

THE
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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I.

THE COMPARATIVE CERTAINTY OF PHYSICS AND
METAPHYSICS.

THEOPHRASTUS, or perhaps Andronicus, in editing the writings of Aristotle, arranged them in two classes: τὰ φυσικά and τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά: physics and metaphysics. Whether the meaning was, that the latter class is to be *read after* the first, or whether it treats of objects that *exist beyond* those treated of in the first class, has been disputed. We shall adopt the latter explanation as much the most probable, and understand by physics those provinces of inquiry which relate to the irrational and material world, and by metaphysics those relating to the rational and spiritual. Aristotle's own division of knowledge favors this explanation of the running titles under which his writings have been placed. "If there is something," he says, *Metaphysics*, v. i., "that is eternal and immovable, and that involves a separate subsistence, it is evident that it is the province of ontological science to investigate this. It is not certainly the province of physical science, for physical science is conversant about certain movable natures." Under τὰ φυσικά, Aristotle included the doctrine of material motion as seen in the heavens and earth; the history of animals; the nature of sensuous perception; of memory; of sleep and dreams; of life and death. Under τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, he grouped ethics, politics, rhetoric, logic, and ontology or metaphysics proper. Some of these terms were wider than in modern usage. This is particularly the case with ethics and politics, which included considerable that now falls under the heads of psychology and philosophy. Aristotle regarded the metaphysical division as by far the most important part of human knowledge, denominating it the "first philosophy," implying that the physical division is secondary.

IV.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CULTUS.

THE progress of opinion, and the growing exigencies of the Church, have brought about a condition of things in which it seems appropriate to resume the argument in favor of such a modification of the Presbyterian cultus, as shall give the people some share in the devotional services of the sanctuary.

Under the existing system the fact is conspicuously otherwise. We charge the Romish clergy with giving the people only half a sacrament. We ourselves give them less than half a service. The priest or pastor in either case, performs for the congregation. Their part is to sit still and look on, while the worship of God is done for them by proxy. There is surely a better way than this, if we can have the intellectual sincerity to perceive, and the courage to adopt it.

The subject relates to the worship of Almighty God; to the strength and beauty that is in the sanctuary; and should be treated with the seriousness that becomes everything relating to an experience so dear to the Christian heart, so elevating and delightful, in its best conditions at least, as the communion of saints in prayer.

At the same time, it may be impossible to do justice to the argument without a certain freedom of remark on the ordinary Presbyterian cultus, which is designed in no irreverent or disrespectful spirit, nor carried further than the necessities of a contrasted portraiture demand.

The instructions for the conduct of public prayer contained in the "Directory for Worship" are well known. They exhibit a full scheme for the "long prayer," giving the proper arrangement of the topics, and the line of thought to be followed under each. The whole, if filled out according to the plan, must make a very long prayer indeed. It is probably from this that the inordinate dimensions of the prayer before sermon are derived, while at the same time the natural order and sequence of the topics has been almost entirely abandoned. The Directory insists on the duty of both general and special prepa-

ration for the right conduct of public prayer ; “ that it may be performed with dignity and propriety, as well as to the profit of those who join in it, and that this important service may not be disgraced by mean, irregular, and extravagant effusions.” That the service of prayer in Presbyterian pulpits is often “ disgraced ” by any such “ effusions,” is by no means charged. The devotional habit, the culture, and the conscientious care of our pastors make their public prayers commonly earnest, tender, and spiritual, often patterns of devotional eloquence. The complaint is not so much against the success of the performance as against the method itself. At the same time, if we were disposed to insist on this topic, we should want neither warrant nor material. That careful Presbyterian churchman, the late Dr. Samuel Miller, of Princeton, recites no less than eighteen faults characteristic of Presbyterian public prayers ; and in the more than thirty years that have since passed, it might be easily shown that others have grown up ; but I prefer to avoid, so far as possible, any such specifications, and to limit myself to the evil which essentially inheres in the practice of concentrating nearly all the devotion of the hour of public worship in one long prayer. If the order of topics recommended in the “ Directory ” were followed, though the service might be more ceremonious, it would be more edifying ; the prayer would begin with adoration, followed by thanksgiving ; then humble confession of sin, supplication for pardon, pleading from all arguments given in Scripture, and finally would close with intercession for others. If this order were followed out in a clear, tender, impressive manner, it might be hoped that such results would sometimes at least follow, as are recorded in one instance by Dr. Gardner Spring, viz: the conducting a soul by the successive steps of the prayer, from a state of absolute indifference at the beginning, to a condition of joyful hope in Christ at the close. But this orderly progression is now seldom observed ; the prayer in the pulpit is sometimes only a long drawn-out prayer-meeting prayer. With no logical sequence of topics, with no real progress of thought, and no devotional climax, it maunders along in a hap-hazard kind of way, returns upon itself, reiterates its phrases, and finally winds up for no other particular reason except that the ten or fifteen minutes during which the patience of the “ audience ” can be expected to hold out, have elapsed. Often, indeed, the audience have lost all patience long before that.* Probably there are spiritual and devout

* The writer was lately present at a public religious service where the circumstances required great brevity in the various parts, the room being crowded and many persons standing. A prayer of three minutes would have been reasonable ; instead of which

persons who follow the prayer however long, and add their silent amen to the sentiments as they are successively evolved from the memory or invention of the speaker; but if the testimony of many not irreverent persons may be trusted, the "hearer," having nothing else to do with the prayer, resigns himself with a sigh of submission to the inevitable; tries to follow for a while the sentiments of devotion, wanders off in thought, moves uneasily about as the long-continued sameness of posture becomes painful; occasionally says to himself, "*Is he never going to stop?*" and finally at the grateful "amen" straightens himself up with another sigh of relief, and a more or less conscious codicil to the prayer, viz: "Well, thank God, we're through with that." He then addresses himself rather cheerfully to the great object which has brought him to the church, the homiletical oration of the pastor. In short, a large portion of the Presbyterian congregations agree with that view of the relative importance of the two things which they have been taught, and go to church not to worship God, but to hear the sermon.

