and eighty-three communicants. Six Classes, representing ninety-three ministers and thirty-two thousand, five hundred and ninety communicants were unfavorable to an immediate revision. Of these, however, only one, St. Paul's, numbering nine ministers and one thousand, six hundred and twelve communicants, expresses itself as fully satisfied with the existing form and character of the work, and the two Classes of Goshenhoppen and Clarion object to the revision, *on the ground that it had not been translated into the German language.* The result therefore in figures, stood as follows:

| | MINISTERS. | COMMUNICANTS. |
|------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Favoring or consenting to | | |
| Revision, | 127 | 32,983 |
| Opposed to Revision, | 93 | 32,590 |
| Favoring Modification, | 127 | 32,983 |
| Opposed to Modification, | 9 | 1,612 |

It is not pretended that such a calculation is conclusive. But it indicates some significant facts. Notwithstanding, these indications, however, the proposition to proceed with the revision was strongly opposed. After considerable discussion, nevertheless, the following resolution was passed:

Resolved, That the Provisional Liturgy be placed in the hands of the original Committee for final revision; and that the Committee be instructed to consider the suggestions of the Classes as given in the minutes of their late meetings, and use them in the revision of their work, as far as the general unity of

the work will allow, and in a way that shall not be inconsistent either with established Liturgical principles and usages, or with the devotional or doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church. That the Committee be requested to report at the next annual meeting of the Synod, if possible, with a view of bringing this devotional work to a consummation desired by the Church, during the Tricentennial commemoration year of the Heidelberg Catechism." (Min. pp. 77, 78.)

This action possesses special importance, as it furnished the particular rule under which the revision took place. It contains five points.

1. The Committee is directed to proceed at once to revise the Provisional Liturgy, and complete the work if possible, by the end of the current synodical year.

2. In the revision they were directed to give full consideration and weight to the suggestions of the Classes, in regard to those points upon which they had expressed themselves.

3. It is implied that those suggestions were believed to be of such a nature, that some, if not many of them, might be turned to good account without violating the unity of the work, or established liturgical principles. They made express reference to the desirableness of diminishing the number of responses, to having forms without responses, to modifying certain doctrinal expressions.

4. Whilst nothing should be done which might conflict with "established liturgical principles and usages,"

no particular authority was indicated by which the Committee should determine what liturgical principles and usages should be considered as established. But it seems most natural to assume that such were meant as might be consistently taken as authoritative for the German Reformed Church. At the same time it may be supposed that some reference was had to the Baltimore schedule.

5. But whilst due regard should be had to such principles, the Committee was *directed to pay no less regard to "the devotional and doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church."* The part of the instructions now given was not ambiguous, even if that in regard to the "principles" might be. There might be honest diversity of opinion regarding those principles; there was hardly any room for such diversity on this other point. "The devotional and doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church," as to every ruling feature, was historical, constituting a clearly defined and prominent characteristic. Or if the Committee did not have full knowledge on the subject, the means of ascertaining all they needed to know were near at hand. This part of the resolution also, determined in good measure the sense in which the clause immediately preceding was to be taken. If there were principles of ritualism which might prevail in some sections of the general Church, but were not in harmony with the doctrines and usages of the German Reformed Church, the Committee were not to make *them* their rule and guide. In settling among

themselves the principles of revision, they were to be unqualifiedly governed, not by what might have the sanction of fourth or fifth century usage, not by what might be commended by the example of the Episcopal or the Lutheran Church, but by what was in full harmony with the known doctrines and practice of the Reformed Church. Nor was the Committee to feel at liberty to frame their own theory of what this "genius" was. The Synod evidently regarded as a matter of course, what must be in the nature of the case, that this genius was fixed and known.

In connection with the above action, it must be stated, that the Rev. Dr. Nevin resigned the position of Chairman of the Committee, which he had been induced again to assume. But the Synod declined to receive his resignation.

Under this resolution, accordingly, the Committee was in due time convened. Here new difficulties soon arose. There was diversity of sentiment as to manner of carrying on the revision. On the one hand, the position was taken that the more simple, less responsive portions of the Provisional Liturgy were to be made the chief model. This was opposed by the majority of the Committee, who urged the other portions as the proper pattern. In support of the former view, appeal was made to the clause in the resolution of the Easton Synod, requiring conformity with "the devotional and doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church." The majority insisted upon the preceding clause as entitled to predominant consideration. Thus

the old issue was revived: a liturgy which in its distinctive form and matter should be truly and genuinely Reformed, against one constructed upon some other basis not strictly and pervadingly Reformed.

The result was the postponement of the work of revision. Instead thereof, a majority and a minority report were presented to the next Synod, which met in Chambersburg, in 1862. The report of the majority was prepared at the request of the other members, by the Rev. Dr. Nevin, and then adopted by them. It was printed in tract form, and bears the title, "The Liturgical Question, with Reference to the Provisional Liturgy of the German Reformed Church." Professing as its design, "simply to bring the whole subject as plainly as possible before the Church," the report is, in reality, under all the suppositions which may be assumed to cover up the fact, 1st, *A violent and wholesale assault upon free prayer*; 2d, *A contemptuous, derisive condemnation of such directories of public worship as the old Palatinate Liturgy*; 3d, *A eulogistic vindication of an extremely responsive order of ritualism*.

Free prayer is denounced in the most severe and sarcastic terms, and epithets are heaped upon it, as it prevailingly obtains, which it might have been thought would not have been indulged in by those who were acting for the Synod of a Church in which it had been generally recognized and practised for at least two hundred years, and which from the first had allowed of Christian liberty in regard to its use; by

those, too, who had endorsed and recommended it in their report to the Synod of Baltimore.

Directories for public worship, such as the old Palatinate, containing prayers to be used by the minister, are treated with no greater respect. The system they represent is called, among other things, "only pseudo-liturgical at best," but "a bastard conception of what a liturgy means," "a praying by book," an "outward fixation of forms" which "must almost necessarily seem to be formal only, and therefore slavish also, and dead," "over against which it is quite possible for free prayer to have the best of the comparison." And all this by the descendants and representatives, through official synodical appointment, of the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism, and of the Palatinate Liturgy of 1563. In radiant contrast with all this, the report holds up the Committee's idea of ritualism, as the only one worthy of consideration and regard. What that idea is will be more fully seen when we come to delineate the Revised Liturgy, which develops that idea in its full bloom.

Knowing what the character of this report would be, a minority report in opposition to it was prepared and submitted to the same Synod by three members of the committee. This report set forth four objections to that presented by the majority. 1st, as being a virtual evasion of the duty assigned to the Committee by the Synod of Easton, and an actual frustration, for the time being, of the wishes of the Church to have the Provisional Liturgy revised with-

out delay. 2d, As not being a fair and impartial exhibition of the points at issue between the majority and themselves. 3d, As an attempt to perform a service antagonistic to the purposes and desires of the Synod and the Church, by endeavoring to persuade them to repudiate the past cultus of the Church, and to adopt one essentially at variance with her established principles and usages. 4th, Because it resists all modifications of the Provisional Liturgy, such as the Synod ever reserved to itself the right of applying to any work the Committee might present, and such as all Church judicatories justly claim the prerogative of making in the case of any Committee's report; whilst on the other hand it arrogantly requires that the Synod shall accept of the work as done by the Committee, or not at all.

In connection with their report, the minority submitted some forms, taken chiefly from the Provisional Liturgy, with modifications; not as complete or ready for adoption, but *simply as specimens illustrative of what they believed might be done in the way of conciliation.*

Both reports were allowed to be read. In the nature of the case, neither would be adopted. But the matter led to a discussion which continued through three days. The result reached is set forth in the following action: "Whereas it appears after a full discussion of the subject, that the way is not open for the Synod to take any farther action in regard to the Provisional Liturgy, therefore, resolved
 1. the optional use of it, as heretofore allowed

among our churches, be suffered to continue till the end of ten years from the time of its first publication, and that the whole question of its revision be now indefinitely postponed." The action was carried by 43 yeas to 13 nays. It was obvious to all present that two things mainly contributed to this temporary frustration of the order passed by the Synod of Easton, the year before. One was, that the members had grown weary of the protracted debate, and were anxious for adjournment. The other was, that during the last hours of the discussion, a supposed commercial difficulty required that the Provisional Liturgy be left undisturbed for the present. It was urged, that by the contract with the publishers, they might claim damages, if Synod did any thing to injure the sale of the Provisional Liturgy before the expiration of ten years from the time of its publication.

But whatever may have contributed to this result, the Committee, and those who sympathized with their extreme ritualistic views, had gained their point. That point was *time*, which naturally came by delay. Any comment on this point might seem aspersive, and we forbear. The movement now rested, so far as any synodical action is concerned, for two years in the eastern portion of the Church. But in the fall of 1863, the Triennial General Synod of the whole German Reformed Church met for the first time, in Pittsburg. Here the subject was again called up by a reference of the Western Synod. That Synod was

dissatisfied with the Provisional Liturgy, and opposed to its continued optional use, and desired the General Synod to order an immediate modification of that work. The General Synod referred the matter to a special Committee, which reported two resolutions; one granting the Western Synod liberty to prepare a liturgy "which in their judgement, might be better adapted to the wants of the Church;" and another in the following words: "Resolved, that it be recommended to the Eastern Synod to go forward in the work of revising its liturgy according to its own judgement, so that the General Synod may have before it the Liturgy of the Eastern Synod in its complete form, in which they may desire it finally to appear, with a view to final action upon the whole subject."

In this way the matter was again brought to the notice of the Eastern Synod of Lancaster, 1864; the Classis of Mercersburg, having, mean while, also passed a resolution which showed dissatisfaction with the indefinite postponement of the subject by the Synod of Chambersburg in 1862, and requested Synod to go forward at once with the work of revision. Accordingly, the Synod of Lancaster passed the following action:

"*Resolved*, That a Committee be appointed to revise the Provisional Liturgy, which committee shall report to this Synod at one of the Annual Meetings preceding the next meeting of the General Synod, in order that their revision may be approved and submitted to the inspection of the General Synod ac-

ording to its request." The Committee appointed under this resolution consisted of the members of the old Liturgical Committee.

