

this "effectual means" may be rendered more powerful, that thus greater spiritual good may be realized. Our conviction is that, where the pulpit is strong, and the pure word of God is clearly and fervently ministered to the people, there is little or no disposition to call for "audible repetition" of a creed which was not written by the Apostles or enjoined by them for any such public use— a creed which, viewed in the light of the fulness of divine truth, is far from being free from imperfection.

Feeble, ill-prepared and dreary sermons do, of course, beget a desire among long-suffering hearers for a change of some sort, but what that should be is very obvious. Let it come in the sermon rather than under the general category of "Uniformity in Public Worship". We do not deny that there is something to be done in the direction of the meaning of this somewhat ominous caption; but the question is, how much?

Do defects and irregularities prevail to such an extent as to justify even the initiation of the movement which the committee represents? If so let the facts be collected and sifted that the need of ecclesiastical legislation may become apparent to all. We have 2,700 Churches and Missions stations in which this information may be gathered. Without this preliminary step it is both unwise and unsafe to act. Dogmatism in the work entrusted to the committee is to be as carefully avoided as in any department of theology. The wishes and theories of persons who pose as specialists are not to be allowed to take the place of facts or to be regarded as sufficient to settle the propriety of raising questions the agitation of which may do harm and no good though handled with the best intentions and the utmost prudence. There is danger, in those days, of giving prominence to the tithing of "mint and anise and cummin" to the neglect of the weightier matters of true worship; and it is the painful persuasion of many that we lack spiritual fervency and power rather than aesthetic forms and uniformity, and this is something which the deliberations of a Committee or the resolutions of an Assembly cannot supply.

In what manner and to what extent is uniformity to be insisted upon? The historic associations connected with the term "uniformity" are not such as Presbyterians contemplate with delight. Our fathers in the old land had more of that sort of thing pressed upon their attention than lovers of true progress and freedom can desire to see repeated. We know that nothing of the sort is now contemplated; and the spiritual liberties of the Lord's people are not to be encroached upon by any coercive measures. Still the beginning and the tendencies of things are the most essential in determining their final development. Hence thoughtful people are sure to ask, in view of the information published officially by Dr. Laing, are we