The influence of this upon the minister himself is most unfortunate. He feels able to address God without any preparation whatever, or only the slightest. He has always a store of the ordinary prayer-meeting phrases on hand, which he can dress up for the occasion, and under the stimulus presented by the reaction of the larger assembly on his imagination, is often able to expand in eloquent rhetorical expression. This demands no previous study; but as for his fellow-sinners, he cannot address them without the most careful preparation. He devotes to this many hours of severe labor during the week; for his reputation depends, not on how he prays, but on how he preaches.

It is impossible that a method of public prayer which leads to such results could be insisted on, and made almost of the essence of Presbyterianism, unless long habit had blinded us to its nature and effects. Our own usage has come to have for us the force of an unwritten "act of uniformity." It tyrannizes over us, and forbids us to use our Christian liberty in the improvement of public worship.

The quarrel of the Non-conformists was not against forms of prayer in themselves, but against those harassing enactments which required them to use the prescribed liturgy with all its parts, however objection-

the orator (we have unfortunately no one English word for the person offering prayer) actually extended himself to twenty minutes by the watch. It was told of a late distinguished doctor of divinity that on one occasion he nearly jerked an immoderate brother off his knees by the collar of his coat; but such extreme measures cannot be recommended as a regular thing.

able, and without varying in the smallest particular. Then was the time to insist on the right of freedom in prayer, even to the extent of refusing the liturgy altogether. When a like arbitrary legislation insists on extemporary prayer and forbids the use of any other method, then is the time for Christian liberty to claim its rights in the other direction. If you insist we shall not worship God except in the use of prescribed forms, we assert our right to worship Him freely as the Spirit gives utterance. If you insist we shall make no use of forms of prayer, then we claim our liberty to use them if we think it for edification. The method is not of the essence of acceptable worship; and the decision in the one case against forms of prayer, and in the other for them, may be equally legitimate. The only real question is, How may our worship be made most devout, attractive, and edifying?

Let it be distinctly understood then, at the outset, that this is an open question. We are not bound as loyal Presbyterians to one method rather than another. Our present usage is extemporary prayer. But it was not so always. The Presbyterian Reformers all made use of a prescribed service of prayer. Luther and Melancthon and Bucer drew up liturgies for the Protestant States of Germany. Calvin prepared a full liturgy for the Church of Strasburg, important parts of which were adopted into the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. The American Presbyterian Church exercised her clear right to dispense with liturgical forms, though her rejection of them is of the mildest possible character. It simply amounts to the declaration that we, that is, the Revisers of the Westminster Standards, are known "not to approve of confining ministers to set or fixed forms of prayer for public worship"; neither do we. A rigidly imposed unalterable method must always be objectionable, whether it be liturgical or non-liturgical; but some system which provides for both may be better than either.

The first necessity in discussing this subject is to meet the prejudice that a liturgy is something Episcopal, and that to talk of introducing forms of prayer in the Presbyterian service is a move in that direction. It is true that, in this country, the use of a liturgy is most distinctive of the Episcopal Church, but it is by no means true universally. The Presbyterian churches on the Continent of Europe all have liturgies, as have also the Reformed, the Lutheran, and the Methodist churches of America; the latter are used, indeed, for the most part, only on sacramental occasions, and the former admit of the use of free prayer in part of the service. The Waldenses, who have been sometimes held up as an example of a people coming out

of the Church of Rome in order to get free from liturgical chains, conduct their worship mostly by means of precomposed forms. Dr. Guthrie, who visited them, and was impressed, as all who visit them are, with the simplicity and spirituality of their religious life, says that "notwithstanding their organs and their liturgy, they are as staunch Presbyterians as we are." He adds, "While the Waldenses have a liturgy, they have also free prayer, and some such midway method between that practiced by the Presbyterian and the Episcopal Churches of our country, I would consider the perfection of a system." In short, it is only an unintelligent prejudice that could lead any one to imagine that a liturgy and Episcopal government have any necessary connection. The Episcopal Church, indeed, which finds its profit in this error, may very naturally be willing to encourage the idea that any who desire public worship conducted with something more of impressive richness and variety, can find it only in the Church governed by the "successors of the apostles"; but no reason can be found in history or in the reason of things, why churches that are less "apostolic," but more scriptural, should not equally enjoy such helps to the beauty and strength of their public worship. It may be enough to add to this, that such eminent Presbyterians as Ashbel Green and Charles Hodge, not to mention various others still living, have given their voices emphatically in favor of forms of prayer. One of the latter, the pastor of nearly the largest church in the Presbyterian body, said, in celebrating the 39th anniversary of his most successful pastorate: "I hope the day is coming when the great and noble Church to which I belong will discover that she has unwittingly given up part of her dowry, and when she will consent to use those forms and symbols of worship which are the common birthright of all saints. I have long thought that our Presbyterian worship is too bare and bald a thing. It would not harm us the least to have some liturgical forms, and thus secure that variety and that uniformity which are alike essential elements of true worship." I may also merely refer to the brilliant argument of Professor Hitchcock, of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, which was received with such strong expressions of favor at the late Pan-Presbyterian Council.

This may suffice to dispose of the prejudice referred to, and leave the field clear for an argument in favor of some form of prayer in our service, without raising the suspicion of disloyalty to the Presbyterian Church.

It cannot be denied, indeed, that the extravagant terms in which the liturgy has been cried up in the Episcopal Church, has had a strong tendency to disgust serious Christians with the very idea of

any similar method for ourselves. When the Prayer-Book is raised almost to an equality with the Scriptures, and little is thought of circulating the Bible unless the liturgy can go with it, it is quite natural that other Christians should fear the influence on their spiritual life of such forms of worship; but it may be very possible to use scriptural and venerable forms, without making a fetich of them, or using them to cast disrespect on the inspired Word of God.