Thus the work which had been expressly ordered two years before, but which the Committee had failed to perform, and which they succeeded at Chambersburg to get indefinitely postponed, was to be once more attempted. In the above resolution no instructions are given for the guidance and government of the Committee; but it is presumed that no one will call in question *the continued force of previous directions*.

In obedience to this injunction the Committee now addressed itself in good earnest to the work of revision. It was evident that no further delay would be tolerated. Patient as the Church had always shown itself, even almost to weakness, toward the private views and desires of some of her leading men, and tolerant of what often wore the semblance of disobedience and dictation—tolerant as scarcely any other Church had ever been in similar circumstances—it was manifest that the action of the last two Synods (the General and Eastern) plainly meant that the work must now be done. At the first meeting of the Committee during the year following the Synod of Lancaster, the former diversity of opinion as to the rule by which the revision was to be made not only re-appeared, as was to be expected, but reached its climax. Now, however, the majority of the Committee proceeded with their work in their own way.

The minority, so far as actual participation in the movement is concerned, was reduced to one present member. But, though alone, he did what he could to secure the adoption of a more moderate course, one less flagrantly in opposition to all genuine German Reformed antecedents. *He was not opposed to a Liturgy, but had for years earnestly advocated the preparation of one. He was not opposed even to some modifications of the old services of the Church; desired that a chancel service should be restored where it had fallen into disuse; was willing that the congregation should be allowed, if it desired, to unite aloud in the Lord's Prayer, and in the recitation of the Apostles' Creed, the latter especially on Communion occasions; even that there might be a loud AMEN at the close of the general prayer; also, that a confession of sin, and declaration of pardon to believing penitents should be admitted, to be used especially at the service preparatory to the Lord's Supper, and on days of public humiliation and prayer.* But he did strenuously oppose multiplied responses, the structure of the Lord's Supper service as urged and adopted by the Committee, certain phrases and expressions, which, if they did not actually teach doctrines directly antagonistic to those of the Reformed Church, seemed to teach them. He also opposed the utter exclusion of free prayer. It appeared that there could be no compromise. The posture of one member arrayed against seven or eight might seem unpleasant. But it was not deemed so unenviable or presumptuous as

that of seven or eight arraying themselves against what were believed to be the explicit instructions of the Synod, and manifest desire of the Church; against three centuries of the Church's history and life; and against nine generations of her membership, reckoning from the honored fathers of 1563 to the present time.

At the Synod of Lewisburg, 1865, the Committee reported progress, and submitted two "offices for service on the Lord's Day and the Holy Communion," as specimens of the manner in which they were carrying on their work. No opinion upon the merits of these forms was expressed by Synod. Prosecuting their labors with vigor during the year which followed, the work was completed, printed, and, with a brief accompanying report, presented to the recent Synod of York under the title: *An Order of Worship for the Reformed Church.* Immediately after the reception of the report and the work accompanying it, the writer of this tract asked and obtained permission to read the following overture or statement:

To the Synod of the German Reformed Church in the United States:

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN:—It has been with the most painful regret that I have found myself unable to unite, during the past year, with the other members of the Committee on the Liturgy, in their closing labors upon the work assigned to them, or in rendering their final report to your Rev. Body. And having received my commission as a member of that Committee from you, and endeavored during the course of many years to bear

my part in discharging the duties imposed upon it, I feel that it is due to the Synod, as well as to myself, to make this formal and official statement of the considerations which have constrained me to adopt this course.

To exhibit the matter in its true light I must ask the privilege of referring to a few antecedent facts.

At an early date in the history of the operations of the Committee, three of its members, including myself (and a beloved Brother who has since then been called to the rest and rewards of the Church triumphant) differed very decidedly from the rest of the Committee upon what we deemed a vital and fundamental point, touching a principle by which the Committee was to be governed in the preparation of the work. We contended that it was the design, and the expressed will of the Body which had appointed us, and of the Church at large, that the proposed new Liturgy, in its forms, in the general basis of those forms, and in the theological spirit ruling and pervading them, *should be in predominant harmony* with the established doctrines and traditional usages of the German Reformed Church. Whatever incidental modifications in modes of expression or in the outward structure of liturgical services might be approved and introduced, we urged that they must be in no doubtful harmony with recognized Reformed standards, and should not involve radical changes in our past culture.

By other members of the Committee, on the contrary, it was maintained that the purpose of the Synod, as set forth in various acts upon the subject, allowed them to construct a ritual upon a model professedly derived from a period in the history of the Christian Church, not primitive or Apostolic indeed, but still dating as far back of the age of the Reformation as the 3d and 4th centuries. They also insisted that they were not required to pay predominant, or even any but incidental regard, to modes and forms of worship peculiar to the Reformed Church.

For a time, however, these Brethren did not so strenuously press their individual views, as to exclude whatever did not agree with them. On the contrary, they seem to have held them with sufficient liberality to incline them to yield in the main to the opposite view. Hence, notwithstanding a diversity

of sentiment which threatened to thwart co-operation at the very outset, the Committee labored together with a fair measure of general harmony, and united in producing the *Provisional Liturgy*.

In the duplex structure and character of that work, the Synod, and the Church at large, must have discovered manifest evidences of an antecedent conflict in the Committee, and of an essential disagreement in regard to the whole subject which had been but poorly covered over. There were two books, (now declared to be irreconcilable with each other) within the same lids. Two liturgies or ritualistic systems, now pronounced essentially incompatible, were presented, interlaced, to the Church on the same platter,—or extended as a mixed draught in the same golden chalice. It must, consequently, have been equally apparent, that whilst each of these diverse elements in the Committee had so far succeeded in asserting its influence and power as to secure formal acknowledgment in some congenial services of the Book, and so a representation before the Synod and the Church, one of them had been permitted to do this, so far as the bulk of the Book, at least, is concerned, to an extent which greatly overshadowed, and almost excluded the other. The preponderance lay, as is well known, very largely on the side of that sort of a Liturgy, of such forms of service, as imitated most nearly, adhered most closely, to those recognized as Apostolic and evangelical by the Reformed Church. Of thirty-one forms, *twenty-seven* are cast after this model, whilst but *four* are framed according to a very different pattern.

This was, it appears to me, a most significant fact on several accounts. First, it was a practical expression of the Committee's conviction of the great purpose of its appointment. In the next place, it was a commendable concession on the part of the majority of the Committee of their private preferences to what was believed to be the ruling desire of the Church, and best calculated to promote its harmony and edification. And in the third place, it was a virtual acknowledgment that the simpler, non-responsive forms of worship were most legitimately Reformed, and a pledge that no attempt should be made to introduce any new

scheme of ritualism into the Church, if the Church did not cheerfully and spontaneously adopt that of which four specimens had been allowed to go out in company with the large majority of the old and simpler kind, in the way of test or trial.

From this statement it will be easy for the Synod to see how the entire Committee, not excepting those who were opposed to that style of worship which is illustrated by the four exceptional services already referred to, could nevertheless unite in recommending the Provisional Liturgy to the Synod of Allentown.

When the time came at which the final revision of the work was ordered, the Committee was directed to proceed with the work according to certain instructions. Upon meeting, however, to discharge the duty assigned under these instructions, it became apparent that there was an irreconcilable diversity of opinion between the other existing members of the Committee and myself, as to the real import of the resolution of Synod under which we were to act. The nature and the extent of the diversity, which was but the full development and ripened fruit of that which had shown itself from the very commencement of our labors, is best indicated by referring to the character of the revision which has been submitted to this Synod. In that revision, it will be found, I think, that every vestige of that type of worship which was represented by the twenty-seven leading forms of the Provisional Liturgy, and which exhibited a harmonious and consistent development and continuation of the recognized cultus of the Reformed Church, has been eliminated; whilst all the services of the book have been mainly modelled after those four of the Provisional Liturgy which bore the least resemblance to any mode of worship known to and authorized by the Church, not to declare them utterly and radically at variance with Reformed principles of worship. Repeated and earnest efforts were made by me to resist this tendency, and to persuade my Brethren, by their regard for the obvious purpose of their appointment, by their love for the true peace and prosperity of the Church, by the wrong they were, in my judgment, about to inflict upon the Church—its principles, its traditions, its solemn obligations to the past as well as to posterity, its proper mission among sister Evangelical Churches—not to use the influence of

their office and their name in an attempt to do, what I believe their course involves, viz: to subvert her fundamental and most sacred institutions, and to revolutionize her most ancient ecclesiastical usages. But all those efforts were unavailing. Nay, occasionally I was ridiculed or rebuked for making them. The Brethren professed to believe that they had discovered in the archives of the past, or in sources other than German Reformed, a better way for the Church to worship God, than that in which our fathers worshipped Him, and taught their children to offer their devotions at His throne of grace. They had, it seemed, learned other lessons in theology, than those taught by Ursinus, Olevianus, Bullinger and Beza, or had become persuaded of a different interpretation of the import of certain ordinances and doctrines, than that put upon them by our fathers, and commonly held by the Church. Indeed, I think they will frankly acknowledge a fact, by which I was continually impressed and painfully oppressed, during the first year of the revision, viz: that it was never a ruling consideration with the Committee, whether any particular point proposed was German Reformed or not, but that they were most predominantly governed by an ideal of ritualism based upon a conception of the Church and the ministry, which had been adopted by them, and to which every other consideration was made to bend.

