

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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I. THE ATTRACTIONS OF POPERY.

DR. JOHN H. RICE, with the intuition of a great mind, warned Presbyterians against a renewed prevalence of popery in our Protestant land. This was when it was so insignificant among us as to be almost unnoticed. Many were surprised at his prophecy, and not a few mocked; but time has fulfilled it. Our leaders from 1830 to 1860 understood well the causes of this danger. They were diligent to inform and prepare the minds of their people against it. Hence General Assemblies and Synods appointed annual sermons upon popery, and our teachers did their best to arouse the minds of the people. Now, all this has mainly passed away, and we are relaxing our resistance against the dreaded foe just in proportion as he grows more formidable. It has become the fashion to condemn controversy and to affect the widest charity for this and all other foes of Christ and of souls. High Presbyterian authority even is quoted as saying, that henceforth our concern with Romanism should be chiefly irenic! The figures presented by the census of 1890 are construed in opposite ways. This gives the papists more than fourteen millions of adherents in the United States, where ninety years ago there were but a few thousands. Such Protestant journals as think it their interest to play sycophants to public opinion try to persuade us that these figures are very consoling; because, if Rome had kept all the natural increase of her immigrations the numbers would have been larger. But Rome points to them with insolent triumph as prognostics of an assured victory over Protestantism on this continent. Which will prove correct?

tionship here, is to attempt an ideal, that belongs only to the other side of life. And this effort to inaugurate *now* the final society is the fertile source of all sentimental radicalism, to which most surely the woman's movement belongs. Glorious as will be the ideal society when we shall have been redeemed from everything that belongs to the sexual relationship, to try to introduce that state of things in this present world means disorder, confusion, shame, loss, here and hereafter. The greatest glory of human life now is to fill out God's plan, in loving obedience to all his revealed will concerning it. This is the Bible conception of perfection of society in this present world.

Would that the old Southern view of woman's position might so prevail as to stay the incoming tide of womanism! And this will be the case just in so far as the Bible way of looking at human society is allowed to dominate our thinking in matters of both state and church. But to realize this, the sentimentalism of a godless humanitarianism, with its specious cries of Progress and Liberty, must be understood and resisted.

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ADDITIONAL FORMS.

LAST May the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern), in session at Macon, Ga., approved and recommended for use in our churches, Forms of Service for Marriages and Funerals. The use of them is, of course, optional. These forms had been prepared by a committee previously appointed by the Assembly, and they were approved and recommended in the same way as might be a set of parliamentary rules, or a hymn-book. The Assembly also approved, and sent down for adoption by the presbyteries, the revision of the "Directory for Worship," which contains forms of covenant for baptism of infants and adults, and for the admission of baptized persons to the communion of the Lord's Supper.

Up to the present, twenty-four presbyteries have voted affirmatively upon the revision, one negatively, and the remainder have postponed action until the spring meetings. The prospect, therefore, of the Revised Directory being adopted is good.

The committee of revision, of which the writer was a member, determined at the outset to be very conservative, and to make as few changes as possible, their main work being to adapt the Directory to the Book of Church Order.

In view of the favorable reception of the additional forms referred

to, it may not be inopportune to say a few words on the general subject of the use and misuse of forms in the worship of God. There is no church without fixed forms for worship, not only a fixed order or directory, but set forms of words. The difference between our Protestant churches is not that some have forms and others have none, but that some have many and others have few. Then, also, there is a difference in the forms themselves. The Presbyterian Churches of English-speaking countries are not called liturgical churches, because they use few forms in the public and direct worship of God in the sanctuary. The benediction is a set form. In the administration of the two sacraments we have forms which are compulsory under the law of the church, and under the command of Christ himself. In the most solemn and delicate function of the minister, the administration of "sealing ordinances," the Head of the church has made obligatory the use of set phrases and sentences. For baptism there is a plain command, and for the Lord's Supper there is what might be called a mandatory example.

Whether the church is to conclude from this that Christ assumed to himself alone the prerogative of fixing a form, or that under his example it may go on and provide more forms, is a question that may be raised.