Without having any claim to idolatrous veneration, the Anglican Prayer-Book, the monument of the sacred taste and piety of Cranmer, Ridley, and other honored fathers of the English Reformation, is an admirable collection of some of the best devotional forms left from the earlier ages of the Church. It incorporates the great hymns in which the whole Church, except the Presbyterian part of it, has been accustomed for fifteen hundred years to express her adoration of the sacred Trinity. It comprises the Litany, of which Dr. Charles Hodge (observing that "it is at least a thousand years old, and no more belongs to the Episcopal Church than the Creed does") affirms that "there is no human composition that can compare with it." It contains those beautiful forms of devotion, entirely unknown to Presbyterian worship, the Collects, of which the early Sacramentaries present an immense number and variety; and it contains the Psalter arranged for responsive reading. There is not one of these features that might not, with eminent propriety and advantage, be made a part of the Presbyterian service. It was against none of these things the Non-conformists protested; but only against those frivolous and vexatious impositions as to rings, caps, crosses, etc., which have been eliminated from the American Episcopal Book of Common Prayer.

But admirable as this is, it is not quite blasphemous to suggest the opinion that by drawing on all the vast liturgical wealth that has been left us by the earlier ages and adapting it more faithfully to the existing condition and wants of the Church at the present time, a better book still might be compiled; for, as Dr. Hodge has truly observed, any such book of prayer, to be worthy of the Church's service, must be "compiled, not manufactured."

The reason for this necessity may not seem at first obvious. If we have equal gifts, a more intelligent piety, and greater learning in the Church at the present time, why may we not produce prayers of equal excellence? In reply it may be said, that each distinctive form of art and literature has its own period to flourish in, and the bloom once gone, never returns in equal beauty. A combination of happy circumstances is required to produce the finest forms of art; original genius, preparatory culture, perfection of apparatus, a fresh and unexhausted

youth, an opportunity, and the stimulus furnished by an object noble enough to lay under contribution all the rest,—given these, and a *Te Deum Laudamus*, a St. Peter's, a Divina Commedia, or a Sistine Madonna may be born; lacking these, no laborious striving of more critical or more scientific ages will originate anything like them. Such works belong to the youthful periods of artistic production. The ages that follow are capable of nothing better than imitation.

All this applies in a measure to the great liturgical monuments left us from the early ages of the Church. It required the sonorous dignity of the Latin tongue, the enthusiasm roused by great conflicts of opinion, and the simplicity of a more purely believing age to generate the elements that went to compose the liturgy of Chrysostom or the sacramentary of Leo. The prayers have a fragrance of the martyr's funeral pyre. The "Great Doxology" may have been chanted at the close of the Council of Chalcedon. The vehement and passionate exclams of the Litany tell of the horrors of the Hunnish invasion, or of the pall spread over the land by the march of the black death. The *Te Deum* records the Church's triumph over the "Ariomaniacs." An Ambrose, a Basil, a Hilary were in the fore-front of the conflict. Such men and such conditions do not often meet in the history of the Church. When modern writers, no way inferior in gifts or piety, undertake to rival them, the result is, for the most part, a poor and prosaic imitation. Many have composed excellent prayers, but the Church can never produce another *Te Deum*. In that supreme hymn of praise to Christ the utmost resources of human thought and language have been exhausted.

Various attempts have been made from the time of Richard Baxter down, to provide a service of prayer for the use of the Presbyterian Church. None of them have met with any success. They have been either mere republications of the Anglican Prayer-Book, with unimportant variations, or they have been drawn from modern sources with nothing of the majesty and richness which characterize that collection. They have served to indicate and emphasize a want, without being able to satisfy it. They have contributed something toward giving voice to that sentiment which is now beginning to demand, in unmistakable tones, some concession to the devotional æsthetic need of our churches. That there is such a demand, no observing person can fail to perceive. After the time when Ashbel Green and others, at the reorganization of the Church in America, urged the adoption of forms of prayer in the Directory, the question seems for

some considerable interval to have lain at rest.* The arrogant pretensions of the bishops led, during the first quarter of the present century, to that warm "Episcopal controversy," in which the leading champions on the one side were Drs. Miller and Mason, and on the other Dr. Howe and Dr. John Henry Hobart; and which so sharply accentuated the difference between the two churches. The "Apostolic Succession" and the "Three Orders" effectually sickened the Presbyterian mind of a liturgy, or anything that symbolized with a system of which Bishop Hobart was the fit representative. A vigorously defensive and polemical Presbyterianism was the result, which involved in the same condemnation a sham apostolic succession, and a venerable and majestic form for the conduct of Divine service. But time passed on, and there gradually arose a set of men who loved the Presbyterian Church enough to wish that she might have the wisdom to learn even from her enemies; and who believed that by every consideration of self-protection and fidelity to her own interests, she was bound to admit some improvement in her system of public worship.

For thirty years or more this sentiment has been on the increase. The number of Presbyterian ministers who openly advocate the use of some form of prayer is large, and the number of those who hope and anxiously wait for it, much larger. The demand is swelling to a volume which must infallibly make itself heard and respected, and which neither waiting for nor desiring any ecclesiastical sanction will ere long vindicate its right to its own preferred method of worship. That the churches themselves are ready to welcome some such improvement is plain enough. They are tired of being forever the "dummiest" of God's dumb people, and readily embrace any opportunity for taking a vocal part in the service. The spoken "Amen" which has been timidly stealing into use is a sign of this. The recitation aloud of the Lord's Prayer, and the responsive reading of the Psalter, have been cordially adopted in some congregations. In the absence of suitable forms of our own, the use of the marriage and burial services of the Prayer-Book is not unfrequently solicited by our mem-

