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POPULAR LECTURES AND LECTURERS.—NECESSITY  
OF REFORMING BOTH.

THERE has grown up a system of operating upon the public mind, to which less attention has been paid than it merits, and of which the general effect is of more importance, and we may add, as yet more uncertain, than society seems to be aware of.

You may observe how the title "*Professor*," has been made to supplant many other titles less reputable than itself; but the effect of this, in various ways, may not have attracted your attention. So you may observe how the business of *public Lecturing*, as a means of distinction and livelihood to the "*Professor*" and others, has been extended and systematised; but it may not have occurred to you to estimate the effects which may be produced—especially the *evil* effects, by the abuse of such a system of controlling public opinion, and perverting the public conscience and taste.

We do not know that it is more unbecoming for a man to assume the title of "*Professor*"—than that of "*Major*" or "*Colonel*"—or any other that he has no sort of right to: but when he proceeds a step farther, and assumes the exercise of the functions which appertain to his title, and exercises these functions in a manner detrimental to society, and has, at his back, organised societies and widely circulated newspapers, conspiring to extend and deepen the injuries he inflicts—the matter assumes a different aspect. The *professional Lecturer*, who offers himself to hire and lives by the public and mercenary use of his small stores, for the amusement of the idle, may be commiserated; but when a *class* begins to be formed out of such persons, and they assume a distinct and eminent position, and

## LITURGIES, INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC, AND ARCHITECTURE.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is, we believe, one of the purest branches of the Church of Christ on earth, and we desire to give thanks continually to God for His wonderful goodness to it, and the distinguished post He has assigned to it, in the arduous but honorable warfare against the powers of darkness and of evil. But it cannot be denied, that the same unbelief which has made other branches of the Church drift gradually away from the great principles of the Gospel, and seduced them to put their trust in an arm of flesh, is working in her also, and threatens her spiritual, which is her only true prosperity, by beguiling her, and corrupting her from the simplicity that is in Christ. She is in danger perpetually of a practical denial of her glorious confession; with her voice acknowledging God, in His word and by His Spirit, to be the only source of light and strength, and herself to be nothing except as He enables her, but in her heart, and with her hand, going after the idols of men who have their portion in this life. She finds it hard to cling to the ordinances of her invisible Head, and to maintain her assurance of faith in His ability to make the weak things of the world confound the things which are mighty, and the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and things that are base and despised, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are. It is easier to go into Assyria, or down into Egypt, the house of bondage, and to trust in horses of flesh and chariots of iron, than to look to the God of Israel, who hideth Himself, or trust in those horses of fire and chariots of fire, which are visible only to the eye of faith. We build the altar, and arrange the wood, but cannot like the majestic old prophet of the Law, wait for the flame from Heaven to consume and accept the sacrifice; much less can we pour the water over the work of our hands, to make it all the more evident that our's is the God that answereth by fire.

These reflections have been forced upon us, by the innovations which have been made or proposed in our forms of worship: and the signs of the times seem to indicate the possibility, at no distant day, of another rupture in the Presbyterian body, upon the ground of worship, analagous to those which have already taken place upon the grounds of doctrine and order. For we cannot believe that our Church can always patiently endure a mass of corruptions which hamper and trammel her. Her constitution is too full of vitality and vigour, to allow any excrescence to remain long enough to exhaust, or utterly to poison the living blood that courses through her veins. Her whole history teaches that she *must* slough off, when the morbid incumbrance reaches such a degree of virulence as seriously to endanger her existence, or her distinctive vocation. Nor