A middle ground is probably the right one, that Christ alone has the authority to lay down a compulsory form, but that the church may adopt forms which shall be optional.

That this is the belief of the greater part of the church is manifest from the fact that its various branches have from time to time adopted additional forms. The adoption of an optional directory is certainly in the line of this action, for if the church may recommend a certain order, it may also recommend certain forms. This has been done in Presbyterian Churches to a far greater extent than many suppose. The adoption of a set of psalms and hymns, and the recommendation of them for use in the churches, is in the exercise of that liberty to prepare optional forms for worship which the church believes belongs to itself. Forms are forms, whether for use at each service, or given that selections may be made from them for the various services. Hundreds of our congregations have adopted for themselves one of these forms for praise, the doxology beginning "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and use it every Sabbath. It is as truly liturgical in principle to sing at every service the Long Metre Doxology, as it is to sing the "*Gloria Patri*," or "*Te Deum*." The

difference is in the quality, style, and association of the words used, and not in the principle itself that underlies their use. The "*Gloria*," or "*Te Deum*," would be considered very liturgical, because they are a part of the service of a thoroughly liturgical church, while the doxology is not so regarded, because it has no such associations, though it was written by an Episcopal bishop, and came to us from the Church of England.

A part of the worship of God, in public and private, is the instruction of the young people and adults in the doctrines of the Bible. In what might be called the use of doctrinal or didactic forms for teaching truth, the Presbyterian Church leads the world, as to the extent of its forms and the general use made of them. The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms are the most elaborate, thorough, logical, and scriptural forms for teaching truth for human edification and divine glory ever devised by man.

The General Assembly was wise in approving and recommending forms for funerals and marriages. The time had come to do it. Legislation is of little value except as an expression or crystallization of the public sentiment which those represented by the legislating body entertain. To have adopted forms for marriages and funerals fifty years ago would have been impossible, or if recommended they would have been used but little. The church was not ready for it. But now this legislation which gives the church optional forms for these two services is accepted by the great majority of our ministers and people. They have decided that funeral sermons or orations are inexpedient, and not to edification on most occasions. Our ministers, in the cities particularly, do not now usually preach sermons at funerals. The distinguished pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, of Richmond, Va., gave public notice to his own church, and also before the Synod of Virginia, in a sermon, that there should be no sermon nor oration at his obsequies. God grant it shall be a long time before that sad event occurs, but when it does, no doubt his wishes will be carried out.

For a long time our ministers have been using funeral services made up of Scripture passages, collated by themselves, or prepared and published by well known divines. The Rev. Archibald Hodge, D. D., recently deceased, prepared one of the most acceptable books of forms for funeral and other services.

At last the church has decided that forms for funerals are desirable and edifying, and that without curtailing the liberty of any man, it is well for the church to have a form of its own, carefully prepared, and

recommended for use by the ministers, containing not only the Scripture passages to be read, but also forms of prayer to be said, or used as models, by him who officiates. There can be little doubt but that this funeral service will come into general use in the course of time.

In the matter of marriages it has become evident long ago that the church needed a service of its own. Ministers were often requested to make their service short on a particular occasion, or to use the Episcopal form. How much better to have our own service, printed and bound up in our hymn-books, for all to use who wish to, and that the contracting parties and others concerned could know beforehand what is expected of them at the solemn scene.

The Revised Directory contains a form of covenant to be used in the baptism of infants, and a statement and form for the public admission of persons to the Lord's Supper. The great propriety of such forms will be manifest on a moment's reflection. Persons who are to answer certain important questions in taking vows upon themselves in one of the supreme moments of their lives, should certainly know beforehand what they will be called upon to assent to. It is but just, and they will feel far more the solemnity of the act if they have already meditated upon the vows they are about to assume. This is true both of the order for making a public profession and also for infant baptism. In the form for making a public profession there is a distinction drawn between those who are joining the church by baptism and the baptized children, members of the church by birthright, who are merely being admitted to the communion on a public profession of their faith. Presbyterians have fallen into a most un-Presbyterian use of words in speaking of our baptized children, a use that tends to do harm to parents and children alike. If they are members of the church by birth and baptism, why should we speak to them of "joining the church" when they come to years of discretion and appear to be born again? If we constantly speak of their "*joining the church,*" they and others will, of course, think they are *not* members, whereas one of the great distinctive and glorious doctrines of our church is that of "infant membership."

