

eloquent dissenting preacher, that his extempore address to heaven before his sermon was "the finest prayer that had ever been addressed to a Bristol congregation."

II

To come back to the Rosary. Our friends may say that we have not quoted the text according to their version, which runs: "use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do;" a text which they think condemns such repetitions as we make on our beads. "Fifty Hail Marys," say they, "divided by only five Our Fathers and Glorias. Is not this a vain repetition? No wonder you are obliged to have a string of beads, to count so many! What have you to say to this?"

We answer: 1) The text in the original Greek has no allusion whatever to conscious deliberate *repetition*. "Speaking like a stammerer" is the accurate meaning, as was said just now. 2) It is much to be feared that here, as in other passages, they who professed to give to the people the pure and genuine Word of God, have "wrested aside the Scripture," as St. Peter says,* for their own purpose, and to support their theory. They found Catholic England in possession of the beads, and also paying due reverence to holy images; and so they put in about "vain repetition" to discredit the one practice, as they altered a text in St. John* to

* Pet., III, 16.

° "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (1 St. John, v, 21.) Now, an idol and an image differ, entirely, in the use that is made of them. An idol is a false god; it is what is forbidden in the First Commandment as a "strange god." It is used to draw worshipers away from the One True God, and so, is an instrument in the hands of the devil. A holy image, on the contrary, is used to remind worshipers, by a lively and striking representation of our Blessed Lord and His Saints, and so becomes a powerful instrument to increase in them the love and service of the True God. This distinction between *idol* and *image* is so plain one would have thought no one could confuse between the two. But it was the object of the 'Reformers' to throw dust in people's eyes, and they put some of this dust even into the Bible. In an early Protestant version they made this text in St. John stand thus: "Little children, keep yourselves from images." Afterwards they grew ashamed of this perversion of the text, and restored the true word; as the late Revising Committee have remedied other perversions which we have not time to notice.

discredit the other. But, thirdly, and more largely, we answer as follows:

To repeat a prayer over and over again, in the self-same words, is not formal, unless we choose to make it so. If any one remains in this opinion, let him look at the example of our Lord Himself. Our Divine Master taught us to pray, both by precept and example. In the way of precept He gave us that perfect prayer which we therefore call "The Lord's Prayer;" and He taught us, in the way of example, when, for us, He was enduring His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is not without a purpose that the holy evangelists were inspired to report His prayer. "He prayed the third time," says St. Matthew; "saying the self same word."* St. Mark repeats it: "Going away again," (from His slumbering disciples,) He prayed, saying the same words.† Thus, by a touch of the pen, as it were, they indicate the extremity of our Lord's agony by recording the sameness of His petition. No variety was needed, where the soul dwelt so intensely upon one idea.

III.

When, therefore, the priest at the altar, alternately with the people, as represented by the server at Mass, repeats: "Lord, have mercy upon us," "Christ, have mercy upon us," nine times in all; and when in our Rosaries we make the repetitions already noticed, we are only following the example of our Divine Master and Model, in His own all-perfect prayer. Be sure, He did not warn the Pharisees nor His disciples against doing what He Himself had done.

—And this is justified by the experience of those who cultivate prayer, as well as by His example. Every one who is in the habit of self-examination, and observes what is going on in his own mind, will tell us that a prayer unfolds

* St. Matt., XXVI, 44. † St. Mark, XVI, 39.