

requefter of the stage. We would set any sensible, God-fearing youth in competition with him, and show that, even as to present gladness, the theatre is a cheat and a lie. Once, on a Sabbath morning as the writer was going to church through the streets of a large city, he saw, flaunting gaudily on the walls, the stage placards of the preceding Saturday evening. In large, lying letters, they announced, "A Cure for the Heart-Ache." Avaunt, deceivers! Ye often inoculate your victims with the poison of that disease, but ye have no power to take it away. Can the company of rakes and courtizans minister consolation to a mind distressed? Will they parody the griefs that wring a human heart? Will they make sport of that disease that Jesus died to heal? When a sinner's heart is ailing, he must wend his steps to another place—he must seek the skill of another Physician! We have sometimes thought the matter of attending the theatre, and similar scenes of midnight merriment, might be profitably put in the form of a dilemma, thus:—

The unconverted (having other work before them) have no time to be there.

The converted (having other joys within them) have no inclination.—*Arnot, Laws from Heaven.*

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, AUGUST 22, 1866.

THE BAPTIST CONVENTION

of these Provinces commenced its Session on Saturday last, in St. John, N. B. We are unable to give any satisfactory detail in our present issue. Quite a number of delegates went over in the *Empress* on Saturday last from Halifax, and the Central and Eastern parts of the Province. That fine steamer affords excellent accommodation between Windsor and Annapolis and St. John. The proprietors deserve well of the religious community, by their readiness in taking delegates for one fare, to and from their annual gatherings.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

PRAYER.

THE examination of religious subjects we deem a duty incumbent on every human being; much more is it the province of the religious press occasionally to invite its readers to discuss the merits of our religious observances and ecclesiastical arrangements. No subject is too sacred for our earnest thought and sincere enquiry. It has occurred to us that we might profitably refer to some matters connected with our church practices, and give a little ventilation to the foundation on which they rest.

The relation existing between God and man is expressed by acts of worship, public and private. The public worship of Almighty God ordinarily consists of prayer and praise. Reading the word of God, and preaching or expounding its truths, are also generally considered essential parts of such devotional exercises. Believers in Christ pretty generally agree in these being the proper elements of christian worship, but they differ much as to the modes of engaging in them. Some bodies adopt a pompous ritual, as that appears to them the more suitable form of prayer; others hold, that, as we have no divinely prescribed formula, it cannot have been intended that we should approach God by the use of a prepared series of prayers, however ancient or beautiful. It has been contended that a form of prayer is a protection against erroneous views, and a security from extravagant sentiments. The history of churches which use them, however, does not, we think warrant such conclusion. We have occasional examples of prayer in both the Old and New Testaments, adapted to the necessities of the cases under which they were offered. None of these appear intended for general use under other circumstances. That commonly called the Lord's Prayer we regard as a comprehensive outline of prayer, and as a general direction given by our Lord to his disciples. The preface "After this manner, therefore pray ye," &c., indicates that object.

The church of Christ appears to be left to a large measure of liberty in applying the principles of the gospel in these respects, to meet her varying circumstances, and to provide for her own peculiar necessities in the different periods of her history. No form of prayer could appropriately supply her demands under the various changes experienced by her members. The intensity of earnest devotion, we believe, will not be bound by the restraints of any formula, however well arranged or evangelical in its character.