* Dr. Green says: "The draught of 1787, which formed the basis of the discussion that issued in adopting the Constitution, contained in the Directory for the worship of God a number of forms of prayer. A question was raised whether these forms should stand as they appeared in the draught, or whether the several parts and subjects of prayer should be stated *in thesi*, or in a doctrinal form. The latter method was carried by a majority; but I voted for a retention of the forms, assigning for reason that an exemplification of any matter of instruction I considered as the best method of making it intelligible and plain." (Autobiography, p. 184).

bers.* It is no prejudice on the part of our congregations that would prevent, in many cases, the introduction at once of a partial service of prayer; but only want of courage and faith on the part of the ministry. That the ministry themselves also feel the want of a liturgy is constantly showing itself. It is by no means uncommon for Presbyterian ministers to use the Episcopal marriage service from preference, of which several cases have come lately within the writer's knowledge; the officiating ministers in these cases being also doctors of divinity. The same thing appears from the disposition to borrow scraps and phrases from the Prayer-Book, which too often have the effect of *purpurei panni* sewn on the somewhat threadbare garment of the Presbyterian prayer. An improvement sometimes made upon this, is the recitation of a whole collect, as, for example, the well-known prayer of St. Chrysostom, at the end of the morning service. This sort of thing is hardly of the highest order of ecclesiastical integrity. We boast our conscientious preference for a plain diet of bread and water; we shall never consent, oh, no! to allow French dishes on our board. But we are quite willing to "convey" scraps and even whole pieces from the better-furnished tables of our neighbors.

What is the uniform character of the service in our churches? It is commenced with a voluntary by the choir; a piece of more or less classical music, which is wholly unintelligible to the congregation; a service in an unknown tongue as much as if sung in Latin. The words might be taken from Horace or Walt Whitman, and the people would be none the wiser. This is followed by other "introductory" services. The praying is exclusively done by the minister; the singing is mostly done by a few young persons in the gallery, and with the same propriety. If the people can worship in prayer by proxy, they can equally worship by proxy in singing. Then there comes usually a single short chapter of the Scripture. The long prayer, notoriously a terror, at least to the young and indifferent-minded, follows. Then comes the great business of the occasion; the hearing, with more or less of critical interest, an able and carefully prepared oration from the pulpit; a short prayer ends the service. Through all this the congregation sit mute. They have not even the poor Methodist liberty of relieving their minds by a "hallelujah," or a "bless the Lord." Neither they who sit in the room of the learned,

* The writer was not long since requested to use the burial service of the Prayer-Book at the funeral of a lamented, young Presbyterian minister, a desire which he was readily allowed to meet by using a form of his own, drawn in part from the liturgical monuments of the earlier Church.

or of the unlearned, say "Amen" to the prayer. The ten commandments, or as alternate to them, the beatitudes, are seldom or never read. The creed is never recited. No voice responds, "*Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.*" No loud acclaim resounds "*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.*" With a close imitation of the Romish method, the choir and the priest have performed the whole audible part of the public worship.

It certainly ought not to surprise us, under such conditions, that a very large number of the children of Presbyterian families, and many of the cultivated and tasteful of our members, have sought a more cheerful, more varied, more sympathetic service in another communion. There is not a Presbyterian pastor in the land, but can testify to such losses. The Episcopal Church has been largely recruited from our ranks. There are many thousands in that Church at present who have been drawn away merely by the superior attractions of its cultus. Certainly they have not been enticed by the greater impressiveness or eloquence of the pulpit.

Some may have gone from reasons of doctrinal sympathy or personal character; but of the young who have left us, and these constitute much the greater part, all may be safely affirmed to have been repelled by the tediousness of the Presbyterian, and attracted by the variety and restfulness of the Episcopal service. Give to multitudes of such persons the choice between a service where they are to sit fixed and mute during the offering by the minister of a prayer of fifteen minutes' duration, and one in which they are to vary their posture by frequent rising from their seats, and are to have their vocal part of the service by responses and antiphonal reading, and they will not hesitate. On the other hand, the cases are very few, and owing only to special causes in which any persons, Episcopally educated, have come over to the communion of the Presbyterian Church. The tracks are all one way. Look through any circle of your own acquaintanceship and count up the Presbyterian families in which one, two, or more lambs have strayed into the "Bishops'" fold.

It is very largely due to this fact that of all the sects in the United States, the Episcopal is growing the most rapidly at the present time. It is forming new congregations and organizing new dioceses with extraordinary rapidity. On the other hand, the Presbyterian Church is almost stationary. It requires a close calculation to show that she is even holding her own.

We are brought, then, squarely to face the question whether this process of depletion is to be allowed to go on, or whether by a just

and reasonable concession to the developed spirit of taste and ornament in everything relating to worship, we shall endeavor to retain our own children in the Church of their fathers. Whether we think more or less ill of the Episcopal Church, we are, no doubt, at least agreed that they are less likely to be trained into a well-developed and vigorous Christian character there than with us. We are far from saying that they may not experience the grace of the Holy Spirit in that communion, and grow up into sincere and faithful disciples of the Lord; but with our purer doctrinal and disciplinary system, we are bound to believe that the conditions are more favorable with us, for the formation of a sound, healthy, working Christian character. We can stick to the short prayer and the long prayer, and the dumb weariness of the silent "audience," and see our congregation gradually melt away, the gray heads becoming more numerous, and the young faces fewer, or we can infuse a new life into our services, give our children something to do in the public worship of God, and by the charm of a new and attractive cultus corroborate our doctrinal and homiletical superiority.

The matured taste indeed is almost as often offended by the Presbyterian services, as the younger mind is disgusted. Compare the prayer on a funeral occasion, including the detailed enumeration of all the classes of mourners, the wife or husband, the children, the sisters, the cousins, and their aunts, together with the circumstances of their affliction, well adapted, if not expressly designed, to start the fountain of sympathetic tears—a method which in the rural districts answers nearly the place of the tragic drama, and is resorted to for a pleasing stimulus to the sensibilities; compare this with the simple, scriptural, impersonal services of the Prayer-Book, and surely no person of any degree of developed taste can fail to see where the advantage lies. In addition to this the prayer often struggles under the painful necessity of drawing some character of the deceased, where honesty forbids the saying of anything good, and delicacy forbids the saying of anything evil. The result is sometimes a severe strain on the conscience of the minister.