Accordingly, instead of being willing to simplify the more complicated forms of the Provisional Liturgy, so as to reduce them to the greatest possible conformity with other Reformed modes of worship, no account was made of the Synod's instructions upon this point. The great aim, as it seems to me, was to work out their conceptions of what an ecclesiastical ritual should be, without regard to any discrepancies or contradictions between the result, and the traditional spirit, and distinctive character of the German Reformed Church. The extremely ritualistic character of the First Lord's day service, and the Lord's Supper service of the Provisional Liturgy, has not only not been diluted or softened, but intensified, both as to liturgical form and doctrinal expression. Instead of modifying them in the sense and spirit of the Synod's instructions, by looking to old German Re-

formed agenda for suggestions and prayers, these were disdained as jejune, not rapid, prosy, and refuge was taken to the Book of Common Prayer in use among our Episcopal Brethren, and other foreign forms. Instead of reducing the number of responses, and those peculiarities and novelties for our Church, by which the congregation is required to take repeated oral and audible part in the devotional services of the sanctuary, and thus again rendering the revision more conformable to our ancient mode of worship, these innovations were multiplied. Instead of modifying doctrinal phrases, which with all the explanations given them as they were found in the Provisional Liturgy, were felt to convey conceptions, or at least be liable to interpretations at variance with acknowledged doctrines in our Church, either no change at all was conceded, or, by omission or addition, the objectionable feature was aggravated.

Among those forms of the Provisional Liturgy to which, from a German Reformed point of view, most exception was taken, I may name that for the administration of the Lord's Supper. For all practical purposes, it presented to ministers officiating in the solemn service, the most serious difficulties. Not only its outward order was found to be unmanageable, but there underlay and pervaded it a spirit, uttering itself in peculiar phrases and turns of expression, which were strange to most of our pastors and people, and disagreeable. No doubt there was a prevailing impression and desire that this form, above all others, should now be so modified as to make it available, pleasant and edifying for all. But so far from this having been done, the new form reported in the Revision will be found, both in regard to the order of service and to phraseology, less acceptable, if not more offensive, than that of the Provisional Liturgy. It is as lengthy, notwithstanding the exclusion from it of the only distinctive point of contact between the former and our ancient mode of administration of the Holy Supper and the address to communicants. It is more complicated, and calls for greater variety and frequency of movement and action on the part of the congregation. And in regard to the inner structure and spirit of the service, whilst no attempt has been made to bring these into greater unison with

the standards of the Church, there are some most significant changes pointing in the opposite direction. As a single instance I may be allowed to refer to the omission of the phrase "*by a divine mystery*," in the prayer in p. 194 of the Provisional Liturgy, and in p. 172 of the Revision. In a word, in revising this service, the Committee will not pretend, I think, that they paid any submissive regard to any service of ancient authorized German Reformed type, either in reference to the external structure, or the reigning thought and spirit, but will confess that they were mainly ruled by other principles. Hence much closer resemblance will be found between this Revised Lord's Supper service and that of the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, than that of any Reformed Liturgy from the old Palatinate down to the heterogeneous and subjective work of Dr. Ebrard. Even in the matter of dismissing communicants from the table, whilst the Provisional Liturgy leaves the form of dismissal measurably optional, the Revision prescribes the use of one form only, and that the form of the Episcopal service.

Similar exceptions might be urged against the Baptismal, Confirmation, and Ordination services. But I have said enough to show all whose hearts are more truly devoted to the Church of our fathers, than to be easily allured from the principles which they inculcate, and the paths which they taught us to pursue, by either the fascinations of the 4th and 5th centuries, or by philosophical speculations and ritualistic fancies of more recent date, that I have had adequate, however deplorable, reasons for adopting the course which I have felt constrained in this instance to take. It was by no spirit of insubordination to the authority of the Body to which I hold myself ecclesiastically amenable, and from no desire to evade duty or toil, that I was prompted to withdraw from active participation in these last labors of the Committee. Still less was it from any abatement of zeal or of interest in a work which, in its original conception and plan, I had been somewhat instrumental in inaugurating at the Synods of Lancaster, (1847,) Hagerstown, (1848,) and Norristown, (1849,) nearly twenty years ago, or from any indifference as to the result about to be reached. On the contrary, my course in this case has been

imperatively dictated by the facts, that the original purpose and plan of the movement have been materially and essentially ignored and contravened, that the issue towards which my brethren were determinedly pressing things, was revolutionary, and that where, singly, I could not resist the force of numbers, I must appeal to a jurisdiction higher than the Committee as my only resort, and frankly lay my complaint at its feet.

In this spirit, and for such reasons, I come back to this Synod to-day from the mission upon which you sent me. I could not perform the duties of that mission in what I am most fully persuaded is the spirit and letter of your instructions, because my associates in the work would not aid me in such an execution of our trust. I would not perform them in any other way, not even to gratify any most favorite subjective, personal views and tastes, because I believed that to do so involved disobedience to my ecclesiastical superior, disloyalty to my Church, and infinite hazard to our spiritual peace and edification.

All which is most respectfully submitted, in our common Lord and common faith.

J. H. A. BOMBERGER.

York, October 18th, 1866.

By the special request of the member who presented the preceding statement, not as a minority report, but simply as an exhibition of his view of what the Committee had done, it was not entered upon the minutes. The report of the majority, with their work, was referred to a special committee. This committee subsequently submitted as their report a preamble in the form of a synoptical historical statement, followed by four resolutions. The statement is accurately derived from the Synodical records. But if this Committee could have found time to compare even the principles adopted by the Synod of Baltimore with the Revised Liturgy before them, they

would hardly have said: "These instructions, after much diligent labor, have been faithfully carried out;" or that "the Liturgy is as much the work of Synod as of the Committee;" or, finally, "that the Committee have acted with prudence and respect for the instructions of Synod at each step they have undertaken in the prosecution of their labors, and that all along they have been prompted and urged forward in their work by the special action of Synod. It is, therefore, the legitimate child of this Synod." That the contrary of these statements is, in a most unfortunate measure true, has been shown, we are persuaded, to the conviction of every candid reader, in the course of these pages, and will be further corroborated in the next section of this tract.

Of the four resolutions presented by this Committee, the first was an expression of thanks to the Lord for the completion of the work. The second was one of thanks to the Liturgical committee for their labors.

The first part of the third resolution offered by the Committee, was,* as nearly as we can remember:

*The report of the proceedings of Synod in the German Reformed Messenger, for November 7th, does not give the original resolution, but that which was ultimately adopted.—In this connection I may also correct another item in the Messenger, for October 31st. I did not ask Synod's permission to *withdraw* my statement, but simply requested that it be not entered in full on the Minutes of Synod. These two items are important for the history of the case.

"Resolved, That we approve of the Revised Liturgy now submitted to Synod, and recommend its favorable reference to the General Synod."

Rightly to estimate the feeling of the Synod of York in regard to the work, it is very important to note this fact. That Synod was convinced that the Revised Liturgy was not the kind of ritual which the Committee had been instructed to prepare, or which would meet the wishes and serve the best interests of the Church. Even many Brethren who favored, with some reservation, its responsive peculiarities, regretted that these had not been somewhat reduced, and especially that the offensive doctrinal phraseology of some services had not been modified. From the tenor of the original resolution as given above, it is evident that the friends of the work desired and hoped to secure the Synod's endorsement and commendation of it. This the Synod most decidedly refused to give. And although strong efforts were made to obtain at least some modified expression of approval, the effort had to be abandoned, and the friends of the work had to be content with a naked resolution of reference, in the terms reported in the German Reformed Messenger of November 7th. Even this was conceded in the spirit of generous compromise.

To this resolution was added a clause authorizing the optional use of the Revised Liturgy until the whole question shall be finally settled by the General Synod. There was earnest opposition to this action, on the ground that it might seem to commit Synod

to some sort of approval of the work. But many of those who were opposed to the Revised Liturgy had partially pledged themselves to support the resolution with the first part amended, and, besides, it was explicitly and authoritatively stated, that the permission of optional use should bear no such construction. Nevertheless, fourteen members voted against it, thereby showing the determined opposition felt against the least favor being shown to the work. Thus amended, and with such assurances, the resolution of simple reference, and of unapproving optional use, passed.

From this whole historical review of the Liturgical movement, now, two facts must be apparent:

1. That Synod, at different times, gave definite and positive expression of its judgment, as to the kind of a Liturgy which it desired the Committee to prepare.

2. That the Committee was under solemn obligations to obey and follow out these instructions.

Is the Revised Liturgy such a work? This question brings us to the next point in our tract.

SECTION II.—CRITICISM OF THE WORK.

By what rule, then, is the Revised Liturgy to be judged?

Certainly not by any rule of grammar or rhetoric. In regard to language, style, or philological merit in general, all may be conceded that the special Committee of the York Synod say of it.

“The work bears on its face the indications of un-

wearied patience and perseverance, of self-denying toil, of an elevated and devotional taste, of much study and reflection, and an undeniable purpose to serve the Church and the cause of Christ. It is questionable whether more labor and earnestness of purpose have ever been bestowed on any similar work, in Europe or in this country.”

Even more than this may be truly affirmed of it. For it unquestionably contains all the elements of just such a liturgy as would be in harmony with the spirit, the traditional character, the wishes and the wants of the German Reformed Church. With omissions and modifications, which in all would probably not exceed twenty pages, the work might be made what is needed and desired. And this was urged repeatedly upon the consideration of the Committee in the course of their zealous and arduous labors.