We are not aware that there is any present necessity for a defence of the practice of extemporary prayer. Not only is it not attacked by the advocates of the more formal mode, but evangelical christians, who use forms of prayer in their more public assemblies, cast them aside on occasions when they are free to use their own discretion in worship. There is perhaps more need of seeking to draw attention to prayer itself. Public worship is, we believe in the estimation of many, made too much dependent on preaching. Spiritual worship is supplanted, and by many people entirely lost sight of in the desire to hear a favourite preacher. Instead of the worshippers being absorbed in the act of drawing nigh to God, they are only interested in what the minister shall say as a preacher. What is remembered of the service is rather an intellectual effort than a spiritual exercise, and the experience of blessings received while waiting upon God. One result of this habit is, that meetings for social prayer are often neglected, and regarded as less acts of public worship than the larger gatherings where a discourse is delivered by the minister. Far be it from us to undervalue the presence of the minister in assemblies of the people of God; our object is to induce men generally, and professing christians in particular, to set a higher estimate on the essentially devotional parts of worship by whomsoever conducted. If we were to do this, there would be less of a banking after novelty, and the running after a man who had by his acts of oratory secured a temporary popularity. When worship is regarded as a means of grace ordained of God, and not merely the performance of a duty enjoined, the exercises of prayer and praise will be held in higher estimation; and preaching will be valued as an auxiliary to these, instead of being considered an essential element of public worship.

We shall take an early occasion of noticing the subject of praise in our public assemblies.

In the present day the great difficulty with many men in the matter of salvation—life and death—is the simplicity of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some great work is, as of old, sought to be done. Obedience to plain commands seems to be too commonplace a thing for God to demand of His creatures. Hence the effort to substitute ordinances and to give them undue force, rather than accept them as simple tests of character and evidences of submission to authority. A late number of the *Sunday Magazine* contains a beautiful illustration of this principle of the gospel, by using the striking fact of our Lord healing the man with a withered hand for this purpose:

"It is a Sabbath morning; and its doors thrown open as the hour of worship approaches, the synagogue begins to fill. Among those who enter, is a man with a withered hand; and however others come, there is haste in his step, and high expectation seated on his brow. Blessed day, now is his chance to be healed. Jesus is in the neighborhood, and is sure to be at worship. Early there, likely the first, this crippled man, heeding nothing else, looking at none, talking with none, keeps his eye on the door. Keenly observing all who enter, and often, as it opens and Christ appears not, disappointed. At length the feet of a group are heard; again the door opens; and the color that flushes his face tells that the person has now come whom he has come to meet. Nor is this all he can do, and does. Observing where Jesus, attended by his disciples, sits, he rises, and elbowing the crowd aside without regard to their challenge or murmurs, pushes on to place himself before the Saviour, right in his eye. All this he can do, and does, and more.

Ordinarily concealing a deformity he was ashamed of, he now drops his robe, and exposing the poor unsightly hand in the hope that it may catch Christ's eye and move his pity, sits with looks fixed imploringly on our Lord. There was no need for him to speak. His eager looks and the poor, bared, withered hand were touching prayers. Nor did these prayers wait long for an answer. The eye that never saw misery but to pity it, is at length turned on him; and Jesus says, Stretch out thine hand! Strange command to others, perhaps also to himself, as bidding him do the very thing he had no power to do. Still he tries it. Again doing what he can, he makes an effort, and, Glory to God! bursting from his lips, succeeds. Virtue goes out of Christ. The shrunken hand instantly acquires a healthy color, and swells into its right proportions. In his joy the man shuts and opens it; moves the pliant fingers, and holds the miracle aloft to the gaze of a crowd, dumb with astonishment. Give him a harp, and with that hand he would sweep its strings to the praise of Jesus. Pattern to men who have souls to be saved, and hearts to cure, he did what he could, using all means within his power to obtain the blessing. And did people with equal eagerness, repair to the church on Sabbath, as he to the synagogue, to meet Jesus Christ, and with the same earnestness and the same faith, lay out their sins and soul's sorrows before him, our Sabbaths would witness greater work than this. He who healed that withered hand healing withered hearts, and whether they required to be saved or sanctified, giving power to them that have no might."

ANOTHER TESTIMONY.—At a recent meeting held in London, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, (Mr. Spurgeon's) for the purpose of taking leave of two missionaries on their departure for India, Mr. Trestrail was requested to give the meeting some information respecting the brethren about to go out to India.