can her unity ever be, for a great length of time, a mere external unity, a thing of brass or iron. The Church of Rome, considered in its relations to God, and to the eternal destinies of mankind, is but a congeries and aggregation of a multitude of putrid parts, kept together by the pressure of outside hoops and bands. There is no spiritual life, no organic action, no "body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part," but a decomposed corpse, ready to crumble into a thousand pieces, when the ligaments and cerements of authority shall be removed. But such the Presbyterian Church can never be: she must be one in life, one in principle, one in aim, as well as one in external organization. When she ceases to have this real unity, it will not be long before the rupture will betray itself in open separation. Does any man imagine that, if a liturgy were substituted for the "Directory for Worship," in half our Churches, the other half adhering to the Directory, would long continue in nominal unity and communion with it? The whole genius and history of the Presbyterian body, everywhere, forbid it. This question, therefore, of liturgies, and the affiliated questions of instrumental music, and ecclesiastical architecture, deserve to be considered in time, as their solution may involve the question of the integrity of our denomination. Our people have hitherto said little, and thought little, about them, because they judge the disease to be sporadic, and easily prevented from spreading, by the conservative intelligence of the Church: but when it shall become apparent that the disorder is an epidemic, or at least, that the predisposition to it is wide-spread and general: when the issue is openly made, between resisting these rags of Popery, and abandoning all the distinctive features of our system—then will come a storm in which either the Church or the innovations must perish. The danger is not an imaginary one. The article on Liturgies, in the July number of the Repertory, and that on Architecture, in the number for October, together with the doings of St. Peter's Church, Rochester, still in nominal connection with the General Assembly, show that it is not. Even the "Presbyterian" objects to the last named article, as savouring too much of an ecclesiastical spirit: and surely such restless agitators and Church disturbers as we are, may be pardoned for doubting whereunto these things may grow; especially when we remember that solemn lesson of history, that the most enormous corruptions in the Church have arisen from the smallest, and apparently the most harmless beginnings. Our readers will please give us their indulgence, therefore, while we throw out some hints for their reflection, upon this subject. As there is nothing which God, in His blessed word, defends with more exquisite jealousy than His worship; as there is nothing that He rebukes with more severity, than the impertinent assumption of man to determine forms of worship for himself; as there is nothing in which, notwithstanding, man has been more prone to intermeddle, than in this very thing, it is of vital importance to us to ponder

it. If we know our own hearts, we are seeking no paltry party ends, but the glory of our common Lord, whose sovereign prerogative we believe to be invaded, and the true welfare of that Church which is the mother of us all.

What we have to say will be directed, for the sake of brevity, chiefly to the subject of Liturgies; but the general principles will, for the most part, be equally applicable to Instrumental Music and Ecclesiological Architecture.

1. It ought, in the first place, to excite our suspicion about these things, that they have been generally thought of, only in a time of spiritual declension in the Church. When the spirit of grace and of supplication has, in a measure, withdrawn Himself, and the people lose that lively sense of God's majesty and mercy, which once found expression in spontaneous adoration and thanksgiving; when there no longer exists, except in a very feeble degree, that profound conviction of their needs as creatures and as sinners, which pours itself out in constant confessions and petitions; when love waxeth cold towards their brethren, and they feel no promptings to importunate intercessions in their behalf; when, in a word, there is no gift and no spirit of prayer, then they seek for a form of devotion, "to be said or sung." Instead of crying mightily to Him who has "received gifts for men," and is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than parents, who are evil, are to give good things to their children; to Him who is able to bless the barren ordinances, and quicken their languishing souls into life, they resort to their own inventions, and make a Holy Ghost of the work of their own hands. Being unable to rise to God, they would fain bring God down to themselves. In the first three centuries of the Christian era, no such crutches of devotion were needed, and none were employed, for the Church was kept near to the fountain of life by the rough discipline of persecution. It was only when she began to enjoy the insidious favor of the world, and was committed to the deadly nursing of Constantine and his successors, that she began to crave forms of devotion ready made to her hand, and to make up, by the splendour of outward signs, for the departing glory of spiritual fellowship with God. The only gift of prayer, which in the course of time was needed, was the gift of knowing how to read: and finally, it came to pass, that all prayer became the business of the priesthood, and was done in an unknown tongue. The whole of religion became a thing of proxy, and had well nigh perished from the earth. When the Reformation came, and along with it, a sense of personal responsibility; when men were made to feel their tremendous consequence as individuals under the government of God; that they must believe, repent, grow in grace for themselves, they also felt that they must pray for themselves. The Spirit that made intercession for them with groanings which could not be uttered, refused to be confined by the meagre, stale, flat and unprofitable forms, in a foreign tongue, which they had been repeating with parrot-like intelligence and devotion. The new liberty of the sons of God demanded something

more. The foreign tongue was laid aside, that the worshippers might at least know what they were praying for; and doubtless all forms of prayer in public worship would have been laid aside, if the leaders had not been afraid of producing an insurrection against the great truths of the Gospel, by a sudden change in the forms to which the people had been used. They argued, that as the people knew the forms, and could not judge of the doctrines, and as the doctrines after they were received, would gradually give life to the forms, if not entirely do away with them, it was better, in all the circumstances, to preserve the forms, translate and purge them. But it was a deep conviction in their hearts, that these forms were inconsistent with, and destructive of those gifts of the Holy Ghost, which had been showered, in almost pentecostal profusion, upon them. Liturgies are felt to be tame things in a revival of religion.