The form for public professions in the Revised Directory brings plainly forward the distinction between the baptized and the unbaptized who seek admission to the Lord's Supper. The use of this form, and the one for baptisms, will undoubtedly tend to rectify this serious mistake which we have made.

It is not improbable that we may also have some day a brief scrip-

tural and optional form for the administration of the Lord's Supper. So conservative a man as the distinguished and beloved Prof. T. E. Peck, D. D., of Union Seminary, Va., now translated, in a letter to the writer last winter stated that, in his opinion there was great need of a form for the Communion. If the church comes to feel its need of such a form, it will doubtless be prepared.

The Presbyterian Church has always been extremely conservative in the use of the liturgical element in the direct worship of the sanctuary, and there is little danger of its going very far in that direction. The Scottish church started out in 1561 with Knox's Book of Common Order, which was largely a translation of Calvin's liturgy. But the aggressions of the English, endeavoring to force Episcopacy upon the Scotch, the visible representative of which was the "Book of Common Prayer," caused the people north of the Tweed to give up their own simpler forms, and, turning with disgust from all printed forms, to adopt the Directory of Worship, in the middle of the seventeenth century, prepared by the Westminster Assembly.

The Reformed (Presbyterian) churches of the continent of Europe have always had brief liturgies for public worship as well as for the special purposes provided for by our optional forms, except, that for a long time after the Reformation there was no provision for funeral services.

The liturgies of these churches have grown but little, if any. They are still very brief, consisting, in the order for Sabbath services, of little more than the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the prayers, all of which are optional. In Calvin's old church, in Geneva, to-day, the service is conducted almost identically as when the great reformer filled the pulpit.

The decadence of spiritual power in the continental churches is due not to the small liturgical element in their services, but to other causes one of which, doubtless, has been the paralyzing influence of the union of church and state.

The use of many forms, excluding spontaneity of thought and expression, must produce more or less formalism, if the same words are used every Sabbath, and especially, also, if they are used in addresses to God, either said or sung; but the use of forms of doctrinal statement, and forms of covenant for admission into the church and for baptisms, will produce beneficial results, because they are intended mainly for instruction, and not for direct worship.

Forms of singing God's praise are necessary for reasons too obvious

to mention. We must have hymn-books, liturgies of praise, from which selections shall be made for each service. But forms for prayer to be used every Sabbath are very liable to become the instrument of lip service, and there is little probability of their ever being adopted to any extent by the Presbyterian Church. The only real worship is that which comes from the heart, and the use of the same set of forms at every service, must, in the end, obstruct rather than encourage that outpouring of the soul in penitence, love, and faith, which is most blessed for the worshipper, and most acceptable to God.

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THE BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE.

THIS conference was held in accordance with the action of the last General Assembly (see Minutes of 1893, page 29), namely: "5. That the Assembly renew the authority given last year to its Executive Committee, or representatives thereof, to confer with the Freedmen's Board, or its representatives, or any committee appointed for the purpose by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, at such a time and place as may be agreed upon by the parties to the conference, upon the following paper:

"Since the two churches are already practically agreed as to the things to be done in the work of evangelizing the negroes, to-wit, the thorough education of a godly ministry, the daily religious training of colored youth in denominational schools, and the constant presentation of the gospel directly to the people by pastors and evangelists, it is proposed: (1), To unite the work of the two churches in behalf of the negroes in an effort to build up an independent negro Presbyterian Church, or, failing to agree upon this, (2), To bring the work of the two churches for this cause into closer sympathy by practical coöperation in every way possible."

There was not much encouragement for the appointment of this committee. An effort was made in 1887 to accomplish the same object, in connection with several others, which proved entirely ineffectual. Committees were appointed by the Northern and Southern General Assemblies to confer on this subject. They met first in New York, in December, and then in Atlanta, in April following. They spent much time in deliberating on this matter, but could not come to any agreement.

These conferences developed a wide divergence of views and aims.