Perhaps this abuse of the exercise of public prayer, by which complimentary remarks are offered under the pretext of worship, reaches its climax of indecorum when two ministers are found together in the pulpit, the pastor and some stranger who is officiating for him. How the latter, in the prayer before sermon, refers to the pastor's long and faithful service, to the love of his dear people for him, to his influence in the Church, to his beloved family, etc.; and how the pastor in the prayer after sermon compliments our dear brother for the words of

truth and earnestness he has spoken, informs the congregation delicately where he came from, and the important position he occupies in the Church, and prays the Lord to reward him abundantly for his labor of love on the present occasion; a gentle intimation that he is to expect nothing else. All this is only calculated to make the judicious grieve and to prompt the aspiration, *Oh, reform it altogether!*

From such infelicities the Episcopal service is absolutely free; and the Presbyterian pulpit will be, when it consents to rid itself of the temptation to personalities, by adopting some judicious forms of prayer for special occasions.

Against all this there is offset the charge of wearisome length, of tedious iteration, of endless jumping up and sitting down in liturgical worship. But it is to be observed that these complaints all come from Presbyterians, and not from those who are to the manner born. The "occasionally-conforming" Presbyterian feels himself in a somewhat uncomfortable, if not even slightly ridiculous, position. He cannot find the lesson in the book; he says amen in the wrong place; he is obliged to depend on his neighbors for a hint when to rise and when to sit down. He pronounces it all a wearisome "battology." But no such complaints come from those accustomed to the service. The frequent changes of posture rest their bodies, and the audible responses, the alternate reading, and the acclamations of the litany, refresh their minds.

But suppose the objection were valid against the Episcopal service, it does not follow that it would lie against a better one. The sources from which the English Prayer-Book was compiled are still extant, a vast mine of devotional literature open to the use of every explorer. The missals of York, Hereford, and Bangor, and especially the "Prymer of the Sarum use," were mostly drawn from the great Latin sacramentaries of the fourth and fifth centuries. We have in no way resigned or forfeited our portion in this body of the prayers of the saints. We have come out, indeed, from the Church of Rome, but we have no more lost our inheritance for all that in the treasures of the early fathers, than we have lost our share in Shakespeare by the American Revolution. We are not prepared so to sunder the unity of the Church militant and triumphant, as to renounce all portion in Augustine, and Ambrose, and Leo, and Gregory, any more than we are in Calvin and Cranmer. Whatsoever in them is adapted to spiritual edification, whatever can be employed to swell the praises of the Redeemer, whatever recognizes and confirms the oneness of those in all the ages who love the Church of God, that we claim an interest in. Gelasius is called "Pope," though he was bishop of Rome before that

title came into any such restricted use; but in the "sacramentary" called by his name are found prayers which had come down from the times of pagan persecution; hymns which the martyrs chanted in the flames, or which had resounded amid the dim aisles of the catacombs. We, ourselves, have traced a large part of the Collects in the Anglican Prayer-Book to the sacramentaries of Gelasius and Gregory; but both in these and in the sacramentary of Leo, and still more in the Mozarabic liturgy, the greatest and richest of all, are to be found immense materials which have never been made use of in any modern book of devotion. There is no need to be indebted in the slightest degree to the Anglican Prayer-Book. We have but to go to the original *monumenta liturgica* to find an unexhausted magazine of devout, tender, scriptural prayers suited to the wants of Christians under all the conditions of life.

If it is said, Why should Protestants resort to the Church of Rome and to the earlier ages to find suitable devotional matter? it may be replied, Why should Christian scholars go to pagan Rome for models of style? Why read Virgil and Horace, when every man ought to be able to make his own poems? The same reasons that raise the presumption that the classics of Greece and Rome possess extraordinary merit, because the world has never been willing to let them die—a presumption at once confirmed by all competent scholarship—assure us that the body of prayers which have come down to us over the waste of a thousand centuries, express the Christian sentiments with a terseness, a simplicity, a majesty, to which modern efforts seldom approach. We gather up the prayers of Jay and Jencks and Bickersteth in books for family devotion; what should forbid us to go back and pour our religious sentiments in the channels prepared for us by Basil or Chrysostom or Ambrose or Gregory? Dr. Cunningham Geikie remarks of the preparation of King Edward's Prayer-Book:

"With the truest wisdom the commissioners shrank from attempting to compose an original liturgy, and chose rather to use, so far as might be, the treasures which the past had bequeathed to them. Hence, whatever was best in the Romish missal and breviary was retained; for it had not become Romish by being used for a time by Rome. Ancient liturgies, collects, and offices had happily survived; and from these many were selected, Cranmer himself translating many of them into the grand English of which he was so great a master. The present and the future of the Church were thus happily linked to the past; the true spiritual continuity of faith and worship from the earliest ages preserved, and a fulness and incomparable grandeur secured for our formularies which the labors of no one generation could have produced."

To the prayers thus drawn from the richest treasures of the early Church, and so translated as to harmonize with the style of our English version and suffer nothing in comparison with the Anglican

Prayer-Book, should be added also the best composed prayers left us by the English reformers, and by any others to whom the Spirit has given in an eminent degree the gift and the grace of prayer.

It must always be observed, moreover, that no form of prayer for the Presbyterian Church should or can be absolute and peremptory. A place should always be expressly left in it for the free utterance of those desires which arise in view of the circumstances of the local or the catholic Church.

That such a form, taken in connection with a sound evangelical theology, with a scriptural view of the sacraments, and with a careful training of the ministry, can involve any danger to spiritual religion, only the most illiberal or timid mind can suggest.