Mr. Trestrail said in reference to Mr. Bion, that he "went out to India in 1846, under the Bale Mission Society in Bale, where he resided and studied for four years in the Mission College, of which the principal was, at that time, Dr. Hoffmann, now chaplain to the King of Prussia. Mr. Bion laboured four years in Bengal before he joined the Baptist Missionary Society, and some eight months without any society. The reasons which induced Mr. Bion to change his sentiments on the baptismal question were these: Mr. Bion had had some doubts in his mind as to baptism before he entered the college, and those doubts were revived rather powerfully when one day Dr. Hoffmann in one of his lectures on Dogmatics said, that "for 150 years no trace of infant baptism could be found, but that it was an important improvement upon the apostolic practice." And again, in another lecture on Pastoral Theology, he said that if he were to go to a hot climate as a missionary, he would certainly return to the primitive mode of immersion. The result was that when Mr. Bion began to baptize his own converts, before a year had passed in Dacca, and had taught them that baptism meant immersion and that infant baptism could not be found in Scripture, but that it was now prevalent in the churches, he felt that he had placed himself in great difficulties, from which he could only be released by taking a decisive step. From a letter from Mr. Bion, in which these facts were stated, it appeared that Mr. Bion and his friend Mr. Supper, who held strong Pædobaptist views, argued the point on successive evenings, until the final result was the baptism by immersion of both parties. A Baptist Church was afterwards formed, the members of which now number 60 persons."

The Upper Canada School Bill.

Much difficulty has arisen in the Canadian legislature, from efforts made by certain parties to secure a law for Upper Canada to provide for Roman Catholics separate Schools, where hitherto the schools have been Common to all, and free from denominational cast. The *Toronto Globe* gives the following explanation of the character of the measure:

"The Bill proceeds upon the principle of giving to the Romish hierarchy in Upper Canada everything that it is proposed to give to the people who support dissentient Schools in Lower Canada. The difference between the cases is utterly ignored, and the common schools of Upper Canada, which are thoroughly unsectarian, are to be placed on the same footing as the schools of Lower Canada, which are avowedly sectarian. Our schools which are so constituted as to serve all creeds, are to be regarded in the same light as the Lower Canada schools, which are so constituted as to serve only one particular creed. In Upper Canada, Roman Catholic teachers and scholars have the same advantages in the common schools as others; but, in Lower Canada, the Roman Catholics have the exclusive use of the schools, and yet the minority in Upper Canada is to have as great and greater privileges than in Lower Canada. We, who invite all to the common schools, and treat all alike, get no more consideration than the Lower Canada majority who monopolize the schools, and force the majority to seek education elsewhere.

Besides asking new concessions as regards the collection of their taxes—besides claiming that the municipal officers of Upper Canada shall be made the servants of Roman Catholic School Boards—besides demanding that the Separate Schools shall have a share of the taxes paid by incorporated companies, no matter what the wishes of the stockholders—the new Bill provides that the hierarchy shall have absolute control over the Separate Schools of Upper Canada.

A large majority of the Roman Catholics of Upper Canada sustain the Common Schools. There are vastly more Roman Catholic children attending Common Schools than attend Separate Schools. Hundreds of Roman Catholics are teachers in the Common Schools. Yet, in claiming public money for the Normal School and for superior education, the Bishops insist that every Romanist in the Province shall be counted in determining their share. No matter though the majority of Roman Catholics refuse to support Separate Schools—no matter though they actually receive the benefit of money paid to the public non-sectarian schools—the hierarchy will have them represented in the distribution of public money to Romanist superior schools. They may belong to the side of the non-sectarian schools, but the hierarchy insists that they shall be counted on its side.

We are glad to see that this Bill is resisted at every step. The outrage must be prevented, if the rules of Parliament afford the means. Upper Canada is in no humour to submit to such a scandalous imposition, just when she is on the eye of obtaining the control of her own affairs. It is perfectly understood that this measure can never become law, unless the Lower Canada majority forces it upon Upper Canada, and the

people of this Province will expect their representatives to use every possible means to defeat the promoters of such an outrage.

