

vice," instead of constituting the service itself. Prayers are curtailed, even omitted, that more room may be given to the discourse. Or perhaps hymns are introduced, rather as a variety than to utter the irrepressible spirit of gratitude and of holy joy. Speaker wants rest, auditors want a change of posture; so, in a parenthesis, the meeting praises God. Want of punctuality in a congregation is sometimes covered by a preliminary hymn. During prayer, reading, exhortation, all late-comers would pause reverently at the door, but while the worshippers are singing, the aisles are open. Nay, it has been known that, as if to economize time, a hymn has been sung during the collection and the strains of music have found a strange accompaniment in the sound of money dropping into the plate. Or worse still, the final hymn has been taken as the signal for departure; and the congregation, riveted in attention till the preacher's Amen, or the last speaker's peroration, have been completely broken up during the doxology.

Such things, it may be, are but trifles in themselves; yet they indicate a tendency to undervalue that which is in fact the highest social exercise of our religion. Nothing in which we can be engaged is so grand and solemn as prayer and praise. Of these exercises we must think right before we can conduct them with all fitting solemnity. And to whatever other religious engagements the "free spirit" of the Gospel may call us, we shall certainly do well to arrange them all in harmony with the prophetic word uttered in Old Testament times to find its highest fulfilment in the New, "My house shall be called the house of prayer for all people."

We would not undervalue preaching; nor would we conceal the fact that there are times and seasons when the sermon is felt to be the most appropriate part of the service, indeed, for the sake of which the whole exists and is arranged. In reference to such occasions, we would ask whether our old Nonconformist habit of distinguishing between "lecture services" as they were called, and the meeting of the congregation chiefly for worship, might not advantageously be resumed. When the lecture was held, the audience met avowedly to hear; the prayer and praise were brief, and chiefly confined to invocation. At other times, the worship was the chief thing, the sermon or exposition being its accompaniment. But in the lecture, the paramount object was to speak, and to hear what God had spoken. Neither object was sacrificed to the other, and by the alternate emphasis given to both, the worship and the preaching had alike their due regard.

III.

A further point that seems worthy of attention is that the true posture of the spirit before God should be anxiously maintained. Our worship should be an offering to Him, direct and earnest; and as free as possible from side glances, if the expression may be allowed, at the worshippers with a view indirectly to their edification.

Here it is that we are called to contemplate the minister's hardest task and deepest responsibility. Surely, there is no part of pastoral service half so solemn as this speaking to God on behalf of the congregation. To speak or preach effectually to men is comparatively easy. For, out of the stores of the minister's own knowledge, or from the fulness of his own heart, he communicates to them, while they receive, ponder, reject what they will. But when he stands before them to plead with God, his whole mental attitude is changed. He speaks for them now, not to them: nay, in a sense yet higher, he speaks with them. Now must he strive to enter into the mystery of each suppliant heart, expressing in meet phrase the common need, yet not forgetting the individual want; giving voice to unspoken secrets of agonizing desire, disentangling by the subtle analysis of sympathy the often confused mass of thoughts and emotions which throng the minds before him, and with strong, brotherly hand uplifting every spirit towards God. The task in its fulness is impossible; for how can one pray aright the fitting prayer of all? Yet must each faithful pastor attempt it whenever he leads his people to the throne of grace. I do not wonder that the burden is often felt to be almost crushing, and that the minister, conscious how often his spirit is fettered within the limits of self when its sympathies should be most expansive, how easy it is to strike a wrong chord of feeling, and so to mar all the worship, and at best how imperfect is his insight into the true needs of those for whom he is called to speak with God, should sometimes ask whether a form of prayer would not in some measure help him; not indeed to supersede, but to supplement, free prayer, and to lighten the care of one who knows that the whole assembly largely depends for its devotion upon the tone and fervor of his own mind, and the propriety of his own expression. Now, there is undoubtedly room for an honest difference of opinion here; and something may be conceded to those who are ready to ask for a modified liturgy. Thus, it cannot be denied that the expression of one mind must be in a certain sense a form to others, and to some hearers it may be easier to pray devoutly in the familiar words of a formulery than in language that he for the first time hears from the minister. It is not always true, at least, that familiarity with the words of devotion is a hindrance to the devotional spirit. Who, for example, does not sing a favorite hymn to a favorite tune not with less, but with greater heartiness than any novelty could possibly have excited? And have we not all observed how the Lord's Prayer, when solemnly and appropriately employed in Christian worship, will at once excite and express the highest devoutness of the congregation? We may even allow the further question, whether it be well that the prayers of a congregation should be dependent upon the mood of their minister? He

