

For many months in the year it houses groups of ministers drawn from the whole of the States in companies of forty to fifty, each group spending four to five days together. Each conference has its own subject and appointed leader, past titles being, "Teaching the Life of our Lord," "The Preacher and Church History," "Present Day Expository Preaching," "The Fruits of the Spirit," "Pastoral Ministry and Confirmation Instruction," "The Christian Ideal of Family and Home." In addition to set lectures the ministers are helped in the arts of sermon writing and delivery, each having to preach a sermon and to hear views on it expressed by their brethren and by the members of the staff; there are opportunities of fellowship and of discussion of problems; and it needs little imagination to see what a boon this College is to hard worked and often lonely clergymen, and what reviving of interests, outlook and equipment it can bestow. Conferences for laymen are also held from time to time, to give opportunity to discuss their professed religion and the application of their vows of Baptism and Confirmation to their daily living. And those who attend these conferences are the guests of the Cathedral. No wonder that one Bishop wrote after attending a Conference: "the Conference with practical unanimity felt that Providence had supplied an instrument in the College of Preachers by which the work of Evangelism could be promoted."

I venture to express the hope that some day Scotland will be blessed with such an institution. I do not know anything that would so revive ministers and the ministry; and on their continual reviving much of the welfare of Scotland and its Church depends.

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THE THANKSGIVING.

When opportunity arises for a revision of the *Book of Common Order*, 1940, it is to be hoped that careful consideration will be given to the desirability of separating the Prayer of Thanksgiving from the Intercessions in Morning and Evening Service. Many Ministers must feel that the linking of these two diverse acts of prayer unduly strains the attention of the congregation, and prolongs the prayer beyond a reasonable length. We believe that if the opinion of the people in the pews were consulted most of them would agree that our prayers are much too long. Intercessions, to be at all adequate, must be fairly considerable. The unhappy result, however, is that in many cases too little prominence is given to the note of thanksgiving; or, as sometimes happens under pressure of time, this vital element of Christian worship is omitted altogether. It would be well to return to the arrangement embodied in *Euchologion*, that pioneer of all our modern service books, published by the Church Service Society in its early days. There the Thanksgiving occupies a distinct place by itself as a separate prayer.

In the *Book of Common Order* presently in use the Thanksgiving follows, quite appropriately, the recitation of the Creed (or the Gospel if the Creed be omitted). Then might follow the Anthem (for which in the present book no place seems to be suggested) or some other act of praise. It seems peculiarly fitting that the reading of the Gospel and the solemn affirmation of the "things most surely believed among us" should culminate in a joyous thanksgiving echoed, thereafter, on wings of song in the Anthem, the most carefully fashioned act of praise of which the congregation is capable; or in some other great hymn of praise. Then would follow the Sermon.

But what of the Intercessions? The balance and spiritual sequence of the service would be greatly improved by postponing the Intercessions to a later place in the service, viz., after the Sermon and the Offering. Presumably the Sermon results in a quickening and stirring of the minds of the worshippers, and thereafter the Offering, where proper recognition is given to it, calls up a vision of the mission and task of the Church militant to which we are all solemnly pledged. This would facilitate a return to John Calvin's practice of offering the Great Prayer of Intercession from the Holy Table, the visible focal centre of fellowship and prayer, with all its hallowed associations. It would also set the Sermon more obviously at the very heart of the Service, as in the ancient rites and in conformity with our Reformed tradition.