We are not at all surprised, therefore, at the following remarks of the writer on Church Architecture, in the Repertory for October, (p. 625):—"Protestant Christendom finds no art to its hand. It has been *hitherto above art*. It has been doing battle for the truth; and in the meantime has gone into the Roman Cathedral, into the oriental basilica, into the pseudo-Greek temple, into plain houses, and even into barns and caves to worship, scarcely stopping to see whether the tower, the dome, the plain ceiling, or the rafter, were over its head. But now, as the strong man in the period of his vigour, finds it well to go back to the poetry of his youth, even so has the Protestant Church arrived at that point of progress, where she may stop to recover the beauty which she was constrained to pass by, in the warfare of her early progress." There is a very sad meaning in all this; and more truth, than the writer in his chase after figures of rhetoric, took time to see. It is because we have given up contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, that we have time for art. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are not done with the truth of God, but we are; they have not given up their assaults upon it, but we have given up defending it. The battle is all on one side now: we have put off the harness, we have conquered a peace, and now for architecture, music, and the arts of peace. The time was, when Protestantism was "above art:" the sphere in which it moved, the work it had to do, was lofty; it soared and gazed upon the sun; but not so now; its wings are clipped, and it has fallen to the earth, and is ready for the plastic arts which work with earth. The time was, when it dwelt in the thick darkness upon the mount with God: but now, it has come down, to make the golden calf in the vale below! "The poetry of its youth!" Would to God, it might return to it! For that poetry is found in the Acts of the Apostles; and its sublime vocation was to testify against the shrines and temple of the Great Diana of the Ephesians, and to point, with unspeakable sadness, to the glorious structures of Athens, as monuments of apostacy from that God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands! Said we not truly then, that these things spring out of a declension of religion? They are the funeral of faith.\*

\*As it is quite common to sneer at those in our Church, who oppose the tenden

2. In the next place, however, the question of liturgies may be decided upon its merits,—to that point we shall come hereafter,—it ought not to be considered an open question in the Presbyterian Church in the United States. And so with Instrumental Music.

It may be well, at this point, to state what that question is, as there is a prevailing misapprehension in regard to it. The question is not, whether a man may compose or select a form of prayer for his own private use, or for the purpose of family worship. Whether he may lawfully do this or not, will depend upon circumstances of which his conscience alone, in the sight of God, is to judge. He may find it better for his own edification, or the edification of his household, to read prayers. But in publick worship, the edification of all the worshippers is to be consulted, and the mode of conducting the worship must be made the matter of a covenant, either expressed, or implied, among themselves, subject always to the authority of the Word of God. In a particular Church, for example, there may be many, who, in their private devotions, assume a standing posture; more are in the habit of kneeling; some few, perhaps, as Richard Cecil tells us was once his practice, walk backwards and forwards while they pray. When they all come together, some one mode must be agreed upon: it would be a violation of decency and order, for each man to assume the posture to which he is most accustomed in the closet. They must all stand, or kneel, or walk, or sit. For the last two modes, there is no example in publick worship in the Word of God; and the choice lies between standing and kneeling, which are both recognized postures of reverence. It would be an indecent thing, for one part to be kneeling, and the other standing, though both postures are Scriptural. What is true of postures, is true of the method of prayer. In like manner, a Christian may find it to edification to use a musical instrument in his private or domestic worship, as the sweet singer of Israel seems to have done, and as Martin Luther did; but it is a very different affair to introduce apparatus of this sort into the public worship of God. Before it can be done, there must be a covenant to do it; and before such a covenant can be righteously made, the Word of God must be consulted: a thing it would be well for those to do, who laugh, in the fulness of their self-conceit, at their brethren, for seeing any *principle* in the matter.

It appears to us, that this statement, if it be a just one—and we cannot see how it can be denied—is itself argument enough to show

cy to Romanize our worship, as if they were the mere victims of vulgar prejudice, fanatical iconoclasts,—albeit, they stand upon the platform of the Confession, and the testimony of the great Presbyterian body, from the beginning,—it may be well to say, that we do not object to the adoption of a style of architecture which is suited to the purposes of Presbyterian worship, nor do we think it wrong to consult and conform to the general principles of the art, in building our meeting houses. We agree with the writer in the Repertory, that the Gothic style is not suited to our purposes; we meet for something else than to burn wax candles, and to practice postures and impostures. It is to the principles upon which he urges the creation of an art; the symbolical idea, the ritualistick spirit of the whole article, that we object, as unsound and dangerous.