But this is not the point. The true questions to be settled in regard to this work, are: is it such a Liturgy as the Synod ordered the Committee to prepare? and is it in harmony “with the devotional and doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church?” Taking the book as it lies before us, we are compelled to give negative answers to both these questions. The Revised Liturgy is not such a work as the Committee was directed to prepare, and it does conflict with the devotional and doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church. These charges against the book are fully substantiated by the following proofs:—

1. It violates or disregards the instructions given

in the external structure and form of its leading services. And it does this in three respects:—

First, *by the multiplication of responses*. Of course it will be understood here that what may be styled “devotional responses” are meant, not mere answers to questions, as in the Baptismal and other services. But under this point are included those portions of the service in which the congregation is to unite orally. By the first and fourth principle of the Report adopted in Baltimore, 1852, the introduction of responsive services was undoubtedly allowed, and this was a liberal enlargement of the limits by which the Committee had been previously bound. But it must not be forgotten that this liberty was granted with distinct qualifications. It was to be exercised in subordination to the *second* principle then laid down, which required that “*special* reference ought to be had to the old *Palatinate* and other *Reformed* liturgies of the sixteenth century,” as well as in submission to the resolution of the Synod of Easton, which requires that the work “shall not be inconsistent either with *established* liturgical principles, or with the *devotional or doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church*.” That by such limitations the Synod intended to restrict the Committee to at least a *moderate use* of responses in the preparation of their work, must be obvious. But what have they done? In the regular service for the Lord’s day morning there are eighteen responses, some longer, some shorter; besides that, the congregation is to unite

aloud in the confession of sin, the Apostles’ Creed, the Gloria in excelsis, and the Lord’s prayer. In the *evening service* for the Lord’s day, there are seventeen responses, the congregation again uniting aloud in the Apostles’ Creed, and the Lord’s prayer. And on occasions when the Litany is used, twenty-four other responses increase the number. In the service preparatory to the Lord’s Supper there are thirty responses, including those in the Litany. In the service for the Holy Communion there are twenty-nine responses, independently of the oral participation of the people in a long confession of sin, in the Nicene Creed, in the Gloria in excelsis, in the Seraphic Hymn, and in the Te Deum, or Ambrosian Hymn, which last alone contains fifteen long responses, or what may be regarded as equivalent to them.

A similar peculiarity marks other services in the book, but the above will suffice as specimens.

Will any one now venture to affirm, that in granting the privilege of introducing responses into the liturgy, the Synod contemplated such a redundant use of them? In comparison with the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, this peculiarity of the Revised Liturgy will be found in excess of responses in the former, if we except the alternate recitation of the Psalms by the minister and people.

But what *special reference* was had in regard to this feature, to the old Palatinate, and other *Reformed* Liturgies of the sixteenth century? None at

all. There is not a response, of the kind in question, in the Old Palatinate Agenda of 1563. It was emphatically a pulpit liturgy, of the kind so contemptuously described in the report of the Committee to the Synod of Chambersburg, 1862. It is indeed contended that the people joined aloud in the confession of sin. But the language of the book, (literally it is, "let every one say with me in his heart,") does not warrant this assumption, and actual custom, so far as it can be ascertained, is against it. The Lord's prayer was not repeated aloud by the congregation. And although it is *possible* that the Apostles' creed may have been orally repeated by the people on Holy Communion occasions, and in the Baptismal Service, there is strong probability to the contrary.

But it is said that authority for responses is found in the Zurich Liturgy, prepared by Zwingli, of 1525. That liturgy, it is not denied, had responses. Those however, who appeal to it in justification of the extremely responsive character of the Revised Liturgy, strangely forget to add two facts in regard to it:—

1. The responsive service alluded to was not a regular Lord's day service, *but the order for celebrating the Holy Supper*. And although the Lord's Supper was for a time celebrated every Sunday, it was soon limited to five or six times a year!¹ 2. In the next place they strangely forget to state that this service *did not continue in force above four or*

1. *Gieseler*, Eccl. Hist. Vol. IV., (Translated by H. B. Smith,) p. 548, n. 29.

*five years, having been changed before 1530, so that in the revised form, the people take no oral part in the service.*² In place of the people the assistant ministers responded where responses were required. "Respondent ministri *nomine et loco totius ecclesiae* is the rubrical direction. Furthermore, these Zurich formularies never extended beyond the borders of the German cantons of Switzerland.³ So far, therefore, from being able to derive any warrant for the multiplied responses of the Revised Liturgy, from old Reformed liturgies, the evidence they furnish goes overwhelmingly the other way. Indeed it was contrary to the entire spirit and genius of the Reformed cultus to favor them, as shall soon be shown. In this respect, then, the Revised Liturgy violates the instructions under which the Committee acted. Furthermore, *it violates them by not providing some forms for the regular services on the Lord's day, without responses*. The Committee bound itself to furnish such by principle *four* in its Baltimore report. That principle declares: "Those portions of the Liturgy which are most frequently used, as *the regular service of the Lord's day*, and in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, should embrace *several forms*, some shorter and some longer; some with, and some without re-

2. Zwingli's Works, (edited by Schuler and Schulthess, 1841,) Vol. IV., p. 75. *Finsler*, Kirchh. Statist. d. reform. Schweiz, 1855, p. 714.

3. *Nitsch*, Praktische Theologie, II., p. 286.

sponses." In the Revised Liturgy, however, we search in vain for any forms of the latter kind, designed for the services indicated. Has the Committee, then, "faithfully carried out the instructions" given by Synod? Or can a Liturgy, thus manifestly at variance with those instructions, be truly said to be "as much the work of the Synod as of the Committee?"

There is, however, a *third* violation of those instructions apparent in the external structure of the work. As already shown in the historical section of this tract, the Baltimore report recognizes the claims of *free prayer* in public as well as in private. And in principle *seven* of that report we read: "A Liturgy ought not to interfere with the proper use of *extemporaneous* prayer, in either public or in private, but rather to regulate and *promote* it. Sufficient room ought to be left for its exercise in connection with the *Sunday afternoon and evening services*, as well as in weekly Bible lectures, social prayer-meetings, catechetical exercises, and on special occasions." Accordingly, the *Provisional* Liturgy left some room for such liberty, but the *revised work* excludes all free prayer. We have searched in vain for a single place in a single service, where free prayer is allowed, or where it could be introduced without infringing upon the prescribed order. Nay, in their report to the Synod of Chambersburg, ("the Liturgical Question") free prayer is most unsparingly ridiculed as mainly "stereotyped private forms of thought and phraseo-

logy," * * "irregular, desultory effusions, which are entitled to but small regard on the score either of piety or sense," * * as "making the people hang on the mouth of the minister," * * "extemporized turns and starts," * * "ranting expectorations," * * sentimental harangues," and an "outrage upon the true freedom of Christian worship." Of course, after such indecorous sarcasm, so lavishly heaped upon free prayer, the committee, (those of them who endorsed the above scandal,) could not be expected to show so much respect to it as to honor it with even the humblest place in their work. What if principle *seven* in the charter obtained at Baltimore, did call for the liberty of Christian ministers and Christian congregations in regard to this matter? Things more hallowed than a sacred number had been disregarded, and why should it not be easy to brush any such, obstacle out of the way?

It will not avail to say in reply to this, that although the book makes no provision for free prayers, ministers may, nevertheless, be at liberty to use such if they please. Of course they will, and they will be likely to exercise such liberty for many years to come. But what has this to do with the case in hand? The Revised Liturgy ignores free prayer, excludes it from its services, and, so far as its influence or power may reach, will utterly banish it from the Church. It wholly discountenances all such spiritual liberty, and the legitimate tendency and effect of its system lead to the abrogation of free prayer. And this is

one fatal item in the condemnation of the Revised Liturgy. In the preparation of it the Committee solemnly pledged themselves to have regard to the claims of free prayer, and to provide for its *promotion*. They redeem the pledge by submitting to Synod an "order of worship" which wholly excludes it! So "*faithfully*" has the Committee "*carried out*" the instructions of their ecclesiastical superior! Such "prudence and respect" has it shown "for the instructions of Synod *at each step*" in the prosecution of their work! And this work, now, is "the legitimate child of this Synod!"

Too long has the Church been blinded and deceived by such dazzling compliments to disobedience of synodical orders. It is time this style of phraseology were changed. Why should we be deluded into the belief that a duty is performed, and into pronouncing it well performed, when the very thing enjoined has been neglected, and that has been done which was either explicitly or impliedly forbidden?

All these complaints, however, are sometimes evaded by another subterfuge. It is very boldly asserted that free prayer is an intrusion upon the German Reformed Church. That after having maintained strictly and uniformly the use of prescribed forms, and allowed no other for more than a century, she was suddenly induced to surrender her principles to the demands of an invader,—and that invader a poor, wretched, half insane, fanatic!—miserable Jean de la Labadie; thus to pervert a pure and unsuspect-

ing Church! Facile unfortunate Church, thus to let itself be defrauded of a sacred birthright, to barter it for "ranting expectorations," "extemporized turns and starts," and "a mummary mouthing the heavens, without either form or life!"

Believe it who may. To our mind the assumption wears absurdity on its very face. Liberal and generous as the German Reformed Church may ever have been, she is not that pliant thing which every hand aspiring to plastic skill and reputation may mould to suit its own fancy. She has proved herself firm to her principles in other days. And we have confidence that the grace of God will keep her as steadfast in these principles now and in time to come, as in ages past. Let no one take flattering encouragement from what is erroneously asserted to have been effected through Labadie's agency, to hope the contrary now. She need but know that her bastions are assailed, or that her foundations are being undermined, and with the spirit of the sixteenth century she will indignantly repel the bold assailants.

There are, however, other reasons for discrediting this statement. It contradicts the explicit assertion made in the report to the Synod of Baltimore. Note what the Committee there affirm: "But, on the other hand, there can be no doubt, that our church, which is common with all the Churches of the Reformation, has *at all times*, to a greater or less extent, approved of stated forms of public worship without excluding thereby *the right use of extemporaneous prayer*," &c.

Thus we have the express considerate testimony of the Committee to the fact that the German Reformed Church at all times allowed the use of free prayer.

Nor did the Committee in making this assertion speak unadvisedly. It is sustained not only by the well-known predominant spirit of liberty which distinguishes the constitution and ritual of the Reformed Church throughout, but by the earliest authorized usage of the Church;—for the first Liturgies contained not so much actual prayers and intercessions, as exhortations to these, in the following manner: “We should implore God, or let us pray to God, that He would bless His holy Christian Church, &c., &c. *Then the minister and congregation, kneeling, engaged in silent prayer, closing with the Lord’s prayer, in the same manner.*”¹ Thus, in the order for public worship in Zurich, for 1523, we find such an exhortation, in which all the proper subjects of prayer are named in detail, *but the prayer itself is not prescribed.* Even the public, (congregational) confession of sin was made in this way:—“Wir sollen auch alle demütiglich niederfallen vor Gott, unserem himmelischen Vater, und us Grund unsers Herzens sprechen: O Vater! ich hab gsündet in den Himmel und wider dich, und bin nit würdig din sun gnämt zu werden; bist gnädig mir armen sündler!”³ *This practice continued*

1. *Finsler*, p. 694.

