

In the second and third centuries of the Church, prior, and leading to the full development of the Church of Rome, similar puerilities, Episcopal lollipops and rarebits, were retailed, for the use of the faithful—Trifles, such as pet days—Christmas and Easter, were elevated in synodical discussion to an equal rank with the essential doctrines of salvation, until human rubbish had buried clean out of sight the pearl of great price.

At present, and for some time back the aspect of Protestant Christendom is very singular and ominous. We observe a restless desire of change everywhere, and innovations bud, blossom, and bear fruit in rapid succession. Now it is with respect to the posture of the body, and now with respect to a liturgy. At one time it manifests itself in a spasmodic unintelligible effort to suit the "spirit of the age." At another in a downright infidel attempt to overthrow the scriptures themselves. In all these, we do not hesitate to say, it is one and the same spirit of change which is at work, going where it can on all-fours, and where it cannot, lurking surreptitiously in the flowers of some thundering pulpit orator. From the chair of our own venerable Assembly, it has ventured to advertize its nostrums, as to speak more appropriately, to blow its upstart nose. From the pulpit of a Free Church it has recommended, as we lately read in the *Record*, a new drapery for the body spiritual of old orthodoxy, so as to make it look more respectable to pleasure-seeking Sabbath breakers. The next thing, will no doubt be the acting a spiritual drama. Why not? Has not Rome pandered to the inordinate thirst of her people for the theatrical, and Rome was not built in a day. And is it impossible that Protestants should ape the æsthetic customs of that Church. It is not only a possibility in some quarters, but an established fact. It is true that those quarters are few, and that the love of change in that direction is repudiated by the great body of our Church, and that of others, but unless the strong inherited attachment to pure and simple Presbyterianism, which obtains in Scotland, be roused to oppose this insidious invasion, it may become a source of gigantic evils. Freedom of discussion ought never to be in abeyance, and in our Church it is never discountenanced, but it evidently is an abuse of that privilege to employ it, as I said, about buttons, or, which is the same thing sitting, standing, or kneeling, in worship.

A change is no doubt, at times very advantageous to all institutions, but then, the necessity for it must be felt, and the reasons for it must be intelligible. What evils have arisen from standing during prayer? what from sitting during praise? what from the absence of a liturgy? If such accessories of devotion as are now being introduced had been the original ones, I would with equal confidence ask the same questions respecting them. I will for the present concede the same pro-

priety to the one set as to the other, for form are not essential to pure and undefiled religion whose seat is the heart. But reform must be; yes. But where is the superiority of the one over the other? True piety says use the modes stamped with the authority of centuries, which a regard to profound spirituality originated, and which scripture precepts authorise as clearly, at all events, as that that can be substituted in their place.

Of Dr. Bissett I shall just say that he abused the confidence reposed in him, and departed in his closing address from the usual course of his predecessors. Perhaps his intentions were good in advising an affluence in forms to the Church of England; but he betrayed either great ignorance, or an unjustifiable fear for the future of the Church of Scotland, when he recommended such course with the view of attaching to her communion the ranks of taste and culture. *Appropos* of this, it is right to observe that the Church in Scotland can surpass the Scottish Establishment in these very qualities, the existence of which his policy seems to ignore. The impression has gone abroad and found its way even into our *Record* through the ignorance of some correspondent, that she is deserted by the nobility. No such thing. A few have joined the Free Church, and a few who were all along Jacobites belong to the Scottish Episcopal Church.

The Duke of Argyll, Lords Belhaven, Bute, Selkirk, Breadalbane, Kinnaid, Mansfield, and Aberdeen, have never, to my own personal knowledge, swerved from their attachment to her. As I write from memory I will not hazard the names of other noblemen who answer her friends by princely donations, if not by actual membership. The names I have given furnish a sufficient answer to the taunt of plebeianism hurled at her by ignorant railers as well as a sufficient cause why the moderator's object was uncalled for. But the element of nobility here or there, is never for a moment to be exalted in a Church, and my reason for adverting to it is to refute aspersions and stigmatize, as is due, the policy of the moderator. To make anything else of it would be to aptly illustrate the French *furor* in the matter of buttons, ribbons and garters.

Dr. Bissett is but a unit, and fortunately has little or no influence. His own Presbyterianism virtually censured him, the other day for this impertinent attempt at reform.

Let him and all innovators attend better to parochial duties, labouring in season and out of season in their respective cures and they will have little time or inclination for agitation.

I cannot help remarking, in conclusion, that it is a singular fact, that in almost all the revolutions and changes which ever occurred in the Church, some restless spirits among the clergy have been the active agents. To such clearly may be traced all the schisms