

## LITURGICAL CULTIVATION.

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depend upon the character of the sermon. Probably, in the majority of instances, the first and second hymns should be strictly liturgical, offerings of praise and thanksgiving; the last hymn alone being didactic and applicatory of the sermon.

III. The third topic under the head of Liturgics is Prayer. This subject deserves a fuller treatment than is possible within these limits. Bishop Wilkins, Dr. Watts, and Witsius, have composed very sensible treatises upon it; but a good work, suited to the wants of those Protestant Churches which use extemporaneous prayers, is still a desideratum. The following rules involve perhaps the principal points to be regarded by the clergyman in his public petitions.

First, he ought to study *method* in prayer, and observe it. A prayer should have a plan as much as a sermon. In the recoil from the formalism of written and read prayers, Protestants have not paid sufficient attention to an orderly and symmetrical structure in public supplications. Extemporaneous prayer, like extemporaneous preaching, is too often the product of the single instant, instead of devout reflection and premeditation. It might, at first glance, seem that premeditation and supplication are incongruous conceptions; that prayer must be a gush of feeling, without distinct reflection. This is an error. No man, no creature, can pray well without knowing what he is praying for, and whom he is praying to. Everything in prayer, and especially in public prayer, ought to be well considered and well weighed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chalmers was accustomed occasionally to write out the prayer in full which he was to offer up. See Appendix B. to the second volume of his life.