2. *Zwingli’s works* II, Abth. 2, p. 228.

3. *Zwingli’s works*, II, Abth. 2, p. 229.

*until the commencement of the eighteenth century, when the mere exhortation to prayer gradually passed over into actual forms of prayer.*⁴

How completely this refutes the assertion that such a thing as free prayer, that is prayer not prescribed in full form in a Liturgy, was unknown in the Reformed Church until it was introduced as an abnormal innovation by Labadie! If Dr. Göbel, who is given as authority for this assertion, has really made it, he must at the time have forgotten to refer to the old records in the case. It is in full harmony, also, with the distinguishing freedom of the Reformed Church in all such matters, and with the practice above described, that we find *occasional prayers*, prepared by individuals, allowed and used in public service. Of this we have an illustration in the prayer of *Myconius for a season of public calamity*, given in Dr. Hagenbach’s life of Myconius.⁵

All this recent stir, however, regarding free prayer as an innovation, is a side issue, and must not be allowed to divert us from the main point. That is that the Synod fully and formally recognized the rights of free prayer; that the Committee volunteered a pledge to respect those rights; but that in the face of all this *free prayer is ignored and formally as well as virtually repudiated in the Revised Liturgy.* And

4. *Finsler*, p. 694.

5. *Leben der Reformatoren*, II, Th. p. 444.

should not this virtual attempt to deprive her of a most precious right, be repudiated by the Church?"¹

2. Passing over from the external structure of the Revised Liturgy, to an examination of *its ruling spirit or genius*, it will require but little argument to prove that in this respect, even more boldly than in the former, *it does violence to the purpose for which it was ordered and to the instructions of the Synod in regard to its preparation.*

Nothing could be more clear, from a fair analysis of the repeated statements of Synod concerning the main design of this whole Liturgical movement, or of the instructions successively given to the Committee, than that the chief, the predominant purpose and desire was, *that the new Liturgy which might be produced, should be essentially and generically Reformed.*

To cite all the authorities at hand in illustration and proof of the almost severe simplicity of Reformed Church worship, and of the rigid exclusion from her order of every thing that even seemed to conflict with this simplicity, would fill not only all the pages to which this tract is limited, but volumes. The devo-

1. We have designedly avoided the discussion of the practice of the Primitive Church in regard to free prayer, not, however, from any fear of the argument, but only because it would lead too far out of our way. No one would need to shrink from the defence of primitive free prayer, who had the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Epistles of St. Paul*, not to name *Herzog's* Encyclop. Art. *Church Agenda*; *Nitsch*, Prakt. Theolog. *Schaff's* and other Church Histories at his side.

tional and doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church, with which the Revised Liturgy was required to harmonize, has always been strongly characterized by its primitive apostolic simplicity. Our fathers went not to the turbid and mixed fountains of the fourth and fifth centuries for the water of life (centuries during which the gradually waning spiritual liberties of the early Church were betrayed into sacerdotal and hierarchical bondage. (See *Herzog* and *Nitsch* as quoted above,) but to the true original divine spring. And although in some instances (as in the case of the early Zurich Baptismal and Lord's Supper forms,) they did not immediately cast off all the superstitions which, like mosses and parasites on decaying trees, had accumulated upon Christian ordinances, the German Reformed Church of 1563 stands forth cleansed from all such marring encumbrances. To pretend at all, therefore, that a system of worship like this of the Revised Liturgy, is in unison "with the devotional genius" of the German Reformed Church, would involve the most inexcusable presumption.

Take, as specimens from a large mass of evidence, the following proofs of our position:

Hase (Kirchengesch. 7th ed., § 370) says, that in arranging its cultus or mode of public worship, the Reformed Church returned strictly to the simplicity of Apostolic times, whilst the Lutheran Church constructed its cultus on the basis of the Romish missal.

Neudecker (Gesch. d. Evang. Prot. I., 565) affirms

that *for the altar* the Swiss Reformed Church substituted *a simple communion table*, and besides abolishing the organ from its churches, rejected all external ornaments. Its founders had the bitter experience made in the Romish Church to guide them, and *dreaded the carnalizing influence of sensuous aids in worship.*

Kurtz (Text-book of Ch. hist., Translated, II., pp. 148, 149) declares: "In regard to cultus the Reformed Church exhibits the extreme reverse of that of the Catholic Church. * * The Churches were converted into naked prayer-halls and auditories, *altars into simple communion tables.* * * In the Lord's Supper the *symbolical* element prevailed."

Hagenbach (Vorles. Th., 3 Aufl. p. 502) says: "In regard to worship (referring especially to the Reformed Church) the essential difference between Protestantism and Romanism, consisted in *the former giving precedence to the Word*, the latter to the symbol. *Preaching was the central point in Protestant worship*, and preaching upon a Scriptural basis."

Nitsch (Prakt. Theol. 2. Buch, 2. Abth. § 246,) whilst he vindicates the Reformed cultus against charges of barren stiffness and want of true spirit and life, yet admits, "that in the matter of an organic Liturgy, and fixed forms of prayer, the Reformed Church rejects traditions, and *retains scarcely any thing belonging to the old Church, excepting the Apostles' Creed.*" With the decided testimony borne by the Old Palatinate Liturgy of 1563 (to which the

Committee was required to have "*special reference,*") it may be assumed that all interested in this discussion are so familiar as to render citations superfluous.

As the sum of this evidence, we add the following quotations from an able article by Köster, in the Evangelical Reformed K.-Zeitung of Erlangen, for November, 1859. "Undoubtedly, simplicity of worship is nothing accidental in the Reformed Church, but is grounded in its principles, and involved in its very name, which expresses the reforming, the abrogation of all Popish errors in doctrine and customs, on the basis of the Word of God, and according to the example of the Apostolic Church, as the aim and essence of our Church. * *

The fathers of the Reformed Church, therefore, sought above all to restore the worship of God in *spirit* and in *truth*, even as the Lord Jesus designates this as that which should be instituted under the New Covenant in opposition to that which characterized the old. Hence, they not only excluded every thing that was contrary to Evangelical truth, which was also done by the Lutheran Church, but every thing that was calculated to work upon the senses, rather than appeal to the *spirit*. * * They would know nothing of a Liturgy, in the sense of alternating responses between the minister and the people, of special *altar-services*, or of artistic means of edification." In defence of the devotional genius of the Reformed Church against the charge of being jejune and not rapid, the writer says: "The simplicity and plainness of Reformed worship is by no

means identical with poverty in spirit and feeling, but is most promotive of the development of a genuine Christian spirit and sentiment, and altogether best suited to cultivate them. For they secure the rights of precisely those elements of Christian worship which are best adapted to awaken and nourish a truly Christian spirit, namely, of the *Word of God*, and of the *free prayer of the heart*."

Whilst, therefore, it pertains to the devotional genius of the Reformed Church to recognize and use stated forms of worship, and such Liturgical forms are by no means discarded, that genius refuses to bow in bondage to them, to the surrender of the believers' and the congregation's prerogative of free unfettered spiritual access to the throne of grace. It has worship, but worship in this free and evangelical sense. It has an *altar*, but that altar is not an outward one of ever re-enacted propitiatory sacrifice, but the spiritual altar to which St. Paul refers in Rom. 12: 1, of which he speaks in that often perverted passage* in Hebrews 13: 10, and before which the spirits of believers prostrate themselves in true heart-worship. It acknowledges a *priesthood*, but discarding the un-scriptural and anti-apostolic sacerdotalism into which the office of the primitive Gospel ministry had degenerated in the 4th and 5th centuries, and which

*A passage, by the way, to which ultra ritualists would not be so prone to allude, if they carefully considered the connection, especially verse 19:—"It is a good thing that the heart be established with *grace*; not with meats, &c." Altogether, the Ep. to the Hebrews is a poor place for sacerdotalists to find a text.

subsequently reached its head in the Roman Pope, it maintains and exhibits the universal priesthood of the entire communion of believers. It tolerates no sacerdotal propitiatory office as mediating between the Lord Jesus Christ and His people, the Church; no hierarchical church, assuming to stand at the entrance to the place of holy audience and fellowship with God, and arrogating the prerogative of dispensing pardon or condemnation, life or death to the Church in the outer court.

Take now this Revised Liturgy as recommended for adoption by the German Reformed Church, and contrast the animus, the spirit which, by a persistent adherence to those things in the Provisional Liturgy from which it was hoped the Committee would purge this latter work, and which might easily have been eliminated, is made to pervade its various services. Set the services for the Lord's Day by the side of that found in the Old Palatinate Liturgy, and mark how they differ, not only in regard to responses, but in their general cast and coloring. It was not by accident that in the old Palatinate Agenda the term "*table*" was used instead of "*altar*." The latter was far more familiar to the early Reformers who had just escaped from the idolatry of the Romish mass. But they designedly rejected it as the symbol of that perversion of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, by which the *sacrament* was made a sacrifice.*

*In like manner and for the same reason the term "*altar*" is excluded even from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer.

They clung, indeed, to the spiritual *eucharistic altar* of the Primitive Church, but they would not recognize that altar which an Apostate Church had set up in dishonor of the full and complete perfection of the atonement accomplished once for all, by the propitiatory death of the Lord Jesus Christ: they abhorred that altar on which was being continually repeated an act of "accursed idolatry" (Heidelberg Catechism, 80th question.) Instead, therefore, of carrying *this altar* with them, our fathers most cheerfully left it behind in the temples of Rome, and joyfully betook themselves again to the long neglected "*table of the Lord*," (1 Cor. 10: 21,) there to partake with Apostles, and with them who "were first called Christians at Antioch," of the sacramental sign and seal of His body and His blood.

