

‘ Countries, and reached their Arms from the Ocean to
 ‘ the *Black Sea*; this huge Mass of Stone is softened and
 ‘ dissolved as a tender Cloud into Rain. Here stood the
 ‘ *African Mountains*, and *Atlas* with his Top above the
 ‘ Clouds; there was frozen *Caucasus*, and *Taurus*, and
 ‘ *Imaus*, and the Mountains of *Asia*; and yonder towards
 ‘ the North, stood the *Riphaean Hills*, clothed in Ice and
 ‘ Snow. All these are vanished, dropt away as the
 ‘ Snow upon their Heads. *Great and marvellous are*
 ‘ *thy Works, just and true are thy Ways, thou King of*
 ‘ *Saints! Hallelujah.* T



N^o 147. *Saturday, August 18.*

*Proxuntiatio est Vocis & Vultus & Gestus moderatio
 cum venustate.* Tull.

Mr. SPECTATOR,

‘ T HE well reading of the Common-prayer is of so
 ‘ great Importance, and so much neglected, that
 ‘ I take the Liberty to offer to your Consideration
 ‘ some Particulars on that Subject: And what more wor-
 ‘ thy your Observation than this? A thing so Publick, and
 ‘ of so high Consequence. It is indeed wonderful, that the
 ‘ frequent Exercise of it should not make the Performers
 ‘ of that Duty more expert in it. This Inability, as I
 ‘ conceive, proceeds from the little Care that is taken of
 ‘ their Reading, while Boys and at School, where when
 ‘ they are got into *Latin*, they are looked upon as above
 ‘ *English*, the reading of which is wholly neglected, or
 ‘ at least read to very little purpose, without any due
 ‘ Observations made to them of the proper Accent and
 ‘ Manner of Reading; by this means they have acquired
 ‘ such ill Habits as won’t easily be removed. The only
 ‘ way that I know of to remedy this, is to propose some
 ‘ Person of great Ability that way as a Pattern for them;
 ‘ Example being most effectual to convince the Learned,
 ‘ as well as instruct the Ignorant.

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YOU

‘ YOU must know, Sir, I’ve been a constant Frequenter
‘ of the Service of the Church of *England* for above
‘ these four Years last past, and ’till *Sunday* was Seven-
‘ night never discovered, to so great a Degree, the Excel-
‘ lency of the Common-prayer. When being at *St. James’s*
‘ *Garlick-hill* Church, I heard the Service read so distinct-
‘ ly, so emphatically, and so fervently, that it was next to
‘ an Impossibility to be unattentive. My Eyes and my
‘ Thoughts could not wander as usual, but were con-
‘ fin’d to my Prayers: I then considered I address’d my
‘ self to the Almighty, and not to a beautiful Face. And
‘ when I reflected on my former Performances of that
‘ Duty, I found I had run it over as a matter of Form,
‘ in comparison to the Manner in which I then discharged
‘ it. My Mind was really affected, and fervent Wishes
‘ accompanied my Words. The Confession was read
‘ with such a resigned Humility, the Absolution with
‘ such a comfortable Authority, the Thanksgivings with
‘ such a Religious Joy, as made me feel those Affections
‘ of the Mind in a Manner I never did before. To remie-
‘ dy therefore the Grievance above complained of, I
‘ humbly propose, that this excellent Reader, upon the
‘ next and every Annual Assembly of the Clergy of *Sion-*
‘ *College*, and all other Conventions, should read Prayers
‘ before them. For then those that are afraid of stretch-
‘ ing their Mouths, and spoiling their soft Voice, will
‘ learn to Read with Clearness, Loudness, and Strength.
‘ Others that affect a rakish negligent Air by folding their
‘ Arms, and lolling on their Book, will be taught a de-
‘ cent Behaviour, and comely Erection of Body. Those
‘ that Read so fast as if impatient of their Work, may learn
‘ to speak deliberately. There is another sort of Persons
‘ whom I call Pindarick Readers, as being confined to no
‘ set measure; these pronounce five or six Words with
‘ great Deliberation, and the five or six subsequent ones
‘ with as great Celerity: The first part of a Sentence with
‘ a very exalted Voice, and the latter part with a submis-
‘ sive one: Sometimes again with one sort of a Tone, and
‘ immediately after with a very different one. These Gen-
‘ tlemen will learn of my admired Reader an Evenness of
‘ Voice and Delivery. And all who are innocent of these
‘ Affectations, but read with such an Indifferency as if
‘ they

they did not understand the Language, may then be informed of the Art of Reading movingly and fervently, how to place the Emphasis, and give the proper Accent to each Word, and how to vary the Voice according to the Nature of the Sentence. There is certainly a very great Difference between the Reading a Prayer and a Gazette, which I beg of you to inform a Set of Readers, who affect, forsooth, a certain Gentleman-like Familiarity of Tone, and mend the Language as they go on, crying instead of Pardoneth and Absolveth, Pardons and Absolves. These are often pretty Classical Scholars, and would think it an unpardonable Sin to read *Virgil* or *Martial* with so little Taste as they do Divine Service.

THIS Indifferency seems to me to arise from the Endeavour of avoiding the Imputation of Cant, and the false Notion of it. It will be proper therefore to trace the Original and Signification of this Word. Cant is, by some People, derived from one *Andrew Cant*, who, they say, was a Presbyterian Minister in some illiterate Part of *Scotland*, who by Exercise and Use had obtained the Faculty, *alias* Gift, of Talking in the Pulpit in such a Dialect, that it's said he was understood by none but his own Congregation, and not by all of them. Since *Mas. Cant's* time, it has been understood in a larger Sense, and signifies all sudden Exclamations, Whinnings, unusual Tones, and in fine all Praying and Preaching, like the unlearned of the Presbyterians. But I hope a proper Elevation of Voice, a due Emphasis and Accent, are not to come within this Description: So that our Readers may still be as unlike the Presbyterians as they please. The Dissenters (I mean such as I have heard) do indeed elevate their Voices, but it is with sudden jumps from the lower to the higher part of them; and that with so little Sense or Skill, that their Elevation and Cadence is Bawling and Muttering. They make use of an Emphasis, but so improperly, that it is often placed on some very insignificant Particle, as upon *if*, or *and*. Now if these Improperities have so great an Effect on the People, as we see they have, how great an Influence would the Service of our Church, containing the best Prayers that ever were composed, and that in Terms most affecting, most humble, and