that such innovations in worship are contrary to our Standards, and involve the sin of covenant-breaking. Suppose all the Presbyterian people in the United States,—we mean, of course, those connected with our General Assembly,—to be assembled in one house for worship, to make to the world an exhibition of their unity, what sort of exhibition of unity would there be, if each section, as it now exists, were to worship according to its accustomed mode? Here, in one corner, is an organ blowing, the performer, perhaps, an ungodly infidel, who is laughing in his sleeve at the simplicity of the saints, and the bellows-blower, it may be, a pious negro, who is prevented by his occupation from joining in the praises of God;—there, in the body of the Church, an immense throng, *singing* forth their joy, in a volume of sound like the roar of many waters;—here, in another corner, a collection of violins, little and big, with flutes and “soft recorders;” there, in another, an ambitious little thing, called a melodeon, whose squeaks can be heard high above the vocal noise that accompanies it;—here, in a nook almost invisible, is heard the intonation of a liturgy;—there, from the vast body, breathes the ready, reverent, and fervent supplication, under the influence of the interceding Spirit;—here, some are standing;—there, others are kneeling, in the same act of devotion; and others still, even lazily sitting, in the act of addressing the King of Kings;—what a glorious unity is this!—And yet this is no exaggerated picture of our Church, as it actually is, with the single difference, that it does not, because it cannot, meet in the same place. Her doctrine is that the Church is one, (See the note on Chap. XII, of the Form of Government,) and as physical necessity demands that she should be broken up into particular congregations, yet to preserve and exhibit this general idea of unity, upon which her whole government is built, the “Directory for Worship” has been framed; a covenant has been struck between the different congregations,—analogous to that which we supposed to be necessary between the members of a particular Church,—to secure uniformity of worship: not the dead uniformity of a liturgical service, which degrades all to the level of the class which has no gift but that of reading; but a uniformity which affords ample scope for the exercise of spiritual gifts in their boundless variety. So that how far soever, a Presbyterian sheep may wander from his own immediate fold, within the limits of the United States, it is the benevolent intention of our Church, that he shall find, not only the same sort of pasture, but the same habits and order in the flock, with which he was familiar at home. How shockingly this benevolent design has, in many places, been frustrated, it is needless for us to say. Are there not many Churches in connection with our Assembly, in which a plain Presbyterian man would feel no more at home, than if they belonged to a different denomination? Here again, we see the deadly influence of Independency upon us, blinding us, and making us insensible to the distinctive glory of our ecclesiastical organization. No wonder the Congregationalists of the North presume to call themselves Presbyterians; they have an ample apology for doing it, in the practice of some of our Congregations,

which have added to the covenant, and thereby annulled it, and virtually declared themselves independent. As to the horror expressed about the doings of the S<sup>r</sup> Peter's Rochester, we have only to say, that it has done violence to no principle which is not violated at this moment, by a hundred of our Churches, about which no fuss is made. They have framed a book of their own, and frankly abandoned that of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Others have quit our book, without announcing their deed formally to the world.

3. Once more—for our space is nearly exhausted—the introduction of the forms and usages in question being, as we have shown, a violation of our Presbyterian covenant, is for that reason, an intolerable act of tyranny; intolerable in principle, and oppressive in operation. Supposing all the members of a particular Church in our communion, to be in favor of a liturgy, or an organ; to introduce either, according to the principles already illustrated, would be pro tanto, a virtual declaration of independence. But in point of fact, there probably never has been a case in our Church, in which there has not been opposition to such an innovation, when attempted; nor many, in which the opposition has not been decided, and even violent. More than this, the opposition has generally been manifested by those members of the Church whose religious profession was most intelligent and consistent: and the innovation has been carried by the influence of those, who, if not men of the world, were, at least, not remarkable for their crucifixion to it. So that here we have vanity and folly oppressing the freemen of the Lord; those “dear children” for whom Christ died, and, by his death, delivered from all other commandments but His own, put under the intolerable yoke of the commandments of men! O shame! But it may be said, that these weak people, who cannot keep pace with us in our progress and improvements, have the privilege of going elsewhere. Yea verily; the citizen who resists an outrage upon the Constitution of his country, has the privilege of expatriation and exile, of leaving the dust of his fathers, and the consecrated scenes around which cluster all his earliest, tenderest, and holiest associations; the captive in the hands of a band of pirates, has the privilege of walking the plank, if he prefers that to lying in his blood upon the deck. The non-conformists, when they refused to submit to *imposed* forms and ceremonies, had the privilege of leaving their homes, with their wives and little ones, or even, if they preferred it, of going to jail, and rotting there. An inestimable privilege, truly, and one which, no doubt, ought to furnish ample consolation to all, who, after they have labored hard, and prayed long, for the prosperity of the Church of their choice, are at last driven out by those who felt nothing of the burden and heat of the day, but are willing to enter into other men's labors. “It must needs be that offences come, but wo unto that man by whom they come.” But it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of his little ones should perish. Let them look to it, who walk about in the house of God, and issue their commands, as if they were sovereign there. “He who scourged the money-changers out of the temple still lives.