So, on the other hand, it is not by accident that the Apostolic and Evangelical Reformed phrase, "*the Lord's table*," is allowed no place in the *Revised Liturgy* (excepting in the way of incidental allusion, in the preparatory service,) but is made to yield to the "*altar*," and this in its *propitiatory* sense, as is evident from the position and sense assigned to it in the service for the Holy Communion. Hence, we find it in the rubric with which the *Revised Liturgy* opens. At the very threshold of the Church of this Liturgy we are confronted by the "*altar*," instead of "*the table of the Lord*."

In the *Provisional Liturgy*, at its first appearance in 1857, this peculiarity may scarcely have arrested

the attention of the Church. The term, in an evangelical spiritual sense, was familiar to all. And it was, no doubt, presumed by most of those who used it, that it was thus used by the Committee. Wherefore it would not be likely to give offence, or excite suspicion. Now, however, we know that it is employed in a different sense. Not, indeed, in one that is literally *new*, but in one which is essentially antagonistic to that known and acknowledged in the Reformed Church. It thus becomes the shibboleth of a dogma, the watchword of a system which is at variance, materially and essentially, with "the devotional genius of the German Reformed Church."

Turn, next, to *the form of declaring pardon to penitents*. That of the Old Palatinate Liturgy most carefully avoids every expression which might savor of sacerdotal absolution. Its whole spirit and aim prove that it was designed, not to convey the idea that the forgiveness of the sincere penitents depended upon any formal and official priestly impartation of forgiveness, but to comfort weak penitents *who were already pardoned*, but who, by reason of weak faith and strong doubts, did not realize the joy of pardon, by an official *ministerial* (not sacerdotal) assurance, based on the promise of the Gospel, that they were truly and really forgiven. Hence, its common title was: *Assured Comfort* (Gewisser Trost.) We give it in full.

"Unto as many of you, therefore, beloved brethren, as abhor yourselves and your sins, and believe

that you are fully pardoned through the merits of Jesus Christ, and resolve daily more to abstain from them, and to serve the Lord in true holiness and righteousness, I declare, according to the command of God, that they are released in heaven from all their sins (as He hath promised in His Gospel) through the perfect satisfaction of the most holy passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A declaration like this, made by the minister from the pulpit, or at the Communion table, is a very different thing from that of the Revised Liturgy made by the *minister* at the *altar*. The *verbal* alterations and omissions may be few, and grammatically unimportant; but they are significant, and, taken as they must be in connection with the system in which they stand as an organic part of it, they are doctrinally most momentous. It is as follows: "Unto as many of you, therefore, beloved brethren, as truly repent of your sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, with full purpose of new obedience, I *announce* and declare, by the authority and *in the name of Christ*, that your sins are forgiven in heaven, according to His promise in the Gospel, through the perfect merit of Jesus Christ our Lord."*

The obvious purpose and effect of the whole act, as contained in the Revised Liturgy, is to make all

* Even in the "Book of Common Prayer," though the term *absolution* is retained, the form which, until recently at least, was in most common use, is milder than this, being, indeed, simply a prayer.

Christians feel that their forgiveness depends in some way upon the formal announcement of it by the minister officiating at that altar. And so far it breaks, or at least disturbs that close *immediate* personal fellowship which, according to the Gospel, and according to "the devotional genius of the Reformed Church," it is the believer's prerogative to have and enjoy with the Lord. For it awakens and fosters the feeling in his heart, that in order to such full, assured communion, and to obtain complete forgiveness as its antecedent condition, he must come to this altar and this priest.

This view of the devotional genius of the Revised Liturgy might be further illustrated and sustained, by a reference to the several steps by which, in the alternating sentences which pass between the minister and the congregation, the former enters upon the supplicatory part of the service.

But we must hasten on to notice yet under this head *the service for the Holy Communion*. In all the authoritative writings of our Church, as well as in her Liturgies, the characteristic devotional idea of the Communion, that which is made to rule and pervade the entire service, is, that it affords *to sincere believers sacramental* fellowship with their crucified, risen and glorified Lord, and in Him with each other; and further, that it gives them sacramental assurance, by a divine sign and seal, of their real, living participation in all the benefits of their Saviour's death, resurrection and exaltation. In proof

of this, it will suffice for our present purpose, to refer, simply, to the 25th and 28th Lord's days of the Heidelberg Catechism, and to quote a few sentences from the Old Palatinate Lord's Supper service. It commences with the words of the institution of the Supper, taken from 1 Cor. xi. 23-29. Then follow three points for sincere self-examination, corresponding with those given in the second question of the Catechism. In the next place the impenitent and ungodly are warned against approaching the table, whilst the truly contrite are comforted, and encouraged to draw near. It then proceeds: "Let us now consider *to what end* the Lord instituted His Supper; namely, *that we do this in remembrance of Him*. We are to remember Him, in the first place, by certainly believing in our hearts, that our Lord Jesus Christ was sent into the world by the Father, according to the promise made in the beginning to the patriarchs; that He took upon Himself our flesh and blood; that He endured for us the wrath of God, under which we must have eternally perished, from His incarnation to the end of His life on earth, and rendered complete obedience unto the divine law, fulfilling all righteousness for us. * * * * That He suffered all this in order that we might find acceptance with God, and never be forsaken, sealing the new and everlasting Testament, even the covenant of grace and reconciliation, with the shedding of His blood, and with His death, when He finally said, 'It is finished.' *That we now might firmly believe that we*

have part in this covenant, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also, after He had supped, He took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.' That is, as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, *ye shall be reminded and assured, as by a certain remembrance and pledge*, of this my hearty love and faithfulness unto you, who must have perished in everlasting death, had I not given my body to die for you upon the cross, and shed my blood to feed and nourish your hungry and thirsty souls with this same crucified body and shed blood, as certainly as you all see this bread broken, and this cup handed to you, and you are permitted to eat and drink of the same in remembrance of me."

"From this institution of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, we see that He fixes our faith and confidence upon His perfect sacrifice *once offered upon the cross, as upon the only foundation and basis of our salvation, having Himself* become the true meat and drink of eternal life unto our hungry and thirsty souls." The same idea is maintained to the end. And the quotation is the more important, as it

fairly and truly represents the most positive and evangelical view of the ordinance to be found in any Reformed ritual.

But what shall be said of the extreme contrast with all this, which is exhibited by the office for the Holy Communion in the Revised Liturgy? The entire departure of its order from all German Reformed precedents, and its adoption of an order altogether novel to those accustomed to them, may be allowed to pass without remark,—though this feature cannot make it the more welcome to the heart of the Church. But when it institutes a comparison, in ancient Levitical sense, between the table of the Lord and the most holy place in the temple, and prompts our minds and hearts to regard the mysteries of the service as *the offering up of a sacrifice*, and to beseech God to *receive at our hands this memorial of the blessed sacrifice* of His Son, *in union with which we offer and present* unto the Lord the reasonable sacrifice of our own persons; we cannot but feel that it speaks a language very different from that used by our fathers, and holds forth a service which is most essentially inconsistent with the devotional genius of the Reformed Church, and utterly irreconcilable with the Apostolic and Primitive conception of the ordinance. This is *not a sacramental Supper* of which penitent believers are invited to partake in thankful commemoration of their crucified Lord, and in blessed communion with their exalted Lord; in which *they receive* a sign and seal of His saving grace. It is a

sacrificial rite, in however refined a form, with which they come before God, and in which they *present an offering to Him*. It is not even a sacramental *eucharist*, in the Apostolic sense of the term. The service, both in form and spirit, has manifestly no kindredship with that of the Old Palatinate or any other known and acknowledged German Reformed Liturgy of earlier times. Even the address to communicants, which gave the service as found in the Provisional Liturgy some outward resemblance to our customary form, is cast out. It is equally clear that it has no affinity, either in tone or spirit, with the Holy Supper, as instituted on that memorable night, or as subsequently observed by the early disciples, and described nearly thirty years after its institution by St. Paul, or as reported historically as having been observed in the Primitive Church. Where, then, shall we place it? With what does it stand most nearly related? And yet the Committee was explicitly directed to execute the revision in such a way as would not make the work, and, therefore, we may add, most emphatically this service in it, “inconsistent with the devotional genius of the German Reformed Church.”

It would be painfully easy to point out similar objections to other services in the book, and especially the Baptismal, Confirmation, and Ordination services. But our point has been already fully established, and proofs need not be multiplied. And why should they be when the Committee itself virtually concedes all by its own confession? Mark well the

import of the following declarations taken from its report ("The Liturgical Question") to the Synod of Chambersburg:—"Must our new Liturgy be of one kind in manner and form, *in genius and spirit*, with the *Reformed Liturgies of the sixteenth century*, having these only for its basis, and following them as its rule? If such be, indeed, the general view and feeling of the Church, as it is now assumed to be in much that is said about the Provisional Liturgy as it now stands, let it be at once known to ourselves and openly declared to the world." Why raise this question? The action of the Synod of Baltimore is claimed to have answered it, and that to the satisfaction of the Committee. The resolution of the Synod of Easton reiterated the answer in concise but decided terms:—"The Reformed Liturgies of the sixteenth century" were not to be made the only basis. No one claims this as the sense of Synod. But *equal* regard was to be paid to them as to those of a much earlier period, and nothing inconsistent with their devotional and doctrinal genius was to be allowed. Take another quotation:—"It requires no argument to show that it (the Provisional Liturgy) is not after the pattern *strictly* of any system of worship which has prevailed hitherto in the German Reformed Church, either in this country or in Europe. It makes no such profession or pretence. It aims to be an improvement upon this whole past cultus, by which it is to be made more thoroughly liturgical than ever before." To this it may be answered, 1. That

the *larger part* of the Provisional Liturgy is "after the pattern *strictly*" of older Reformed services. 2. That the objection to other portions, particularly as they now appear to the exclusion of the simple forms in the Revised Liturgy, is, not that they are *not strictly* after the Reformed pattern, but after a pattern essentially inconsistent with it.