may be cold and languid, his heart oppressed; the power of language may fail him; he cannot strike to-day the key of becoming gratitude or lofty praise; must therefore the devotions of the whole congregation be marred? Again, our wants in many respects remain from time to time the same; and it may be hard to show why they should not be expressed in the same words. It is possible to be very formal without a form, and as possible to be truly spiritual with a form. All this we fully admit; and yet the instinct, the ineradicable habit, the practical wisdom, or the spiritual feeling of our congregations seems to have settled the matter decisively. The main question we must remember is, what upon the whole will best minister to the devoutness of the congregation should help us to decide. Public prayer, we should remember, is intended not only to express, but to stimulate the devotional earnestness of those who unite in it; and there can be little doubt among us that the most effective stimulus is furnished by the freshness, the spontaneity, and the variety of free prayer. It is suggestively remarked by Mr. Dale, of Birmingham, that the call for a liturgy, so far as it exists among us, is not from the people but from ministers. With every drawback, and notwithstanding every difficulty, our assemblies would testify that they draw nearest to God when uplifted by the pastor's own prayer; and the minister who most frankly and trustingly casts himself upon the aid of the Holy Ghost, finds in that help, even with occasional weakness and failure, an inspiration which he would seek in vain in connection with the best of human forms. Better to halt sometimes, than permanently to barter our strength for crutches.

The responsibility thus remains, and must remain, with the minister. Of the spirit in which he should discharge it, this is scarcely the place to speak. Only let him beware of the temptation of engaging in something lower than worship; as, for example, in the choice of hymns—a matter of main importance in the service. Many so-called hymns are meditations, self-centred; others are vows, fragments of personal biography, entirely inappropriate to the ordinary congregation; while others again are dogmatic statements, definitions of belief, true and important, but not worship; while a large class again consists of exhortations and appeals, more like passages of sermons in rhyme—I will not say in poetry—than psalms or spiritual songs. Now, it might be unwise to insist that every hymn shall be a direct address to God in Christ; or, as the heathen said of Christians long ago, and, as I trust may be said of the churches to the end of time, to Christ as God: there is surely such a thing as indirect praise, and the canon which some have laid down in this matter would exclude the 103rd Psalm; but a hymn without worship in it, however earnest its feeling or correct its theology should never be selected to express the homage of a congregation to God.

But it is in prayer that the tendency is often most observable to pass into exhortation. Some prayers indeed are but homilies, thinly disguised by a change of person and of mood. Apparently aimed at heaven, their true intention is to rebound to earth. The assembly is not one of worshippers but of hearers; and half unconsciously they assume the hearers' attitude. Hence in part that wonderful custom of ours, the custom of sitting down to pray. The posture of the body only too accurately symbolizes the posture of the mind. True, the habit may be otherwise explained; as by the weariness and distraction of thought occasioned by long standing, or by the inadequate space provided in our places of worship for those who fain would kneel; and to some extent these reasons are valid. Yet, if the incongruity were very strongly felt, the reasons would be soon removed. Prayers would be made shorter to prevent the weariness. New places of worship would be planned for the convenience of a kneeling congregation. As it is, it is probable that the custom will continue till prayers become less like sermons, and the worshippers are so manifestly brought into the presence of God that they must fall down on their knees before Him, or stand up to utter forth His praise.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By REV CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER IX.