Sir S. MORRISON Peto.—It will be remembered that the recent financial pressure in England affected seriously the house of Peto, Betts & Co. We find in one of our exchanges the following statement respecting the position of that extensive firm:

Their suspension did not arise from any cause dishonourable to Mr. Peto or his partners; but only from the unexpected financial derangement acting upon their very extensive business operations.

At a late meeting of the creditors, it was shown that while the total liabilities of the company amounted to more than a million pounds, those which were unsecured only amounted to £438,375, and that their assets, after deducting losses by depreciation of securities, amounted to £1,562,064; leaving a clear balance in their favor of £1,123,689, or \$5,438,654. The firm intend not only to pay all their debts, but to add interest on the suspended payments. At the time of their suspension, they had offers of assistance from personal friends to the amount of two and a half millions of dollars; but they preferred not to run any risk of embarrassing their friends. The assembled creditors passed by acclamation a vote of sympathy and confidence in the firm.

Sir S. M. Peto has offered to resign his seat as member of Parliament for Bristol, but his constituents declined to accept it; and passed resolutions expressing their sympathy, and the hope that Mr. Peto would long continue to give them his valuable services.

SONS OF TEMPERANCE IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE.—Since the brief paragraph respecting the formation of a Grand Division of the Sons of Temperance in New South Wales appeared in our columns, we have received the *Christian Pleader* of May 1866, published at Sydney with a somewhat fuller account of the Order as it exists in that Southern land.

The order of "Sons of Temperance" was first introduced into the colony by William Hobbs, Esq., M. D., Newtown, who being for many years a member of the Grand Division of Sons of Temperance, Nova Scotia, British North America, possesses a thorough knowledge of every practical detail and feature embraced in its institution, and has had an opportunity of witnessing the several benefits resulting from its establishment. By way of information, we may mention that Divisions of the order are but teetotal societies compacted and consolidated after the style of Freemasonry. The resemblance to Freemasonry consists in the adoption of certain symbols, badges, and passwords, and the creation of a benefit fund available for members in case of sickness or death. The order has greatly increased since its first establishment in May, 1864.

The Grand Division of New South Wales, composed of the Patriarchs and Past-Patriarchs of subordinate divisions, was organized 30th November, 1865.

SUBORDINATE DIVISIONS.—No. 1, *Day Spring Division*—Organized May, 1864. Number of members 180.

No. 2, *Rose of Australia Division*—Organized July 19th 1864. Number of members 142.

No. 3, *Good Samaritan, or Newtown Division*—Organized 14th September, 1864. Number of members 100.

No. 4, *Rising Sun, or Temple Division*—Organized September 20th, 1864. Number of members, 24.

MURDOCK'S HISTORY OF NOVA SCOTIA No. 18 has appeared, bringing the narrative down to the present century. 1805 is the date of the last chapter. The stirring times of Sir John Wentworth are brought forth more in detail than many of the earlier periods.

We understand that it is the intention of Mr. Murdock to complete his history in six more numbers. They will then make two very respectable volumes, creditable alike to the author and publisher.

NEWS SUMMARY.

Our Telegraphic dates by Atlantic Cable bring European intelligence to the middle of the past week. It is highly satisfactory to learn that the work of pacification is going on favourably, and that Preliminaries of Peace between Prussia and Austria have been duly adjusted and signed. The details are not yet defined. It is only known that the result will add largely to the territories and power of Prussia. The negotiations between Italy and Austria for the cession of Venetia, appear also to be progressing favourably. The overwhelming success of Prussia has operated most favourably for her Italian ally, who has been very considerably, though not materially the loser, in her two or three conflicts with the Austrians, both by land and sea. There is a pretty strong probability that the Papal dominions will ere long be absorbed in the kingdom of Italy. Austria, the chief reli-