The want of appropriate forms for special occasions in the Presbyterian Church has been already referred to. Numbers of pastors have prepared forms of their own of various degrees of excellence. Many resort openly to the Episcopal Prayer-Book, a proceeding which can scarcely be thought either respectable or prudent. The evident lack in our arrangements in this particular led the late Dr. Charles Hodge to say that "if a book could be compiled for the Presbyterian Church containing appropriate prayers for ordinary public worship, and for special occasions, as for times of sickness, declension, or public calamity, with forms for the administration of baptism, of the Lord's supper, for funerals, and for marriage, we are bold to say it would be in our judgment a very great blessing."

We are by no means unwilling to shelter ourselves under the authority of such names as those of Dr. Charles Hodge and Dr. Thomas Guthrie. We emphasize the fact that they earnestly desired not only forms for special occasions, in the Church of which they were such distinguished leaders, as many Presbyterian clergy do, but also for "all ordinary public worship."

Since it is admitted that any liturgy for the Presbyterian Church must be so arranged as to leave part of the service for free prayer, the influence which the liturgical form will be adapted to exert on the extemporaneous part should not be overlooked. Those who have heard the free effusions of prayer with which some of the evangelical English clergy are accustomed to close their services, have not failed to be impressed with their scriptural simplicity, tenderness, and dignity. The familiarity of those earnest divines with the language of the Prayer-Book, invests their own prayers with a decorous beauty which distinguishes them in a highly agreeable manner from the performances of some other pulpits. This advantage might be gained certainly by the careful individual study of the best models of prayer;

but since, as a matter of fact, our ministry are taught that their great business is to prepare and deliver good sermons, and that it is comparatively a matter of small consequence what becomes of the devotional exercises, they are not likely to lay out much time upon this.

The Presbyterian Church cherishes a just and proper jealousy for spirituality of worship. This is the peculiar attribute of a true Church, as formal ceremonious worship is the mark of a corrupt or decayed one. The churches which represented a superstitious Christianity for many ages, were churches in which there was no other than liturgical prayer. The Church which cast out her most earnest, devout, and conscientious ministers and members, the Non-conformists, was a liturgical Church.

It is superficially argued that the ritual service was the fatal element that generated the decay of vital piety and the growth of a superstitious devotion; whereas, in fact, the service of prayer was the chief preservative influence in the Romish and Anglican Churches, and stood as a pillar and ground of the truth during the ages of ignorance and superstition. The great hymn of Ambrose has been an insurmountable bulwark through all the ages, against the billows of Arianism. The litanies have been a perpetual *sursum corda*, an unceasing summons to look to God for help in all times of public or private calamity. The prayers of the Greek and Latin fathers embodied in the liturgies have graven on the heart of the Church in all ages the atoning sacrifice, the intercession, the mediatorial reign and glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was the unhallowed marriage between the secular and the spiritual order, the plenteous dower which the first wealthy pope received from Constantine, and handed down to his successors, and the aggrandizement of the hierarchy that followed: this it was, and not the use of liturgical forms, that corrupted the Church. And when the barbaric deluge had swept away all monuments of learning, and the storms attending the resettlement of Europe had brought on almost universal anarchy, and all seemed darkness and despair, it was the sweet and tender strains of the liturgies mounting upward that broke a rift in the gloom, and showed some star of hope still shining on suffering humanity. Corrupt as the Romish Church of the middle ages was in her administration of the sacraments, she never ceased to hold forth to the people *integram, inviolatamque*, the great doctrine of the Trinity, the true and perfect divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the deity and power of the Holy Spirit, the ruin and corruption of man by nature, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Had it not been for these doctrines, fixed immovably in the liturgies of the

Church, and forever repeated in the ears of the people, the stress of ignorance, violence, and superstition would have swept Christianity from the face of Europe.

Equally in England it was the liturgy not that corrupted, but that saved the Church. The patronage of the State, the servility of the hierarchy, the incompetency or worse of the lower clergy, might have destroyed all religion in England; but the unceasing recitation of the Commandments, the Creed, and the Litany forever kept alive in the breasts of the English people both the faith and the hopes of the Gospel: and we must always remember that it is in the hearts of the common people that religion finds its last and strongest hold. Those who talk in sweeping and general terms of the universal corruption of the Church, seem too often to fall into that error which Dr. Arnold was accustomed so strongly to condemn, of confounding the "Church" and the "clergy." The clergy may become very corrupt and yet the Church of Christ's true people by no means be lost. When all religion had deserted the temple courts, defiled by the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and the mercenary creed of the sacerdotal order, piety still lingered around the synagogue. In many a village home there were still devout Annas and believing Symeons waiting for the consolation of Israel. True religion, when it can get nothing better, will support life on very poor husks of the Gospel; and in numberless cottages of the ignorant and oppressed peasantry during all the dark ages, piety still maintained a feeble flame fed by nothing else but the liturgical mass on the altars of superstition.

In the Church's dark eclipse,
When from priest's or pastor's lips,
Truth divine was never heard,
'Mid the famine of the word,
Still THESE SYMBOLS witness gave
To His love who died to save.

That there is anything in the use of a book of prayer essentially unfavorable to spirituality of worship, is a mere prejudice growing out of a want of experience. Christian people who use a book do not find it so; and the contrary might be safely inferred from the various and excellent manuals prepared by Presbyterians for family devotion. Devout "churchmen" claim that the Prayer-Book is eminently favorable to concentration of mind, and near communion with God. Indeed, why it should be possible to pray spiritually when waiting to catch up the sentiments as they distill, not always in the best constructed phrase, from the lips of a living speaker, and impossible when we are using the fit and gracious words left us by some saint of God

of the olden time, it would not be easy to say. It has never been alleged that Christians do not find the written prayers of David favorable to devotion.