SECOND RESIDENCE IN AMHERST.

(No. 5.)

Towards the close of the year 1828 a letter from Bro. William Chipman brought me the pleasing intelligence of an extensive revival of religion in Western Cornwallis, Aylesford, Nicolaus, and adjacent places. He stated that some of the persons recently baptized in the place first named had referred to my labors, some ten or twelve years before, as the means of leading them to the Saviour. Such cases shew that, though a preacher ought to desire that the effects of his labors should become manifest immediately, yet delays should not dishearten him. "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

In the early part of 1829 I performed an extensive tour in New Brunswick on behalf of the Baptist Education Society. As is very common in such cases, some persons whose means

were quite limited responded to the call with alacrity, while others in good circumstances declined to give any thing. Indeed some of our people were unhappily opposed to the undertaking altogether. They appeared to labor under the misapprehension, that we proposed to make ministers by human learning. I endeavored to show them, doubtless in some instances with success—that it was our intention to aid men who might be justly regarded as called of God to the ministry, in acquiring such knowledge as was adapted to be useful to them in their important work, especially by enabling them to understand the Scriptures more fully and correctly, and so to become "workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;" and also to further the grand interests of education.

It may perhaps be useful to others for me to record an error committed by me while on this tour. As the roads were in a bad state, the beast which I rode on fell nearly down, and hurt my back. The hurt, however, did not seem to be so serious as to require any particular attention. The night following on retiring to bed—not to rest—when I had extinguished my light, without the means of reviving it, I found myself in cold sheets, with very little clothing over me. Being in a remote chamber, and unable to make my friends hear me, by a moderate call, or to find my way to them, after suffering a long time I fell asleep. When I awoke my back was in very great pain. My indiscretion in not previously examining the bed, undoubtedly subjected me, not only to a dismal night of suffering, but also to a long-continued physical infirmity and affliction. Painful experience taught me an important lesson. On a subsequent occasion when I perceived the bed-clothes to be damp, I arose and had them dried; and probably by this means escaped serious illness.

On the 30th day of May, precisely two years after I commenced the study of French, I completed the perusal of Ostevold's Version of the whole Bible in that language. The texts were generally noted, and both attentively compared with the original Hebrew of the Old Testament, and the Greek of the New. By this profitable exercise a large number of texts were critically examined, and, in many instances, their exact import was more satisfactorily ascertained by me than it formerly had been. It was pleasing to observe the general agreement of these Versions, especially on all points relating to either doctrine or duty, wherein no material difference was observable. In many instances the diversity is very slight, relating only to some circumstance, the clearness of expression, supplemental word or clause, &c. It is, however, evidently desirable to know the exact meaning of every sentence in the Bible. To this the careful comparisons of different translations with the originals is highly conducive.

On the 25th day of April, while going to Sackville in the discharge of ministerial duty, in crossing the Great Marsh, by reason of an unusual fresher I got very wet. The mistress of the house at which I first arrived evinced much concern for my health, and urgently pressed me to take some spirits, as the only means of preserving it. I had no real confidence in the remedy proposed, but yielded to the importunity. This was the last time—more than 37 years ago—that I ever tasted ardent spirits. Not long after this a copy of the "Journal of Humanity," the first Temperance Paper, published at Andover by the American Temperance Society, came to my address. As soon as the plan proposed, namely, that of forming societies in which temperate persons would pledge themselves to abstain in order to reclaim the intemperate, and to preserve others from the snare of intemperance, was distinctly presented to me, it commended itself to any judgment, as adapted to effect much good. Though probably there was not then a person on the North side of the Bay of Fundy that had advocated such a measure, I immediately commenced preaching Temperance in this new aspect, and recommending the formation of Temperance Societies. After I had done so on a Sabbath in Sackville, a pious woman asked, "Where do you think that you can find a person that will join such a society?" It was not in my power to name one. On my applying to a minister to join me in the undertaking, he replied, that he would be glad to see such a thing carried into effect; but he did not know that it would be consistent with the discipline of his Church to join such a society. The *Custos* approved of the measure, but declined to unite in it. Some of the members of the Church under my care in Amherst thought it would be a good thing, if successful; but feared it would prove a failure. Certain friends became much displeased, some ridiculed, while others maligned. The evils of intemperance, however, appeared to me

so great, and its prevalence so alarming, that neither apathy nor opposition could deter me from putting forth earnest efforts for its suppression.