Once more. "It (the new liturgy,) is a question of very material change in our church practice, *if not in our church life*. The new Liturgy is for us as a church, in many respects a *new scheme of worship*. It is not the pattern according to which our fathers worshipped, either in these United States or elsewhere."

And yet, in the face of all these concessions, our Church and congregations are often told that the only aim of the movement as represented by the new Liturgy, is to restore old and honored Reformed customs! The above extracts, taken together with the Revised Liturgy itself, assuredly tell quite a different story. And no one can say that in making these quotations we have in the least garbled the statements of the Committee, or misrepresented their views.

After such an exhibition of the inconsistency of the Revised Liturgy with German Reformed principles and usages in a *devotional* view, it will be unnecessary to show in detail its *doctrinal discrepancies* with the authorized standard of the German Reformed Church. Upon this point, therefore, we shall limit the tract to a simple statement of those doctrines in regard to which the discrepancies consist.

The *first*, affects the relation of the glorified body of the Lord Jesus Christ to true believers. Upon this point, the Heidelberg Catechism expresses itself in most distinct and unequivocal terms. For whilst it teaches clearly the living union of believers with the Lord Jesus Christ, and that this union is promoted by a sincere participation in the Holy Supper, it is most careful in guarding against the error which contends that the glorified body of the Lord is in any way contained in, with, or under the sacramental elements. "To eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ is (indeed) not only to embrace with a believing heart, all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin, and eternal life, but also, besides that, to become more and more united to His sacred body, by the Holy Ghost, *who dwells both in Christ and in us.*" But then it further affirms this to be true in a sense corresponding with the doctrine laid down in the answer to question 47, viz., that "in respect to His human nature, (even His glorified body,) He is no more on earth." Hence, in the other part of the answer quoted above, (Q. 76,) it is added: "So that we, *though Christ is in heaven, and we on earth*, are notwithstanding, "flesh of His flesh, and bone of his bone," and that we live and are governed for ever by one Spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul." And this, moreover, is confirmed by the whole doctrine of the sacraments taught in the Catechism. On the contrary, now, the doctrine of the Revised Liturgy upon this point

is, if there is any certain meaning to be attached to its terms, that of at least a modified ubiquitarianism. Such phrases as, "who dost admit Thy people unto such wonderful communion, that partaking of the body and blood of thy dear Son" (not any longer 'by a divine mystery,' by which the expression is qualified in the Provisional Liturgy,) and "*exhibit* and represent to us with true effect the body and blood of Thy Son," and "receive at our hands this memorial of the blessed sacrifice of Thy Son," and "vouchsafing to feed us *through these holy mysteries*, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of Thy Son," taken as they must be in connection with the entire Communion service, and with the quotation in full, in the preparatory service, of that passage of St. John, vi. 53-58, on which ubiquitarians chiefly rely; such phrases, we say, interpreted by this just rule, seem to allow of no other conclusion than that which we have drawn.

Another discrepancy of this kind appears in regard to the office of the Holy Spirit, or rather, *the means and instruments by which the Holy Ghost works regenerating grace*, or union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in the hearts of men. The Catechism says, that the great instrument employed to this end is the *Word*, and this in express distinction from the *sacrament*. Accordingly, after having stated Q. (20,) that only "those who are *ingrafted* into Christ, and receive all His benefits by a true faith," are saved, it defines this faith, and declares that "the Holy Ghost works it by

the Gospel in my heart," (Q. 21.) And again it affirms in Q. 65, that "we are made partakers of Christ, and all His benefits, by faith only;" and in the answer to this question guards the truth against the error or misapprehension of supposing that the term "Gospel" may be used as including both the Word and the Sacraments, by placing the two in plain antithesis to each other, and asserting that "the Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts *by the preaching of the Gospel*, and *confirms* it by the use of the sacraments."

Very different from this, however, is the doctrine of the Revised Liturgy. There, we are told that "deliverance from the power of the devil, the remission of sin, and *the gift of a new and spiritual life*, by the Holy Ghost," are to be obtained "*through the sacrament of baptism, which Christ hath ordained for the communication of such great grace.*" And to intensify the idea, it is reiterated three times, (pp. 189, 190, 192,) and repeated again in the form for the Private Baptism of infants, (pp. 194, 196,) as well as *in that for adults*, (pp. 198, 199, 201.) So strongly and palpably does the book show itself to be not only "inconsistent with the doctrinal genius of the German Reformed Church," but "irreconcilable with her faith." All the standard authorities of the Church, all who are in any historical way expounders of her doctrines, maintain views directly in conflict with those above quoted from the Revised Liturgy. Not only Ursinus, but Olevianus; not only a Lasco, but Beza, Bullinger, and Oecolampadius; all agree in

this matter. Why then did not the Committee conform the doctrinal part of these services to the terms of their instructions, and the faith of the Church? Are the doctrines of the German Reformed Church not in full harmony with those of the sacred Scriptures? Were our fathers deceived, and did they bequeath to us an inheritance of error? It is an unpleasant thing to differ from our brethren; but if the answers to such questions are the only inferences which the above quotations from the Revised Liturgy warrant and require, we must submit to the hard necessity, and declare ourselves to be of a totally opposite persuasion. We believe that the fathers were right, and that the Committee is wrong. And such, we feel confident, is the prevailing conviction of the Church.

There is so intimate a connection between the doctrines above named and *that of the Holy Sacraments*, which is the next in regard to which the discrepancy between the Revised Liturgy and the faith of the Church betrays itself, that errors affecting the former necessarily affect the latter. It is not surprising, therefore, to find, that whilst the German Reformed Church teaches that "the sacraments are holy signs and seals, appointed of God *for this end*, that by the use thereof He may the *more fully declare* and seal to us the promise of the Gospel," and are in this sense grace-bearing ordinances, the Revised Liturgy teaches a doctrine essentially different from this. In proof, no stress need be laid upon such phrases in

the preparatory service as, "the mystical exhibition of His one offering of Himself," or, "we have to do here (in the sacrament) not with outward signs only, but with the heavenly realities themselves." Expressions like these may admit of two interpretations; but it is quite otherwise with regard to the sentence with which communicants are dismissed from "the altar," and those declarations in the sacrament of Baptism already cited. These latter especially teach in the very strongest terms, that *regeneration*, not in a technical or ecclesiastical sense, but in the fullest spiritual sense, is wrought through Baptism. And this, we affirm, is not only a modification of the doctrine of our Church upon the subject, but is irreconcilable therewith.

SECTION III.—EFFECTS OF THE ADOPTION OF THE REVISED LITURGY.

After the preceding historical review of the ritualistic movement in our Church, and examination of the character of the Revised Liturgy, it is natural and proper to inquire into the probable and necessary effects of its adoption, or of authorizing its optional use. But as these pages have already exceeded the limits originally fixed for them, we shall have to confine ourselves to the mere statement of what we believe would necessarily follow its introduction into the Church.

The *first* effect would be a radical and total change of our cultus and worship. This needs no elucida-

tion or proof. Let any one enter a congregation where this mode of worship is in operation, and he will see at once how complete and entire a revolution has taken place. Old things will be found, indeed, to have passed away, and all things to have become new, so far as any order of service known to the German Reformed Church is concerned. Free prayer is wholly excluded. Prayer by laymen, and social prayer-meetings are discouraged, if not abrogated. The heart and the tongue of the living Church are *bound* by the forms prescribed in the book: these forms are no longer helps, but fetters, and the Spirit is assumed to be no more with the Church excepting through them.

The *second* effect would be a fundamental change of all our conceptions of Christianity and the Church. The former would be converted into a refined form of Judaism, and the latter into a vicarious counterpart of the Levitical economy in ancient Judaism.

Another effect would be a radical change of some of the fundamental and distinctive doctrines of our Church. It would lead to the preaching of another Gospel from that proclaimed by our fathers, and learned by them, through the Holy Ghost, from the Apostles. Has it not, in part, done so already? Have we not again and again been compelled to listen to sentiments touching the work of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the Sacraments, regeneration and conversion, which until recently were never proclaimed in the German Reformed Church? Let the Synod

sanction the Revised Liturgy, let it favor and encourage the introduction of the book, and this evil must spread rapidly. Unhappily, tares, if only let alone, multiply in the human soil, more rapidly than the seed of the truth.

A *fourth* effect would be a substitution of the sacrificial altar, with its propitiatory oblations, for the Holy Table of our Lord with its eucharistic, thanksgiving, devotions. And in necessary affinity with this, the Gospel ministry, called in the New Testament by many names, but never by one which most distantly implied that it was a revival of Aaron's office even under a Christian form, would be converted into a new Levitical priesthood, forming a caste distinct and separate from the universal priesthood of all true Christians. But this is the only human priesthood recognized under the Gospel, and whose office it is, not to present an ever repeated *propitiatory* sacrifice unto the Lord, but living sacrifices of thankfulness, in the form of unreserved personal consecration to Him in all good works.—(See Heidelb. Catech. Q, 32.)

Attending this would be the subordination of "the preaching of the Gospel, as the principal part of Protestant worship," (see principle 1, in the Baltimore report) to the administration of the sacraments, and of the pulpit to the altar.

Following all this, as it has ever followed those things in the past experience of the Church, there would be a lowering of the measure and standard of genuine evangelical piety and morality. A scrupu-

lous observance of outward religious rites and ordinances would take the place of the diligent cultivation of Christian graces; reliance upon such observance (*opus operatum*) would divert men from a sole reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ. This effect of such a system of Christianity and ultra high churchism, is nothing new or unknown. Unhappily the evidences of it abound on every side of us.