In addition to this the confirmation of the sense of the communion of saints found in the use of a book of "COMMON prayer" should not be forgotten. The Presbyterian worshipper knows, indeed, that his brethren in a thousand sanctuaries are at the same time with him on Sunday morning listening to some portion or other of the Scriptures, and singing the praise of God out of the "Hymnal," or the "Songs of the Sanctuary," or the "Book of Praise," or "The Church Hymn Book," or some other collection; and that multitudes of other congregations are about the same hour groaning inwardly under the infliction of the "long prayer," and after that are enjoying the pleasurable relief of listening to an extremely smart, elaborate, and well-composed sermon, smelling strongly of the midnight (Saturday midnight) oil. But the sense of unity in worship does not go further than that. The devout liturgist, on the other hand, remembers that at the same time he is bowing his head before the face of Almighty God, our heavenly Father; some hundreds of thousands of his fellow-Christians are also exclaiming, in the phrase of the pathetic confession drawn by John Calvin, "*We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep; we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts; we have offended against Thy holy laws.*" The strong-minded Presbyterian may pooh-pooh all this as quite a frivolous consideration of no value to such eminent Christians as he is; but let him be merciful to men of mould; let him bethink himself that there are a good many of Christ's people, weak brethren, no doubt, and quite unworthy of his notice, whose spiritual digestion is helped by just such pabulum as this. This it is, in part, that makes the Prayer-Book so dear to their hearts, that the Church, over a whole continent, is praying at the same time, in the same words; and this is the more interesting when we consider how fearfully and wonderfully the prayers are commonly read.

A distinct argument for an allowed Presbyterian service of prayer has been mentioned by Dr. Hodge. There are many thousands of the sons of the Presbyterian Church whose home is on the deep, or who are far from their domestic sanctuaries engaged in the military service of the country. For these scattered sheep there is commonly no practicable mode of worship except the use of the Episcopal Prayer-Book. There are many commanders of ships and officers of forts and posts, who, from voluntary inclination, if not under the orders of the Department, hold divine service with their men on the

Lord's day morning. They do not feel able to conduct the service by extemporaneous prayer. Their own Church furnishes them no form of service; in all foreign ships and ports they find the Anglican Prayer-Book in use; and so they naturally fall into the same method. The Presbyterian Church has tamely consented to be driven from the seas; and wherever the American flag waves over a little worshipping congregation assembled on the deck, it casts its rainbow shadow on the pages of the Episcopal Prayer-Book. None who have ever witnessed it can forget the pathetic association of a burial at sea with the words of the funeral service: When the boatswain has piped "all hands to bury the dead," and the ship is hove to, with the fore-top-sail to the mast, and the officers and crew gather around the gangway with bared heads, as the flag is snatched off, and

The heavy-shotted hammock shroud
Drops in its vast and wandering grave,

the last accents that fall on the ear are the noble words from the ancient liturgy:

*Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity, we give Thee hearty thanks for the good examples of all those Thy servants who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors; and we beseech Thee that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of Thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul, in Thine eternal and everlasting glory, through, etc.**

Equally it cannot be doubted that the attendance by Presbyterians at funeral occasions where the form for the burial of the dead is used, and the concession of its superior excellence made by the Presbyterian clergy who so frequently borrow it, in part at least, all tend to detach the minds of our children from the Church of their fathers, and prepare the way for their easy transfer into the Episcopal denomination. If we are wise we shall not wait very long before yielding so much to the necessities of the case as to provide ourselves with forms as scriptural and venerable as those of the Book of Common Prayer.

A popular form of objection to the use of a service of prayer is that the great business of the Christian minister is to preach the Gospel; and that the people are to attend church to hear and not chiefly for

* Patrologia Latina CLI. : 928. Deus, apud quem mortuorum spiritus vivunt, et in quo electorum animæ, deposito carnis onere, plena felicitate lætantur, etc.

the worship of God. This corresponds to the whole prevailing Presbyterian idea of the church. The pulpit becomes a "platform" from which the ecclesiastical orator can with the best advantage deliver his sermon. The church itself is only an "audience room"; the worship of God by prayer and praise is only the "introductory part" of the service. This is the phrase of contempt by which it is commonly known in Presbyterian parlance. It is notorious that the people for the most part merely tolerate it because it is the vestibule to the sermon; or at least, that the only exceptions are in favor of a somewhat elaborate performance of song by a paid choir.

We take issue with this entire view of the relative importance of worshipping God and hearing sermons. "Preaching the Gospel" is proclaiming the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, announcing as heralds the message of God's grace to dying men; this was the business of the apostles, and is the first business everywhere of all missionaries and Christian pioneers. It is in this way Christianity is first introduced to the knowledge of any people. The same principle demands preaching as the main work of the minister of the Gospel in any partially evangelized region; and preaching, always preaching, in every region and place as a part of the means for forming and building up the Christian Church and a Christian civilization. But it is only a part. Besides it, Christ has ordained other means to be employed for the same end, viz: the whole apparatus of worship. If the example of Paul is to be pressed, then the minister of the Gospel has nothing to do with ordinances or with pastoral care. In the great apostle's fiery zeal for the conversion of the heathen he could not wait even to administer baptism to his converts. He thanks God that he had baptized only half a dozen in all Corinth. He must haste like the clansman bearing the fiery cross along the highlands, speeding forth the summons without turning aside for anything to the right hand or to the left.

Others who came after Paul and were not appointed so exclusively to announce the glad tidings, could tarry in Crete, ordain elders, set in order the things that were wanting, administer ordinances, and in general nurse and train the congregations of infant believers.