One of these measures was the publishing of a communication in our Magazine. While engaged in preparing this, not knowing the views of my venerated Brother Manning on the subject, I feared he would regard this undertaking as chimerical; but was cheered and encouraged by the receipt of a letter from him, in which he expressed a deep interest in the matter, informed me of his own efforts, and advised me to write and publish on the subject. An animated letter was also received from my valued brother William Chipman, who early took an active part in this good work. In my communication on "Intemperance," (*Mis. Mag.*, Oct., 1829, p. 361.) were noticed, as effects of it, *poverty, disgrace, disease, loss of reason, remorse, fear, and the loss of the soul.* Among the causes were mentioned *bad maxims and bad habits*; and the remedy prescribed was *entire abstinence.* It closed with these words:—"Dear reader, do not treat the subject with levity: it is of a very serious nature. Immediate, vigorous, and self-denying efforts are required. Do not, therefore, dismiss this well-meant advice with a mere remark by way of censure, or of approbation. *Entire abstinence* would be no cross to you, your refusal to embrace and practise it, and so, by your example and influence, to aid the cause of humanity, is utterly inexcusable: if it would be a cross, it is the more imperatively necessary. May God incline your heart to the way of wisdom!"

For the Christian Messenger.

DEAR BROTHER,—

You have lately favored your readers with pretty extensive correspondence respecting the position and duties of the ministry; leaving, perhaps, little more to be said. There is however one point concerning which I am anxious to hear more distinctly the opinion of some of your interested contributors.

So far as I can discover, your correspondents are all agreed that if a minister is plainly called to occupy a field *incapable* of maintaining him, it may become his duty to seek out a support by his own efforts. But this is the point to which I would direct attention:

Suppose a minister to be laboring where his people are fully able to sustain him, in case of persistent refusal or neglect, what is his manifest duty? Is it to engage in some other employment "to supply [their] lack of service," or should he not regard this as one of the plainest indications that he is no longer called to labor there? And since his services are evidently not required, but are actually injurious, as well to the people as himself, and as there is plenty of room in the Gospel field for the full exercise of all the powers of faithful men, ought he not from every consideration, promptly to seek work elsewhere? And if he must needs support himself would it not be better for all concerned that it be done in circumstances which render the necessity evident to every one?

THEA.

For the Christian Messenger.

"A Young Pastor."

Mr. Editor,—

Protracted controversies between brethren usually do more harm than good. I readily answered the inquiries of your anonymous correspondent; (*C. M.* Oct. 24.) but it does not seem to me expedient for us to enter into debate. A few explanatory words may suffice.

The question between us (*C. M.*, Nov. 14.) is not, whether discipline is not sufficient, when prudently and promptly exercised, for the preservation of order in a Church; whether the dissolution of a Church is not desirable; nor whether it has not sometimes been effected imprudently; but it is simply this:—May not a case occur in which it is allowable and expedient for a Church in a scattered, divided, and disorderly state, by mutual agreement of its numbers to be reorganized? When this is deliberately and cautiously done, in order to preserve what union remains, and to prevent the extinction of the Church, can it be justly regarded as an "attempt to destroy Christ's body."

The separating of husband and wife, which is expressly forbidden, while this is not, is altogether a different thing. And yet a case does sometimes occur in which even the marriage union may be dissolved. (*Matth. xix. 6, 9.*)

In the case supposed by me of a large building just about to fall and be utterly ruined, it was not represented as "shattered in pieces by one fell blow," but as taken down with care, and all the sound materials thus preserved for the construction of a more substantial building.