Next would come, instead of the greater uniformity contemplated as one of the desirable ends of the Liturgical movement, increased and more intense diversity. For it is utterly idle to dream that the German Reformed Church, as a whole, or in great part, will ever submit to such a radical and sweeping revolution of her faith and customs. What a picture will this present? In the same town or neighborhood, one congregation worshipping in the simple mode of our fathers, and another conducting its service in a manner so closely approximating an extreme ritualistic mode that it would be hard to point out the difference.

There would be a divided, discordant Church, reduced to weakness by its divisions, and brought to the verge of ruin by its intestine distractions.

And finally, instead of adding daily to her numbers, and extending her borders, the Church would decrease and decay. Many would be driven from her because of these unnatural and incongenial innovations. She could no longer seem like home to them; she would be their home no longer. Stripped of all that had become dearer to them than life, of what they had

been piously taught and trained to prize as most hallowed customs and most sacred principles,—who could blame them for going forth as outcasts, to seek elsewhere a resting place? There are ways of driving people from their just inheritance which are more effective, and at the same time more painful and distressing than the use of outward violence or force. To those captivated for the time by some glittering novelty, it may seem a little thing to employ such means, in the case of Church attachment, and religious convictions. But is there really any cruelty more sharp and afflictive than to turn a generation, which is *too old* to be easily taken with such ecclesiastical novelties, and yet *too young to die*, out of a spiritual home so dear to them, to search in vain for another which shall be to them as the old? For our part, taste, custom, and firm convictions, must ever make these proposed innovations unpleasant and offensive, and we can never become reconciled to them. They are not the Reformed Church, and never can become such to our hearts. And it would be a marvellous anomaly in the religious history of men, if there were not well nigh a hundred thousand members of our Zion in this country, of the same heart and mind. But whilst many would be driven from their native or adopted Church home because of these encroachments, others would soon abandon her because for them the innovations did not go far enough. The concessions which might be made to them, would only inflame desire for still larger indulgence, and embold-

en them to demand it. Deny them, and they would coldly and petulantly forsake the Church in favor of one which might gratify their tastes. And so our beloved Zion would be as a woman bereaved of her children, and sit solitary and forlorn in her desolate places, as a widow stripped of her glory, and covered with the sackcloth of shame.

Is the German Reformed Church prepared for such issues? Can she be asked or expected to covet them? Why then should the doors of her sanctuaries be thrown wide open for the admission of novelties in faith and practice, of which they are the certain and legitimate effects?

SECTION IV.—A REMEDY PROPOSED.

Perils like those just described may seem to some to have so beset our Church, as to shut out all hope of escape from them. It is said that she was slumbering in imaginary security, or listening unsuspectingly to the sounds of a pleasant melody, whilst her hands were being tied with cords, and her locks shorn from her temples. Now, it is despondingly affirmed, it is too late to wake up from her trance, and repel the threatening evils. There seems to be nothing left but to endure the consequences, or to imitate, in ecclesiastical form, the example of Abraham and Lot.

Whilst fully sensible of the imminence of our perils, and painfully conscious of the perplexity in which they involve the Church, there still does not seem

any unavoidable necessity for taking refuge to either of these desperate expedients. And this, in brief, for the following reasons:—

1. The evils have not yet taken such root in the Church as to render their eradication impossible. This is not a rash and unwarranted assertion. Only let the real facts in the case be fairly considered. It may be admitted, that the hearts and minds of many ministers in the Church are captivated by the new order of things proposed, and are largely committed, and strongly attached to the principles upon which that order rests. Considering the opportunities enjoyed by our literary and theological institutions for the last twenty-five years, it is no wonder that this should be so. But, on the other hand, there are many more who are not involved in such entanglements. Two-thirds of the Brethren, at the lowest estimate, are not only free from them, but are earnestly opposed to the whole ritualistic movement in its extreme form. Besides, it must be remembered that the Church at large is not, to any considerable extent, committed to the movement. Indeed she is just beginning to understand what it really means and involves. Never once, in all these recent years of liturgical agitation, did she intimate by word or by action that she desired and longed for such radical changes in her doctrines, her cultus, or her worship. Nay, it may be safely affirmed that she never dreamed that *such* changes were at all contemplated, or to be proposed. The movement, even

in the milder features of its more extreme forms, did not proceed from her heart or mind. It had a different, much more limited and secluded origin. During the prevalence of the Anxious Bench innovation, hundreds of congregations, constituting large portions of the Eastern and Western Synods, had yielded to its influence, and cordially adopted and practised its peculiar measures. Not so, however, with this innovation. It is even thought invidious to speak of the small number of congregations which have at all embraced it in its full form, notwithstanding the zealous efforts made, and sometimes more than zealous means employed to secure its adoption. Upon the Church at large, it has taken but a very slight hold, and even this, in most instances, would have to be relaxed, if the true nature and legitimate effects of the movement were fully known and understood.

Why, then, should the case be thought hopeless, or the evils of it inevitable? The Church of our fathers has passed unscathed through many a fiery trial, and by the favor of the Lord, will pass unhurt through this. She has sustained, without serious danger, many a severe shock, and that now shaking her foundations need not subvert them.

But there seems to us to be still another ground of confidence, and even at the risk of exposure to additional momentary derision, we will name it. It is our persuasion that upon calm reflection, and upon

earnest consideration of the consequences which must flow from a persistent attempt to introduce the principles and practice which characterize the extreme ritualistic movement, many who are now somewhat zealous for it, will abandon its peculiarities, and give up the effort. It may be thought an absurd expectation. But greater changes than this would involve have taken place in the history of men and of schools. Extremes beget corresponding re-actions. And why should it be deemed incredible, that those who have exchanged one set of views and one kind of customs for a new theory of doctrine or practice, should after a time become convinced of their mistake, and retrace their steps? How many, already, take different views of these things from those which they entertained a few years ago! It is no wonder they should. Theory and practice are not identical. When a system which may have theoretically carried the mind and heart wholly with it, by its logical strength, or beautiful proportions, is found practically to involve for a Church, what this extreme ritualistic movement has been shown to involve, the advocates of such a system will feel compelled to pause before they try to enforce its application. Old affections will re-assert their sway, and the woodman, sharp as his axe and strong as his arm may be, will hesitate to cut down the ancient oak, even though a princely palm might grow up in its place.

Can it be, then, a mere pleasant delusion to believe

that when our Brethren find themselves brought face to face with the Church which they propose so totally to change in form and feature, in spirit and life, in principles and practice; and rightly reflect upon *her claims as she is, as she was* when they were borne on her bosom, when they were presented before the Lord on her arms, to receive the sacred Baptismal sign and seal of covenant grace, when they were taught to pray at her knees, when they were welcomed to solemn, though simple, worship in her sanctuary, when they were gathered as children beloved, around the holy sacramental table of her once crucified Lord and Saviour, there with their fathers and their fathers' children, avowing, ever anew, sincere fidelity to her doctrines and to her service, in the Lord;—they will not themselves change, and like the penitent disciple, return more warmly than ever, to their first love?

Whilst cherishing this hope, we do not forget that we have spoken very plainly, not only in these pages, but elsewhere, of what we feel persuaded is involved in the extreme movement under consideration. But neither should they forget, that they have spoken very plainly also, not merely in a personal way, which is of small account, but in words of exceedingly offensive derision, of what is far more sacred than any private, individual feelings. And they will surely know how to make due allowance for even a superfluous ardor of zeal, if such has been displayed,

in defence of the old foundations against what is believed to involve their subversion. But whether they do or not, we shall still cling to our hope, until forced by the most desperate necessity to abandon it.

Mean while, allowing that such reasons against despair exist, what may be done to escape from our present embarrassment? The solution of this question should not be impracticable. Past experience may be presumed to have taught us some important lessons which may be turned to good account, in aiding us to escape from our perplexity, and again reach the open path; only there must be mutual concessions. There are some such which can be made without violating principles on either side.

Let us go back to the point at which the recent revision commenced. Let us take the material which was then placed in the hands of the Committee, and out of which, in large part, they wrought the result reached in the Revised Liturgy. By the application of certain rules, which seemed to them good, the process towards that result required considerable modifications of the original book. No one will deny that the Revised Liturgy is a very different sort of ritualism from that found in the Provisional Liturgy, taken as a whole. The elements of the former were indeed contained in the latter, but in quite other combinations. Those elements, as we have shown, belonged mainly to one portion of the book, and have been taken wholly from that portion, and wrought

out in an extremely one-sided way. Why must the work be carried on in this manner? Why not resume it, and conduct it upon other, or at least somewhat modified principles? Surely the Reformation period of our Church can claim that its right should be fully respected, and can object to every thing being conceded to the ritualistic demands of post-primitive centuries. Then let the Provisional Liturgy be taken as a general basis. We have always not only granted, but contended, that it contained all, or nearly all, the material needed. According to it, let there be a chancel service, or, if it be preferred to call it so, an *altar*-service, if it be understood that the term is used in an evangelical sense, preceding the sermon. According to it, let there be a confession of sin, and declaration of pardon, in a truly evangelical form; let the congregation, if it wish, unite aloud, at the proper time, in the Lord's Prayer and the concluding Amen; let it, also, if it will, unite aloud in the profession of our Christian faith, in the articles of the Apostles' Creed; especially let the Confession and the Creed, in this manner, be used at the service preparatory to the Holy Supper, and upon days of humiliation and prayer. According to it, let the leading Church Festivals, with the appropriate prayers, be duly observed, and all other customs peculiar to our Church. But, at the same time, let all those doctrinal expressions, which in sound, at least, if not in actual sense, conflict with fundamental

doctrines of the Church, be modified, and the numerous responses of the leading services be dropped. Let this be done, and whilst, on the one hand, many who have hitherto had no sympathy with the movement, even so far as it looked to but moderate liturgical changes, will have yielded as much as may be equitably asked of them; on the other, those who have gone with the movement to the extremest verge, will thus concede only what is due to the peace and integrity of the Church, and what should not involve, for ministers or members of the German Reformed Church, the abandonment of any essential principles, or the sacrifice of any cherished faith.