To make the preaching of the Gospel consist exclusively in the delivery of sermons, is the fatal mistake of Presbyterianism. All appropriate worship of God through Jesus Christ is the preaching of the Gospel. Devotional singing is setting forth the praises of Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King. The apostles' and Nicene creeds are full of the Gospel. In the Lord's supper, Christ is set forth evidently crucified for us. There is more of Christ in the *Te Deum* and the

Litany alone than is commonly found in two entire Presbyterian services. If we imagine that we have a monopoly of the exhibition of Christ as the sinner's only friend and refuge, we are laboring under a profound mistake. All these services, confession, supplication, and thanksgiving; creed, psalm, and sacrament, are preaching the Gospel; and to ears attuned to them, and hearts in sympathy, are preaching it with a tenderness, a pathos, a power which is not so often found in the elaborate Sunday morning's sermon.

We have no doubt succeeded in persuading our congregations that their conversion is only to be expected through the institution of preaching. This is true, as the apostle Paul argues, of the heathen, and of all men ignorant of the Gospel; they cannot believe unless they hear, and they cannot hear without a preacher. There can be no ordinary salvation through Christ, to those who never heard of Christ; but to such as live in Christian communities the whole service and apparatus of worship preaches Him. But all this passes for nothing in Presbyterian congregations. Teach a man that you do not expect him to be saved except by hearing sermons, and he never will be. If ordinary sermons are not enough, he must have reduplicated and intenser sermons, till his spiritual palate, grown callous almost to disease, nothing will reach his sensibilities but the highly peppered curry of an evangelist applied for ten days in succession.

It is a curious illustration of the Presbyterian fear that men may perhaps be converted by something else than hearing sermons, the way in which we have come generally to administer the Lord's supper. The writer well remembers the profound impression made upon his youthful mind when coming to the paternal pew on a communion Sunday, in the church where that man of God, John Chester, ministered; the first thing to arrest his eye would be the table before the pulpit, with the emblems obscurely outlined on it, like a dead Christ, covered with the awful shroud; and when, at the close of the morning sermon, the whole congregation still keeping their places, believers rose from their seats and gathered around the sacramental board, it seemed to him like a rehearsal of the separation of the last great day; and his heart was ready to burst with the thought that being ashamed of Christ here, Christ would be ashamed of him when he should come with the glory of His Father to judge the world.

We have changed all that finely. In great numbers of congregations the Lord's supper is reserved as an *agape* for a separate hour in the afternoon; the sinners are conveniently rid of a disagreeable spectacle, improve the afternoon for a quiet nap, and reserve all their emotions against the delivery of the next sermon.

In short, the inevitable result of our whole view of the nature of worship is, that we make comparatively little of anything but the oratorical part of it, while the judgment of the fathers of the Presbyterian Church was, that praise and prayer are "THE MORE IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE SERVICE"; a judgment which, it may be hoped, will still have some weight with loyal Presbyterians.

There is an unwise conservatism in Church and State which insists on clinging to an old custom after the reasons which first demanded it have ceased to operate; or even after it works to the prejudice of the system it was designed to subserve. Usages wholly obsolete in spirit and detached from all their surroundings, continue to stand through the principle of inertia, like old towers from which the battlements have crumbled away. The champion of England still continued to ride in full armor at an English coronation, after it had become necessary, as Mr. Carlyle represents it, to hoist him on his horse with a tackle. Forms are for a system, and not the system for the forms; forms wear out, while the system remains; and a true philosophy will bid us wisely adapt the perishable garment to the living body, before a "solution of continuity" displays something too much of the nakedness of the subject. If the Presbyterian Church is losing her hold on those whom she must depend upon to carry the Ark of the Covenant in the next generation; if "the sects around her" are growing rapidly at her expense, it may be worth while very seriously to inquire into the causes. It will surely not be attributed to any falling off in the standard of attainment or the standard of piety in her ministry. They rank by universal consent, if not first, yet among the foremost as regards pulpit excellence. They keep up the prayer-meeting, the Sunday-school, the work of pastoral visitation with a fidelity not exceeded in any other denomination; and yet they are working with only one hand, and the ill-cemented wall falls down as fast as they build it. They are as wise as they were two generations ago, and no wiser.

There was a certain professor in Berlin whose lectures were at one time attended by great numbers of students, but who came to hold his "vorlesungen" to empty benches. The excellent Frau Professorin was lamenting to an American student the decay of her husband's popularity. She was at a loss to understand it. He was still in the vigor of health, and his lectures were just as good as they were at first. To her certain knowledge "*he had not changed a word in them for thirty years.*" Alas, poor conservative! a "konservativ" in the "Gospel of Peace according to St. Benjamin," is a respectable old party who, "being in hot water, stays there for fear he shall be scalded."

The Presbyterian clergy will continue to preach better than others. They will perhaps stick to the rigid ritual of the short prayer and the long prayer; they will wear themselves out with manifold labors to retain and save their people; and the irrepressible demand for a service in which they can take some share, will continue to steal away the hopefulest part of them. And this has become the more inevitable since we have begun to acquaint our children—rather unwisely, if we mean to go no further—with the beauty of a liturgical service. In many Sunday-schools responsive reading of the Scripture, and some brief service of prayer, and on Easter-day, at least, an elaborate ritual service has been introduced. The worthy pastors and superintendents who ventured on these innovations, did not reflect perhaps that they were educating their children for the Episcopal Church. The “bareness” of the church worship—for somehow or other this term seems to suggest itself quite naturally to Presbyterian writers—presents a disagreeable contrast, to the impressible young natures emerging from the warm atmosphere of the Sunday-school room. They will not easily lose the flavor of the more attractive service.

Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem Testa diu.

The remedy for all this lies within the discretion of the individual pastors. If our congregations have gladly consented, as they have in many instances, to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer aloud, to the responsive reading of the Scriptures, and the repetition of the creed, they will with equal pleasure accept more. No great and sudden revolution in long-established usages is desirable or possible. Wisdom is profitable in all things; and the Presbyterian churches that will wisely improve the time and introduce some judicious and satisfactory liturgical forms, will be the churches that will hold their own members, and grow rapidly through the charm of a new and attractive mode of public devotion.

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