

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 4—No. 15.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1875.

[Whole No. 171

Contributors and Correspondents.

LIVING PRAYER-MEETINGS.

One of the difficult problems of the day, constantly coming up in our conferences upon the State of Religion, is, how to make the prayer meeting interesting and attractive. The first thing is to find the source of

THE EVIL—FORMALISM.

To this almost all the trouble may be traced, whatever prominence may be given to interior defects and outside hindrances. Hence, a cure must be sought which will strike at the root of this evil. Without that, to prescribe short prayers with frequent singing, etc., will avail no more than to tell the despondent not to have such sighs and draw such long breaths and speak so gloomily, but to breathe and speak briskly and cheerfully like healthy people. Relief for such can only be got by better health of body and mind. For our lifeless prayer-meetings we must have as

THE CURE—(1) REALITY.

Such assemblies cannot but be interesting to Christian people when there is brought before them vividly the solemn and momentous truth—hard to realize, yet of the utmost importance distinctly to grasp—that they are gathered in the audience chamber of the King of kings, who sits upon a throne of Grace, delighting to fulfil every promise He has given to His people's encouragement, and every request in harmony with these: in short, only waiting that

(2) SINCERITY

which, with faith, forms the very essence of true prayer. Every earnest observer knows how the life of a prayer meeting is repressed by the stream of formal phrases, for which a better term could not be found than Christ's—"vain repetitions"—which flow from the lips of some persons every time they take part, but who can tell how grieving they must be to Him who desires "truth in the inward part?" Must they be silenced? No, but instructed not to offer one petition which does not come from the heart, as all else is a mockery to the Most High, and then left to the same freedom as others to take part of their own accord when the meeting is thrown open, as it surely should be for a part of the time, if these evils are to be successfully counteracted. Another indispensable element in the course is

(3) CONSISTENCY.

This is a necessary consequence of sincerity, yet a most important addition to it often lost sight of. Let it be kept in view that if we truly desire the things we ask, our conduct will be in harmony with our prayers. The sad want of this is, I am impressed, while it lasts, an insurmountable moral barrier to life and interest in our prayer-meetings. To every honest nature there is a feeling that while the individual and congregational life and efforts do not correspond with the language so freely used at such gatherings, they are not only unprofitable, but a mockery from which nature and grace alike revolt. Every true heart owns the righteousness of the Psalmist's statement, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer." If the iniquity be insensibility to the danger of the unsaved around us, or unbelief as to the possibility of their being now saved, or indolence too great for the exertion instrumentally required, or selfishness too great for the self-denial without which "this kind goeth not out," or whatever it be if *unconfessed*, or at any rate *unforsaken*, can it be wondered if our meetings are scenes of lifeless formalism and weariness?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

Might not occasional conferences be held in our congregations for the earnest and candid consideration of just such matters as these, for encouraging one another, and for committing ourselves to each other and to God for greater zeal in work as well as boldness and perseverance in prayer? Might not definite subjects for special prayer be more frequently presented, not only by individuals, but jointly after such united conference, with the distinct understanding that all uniting would consider themselves pledged to earnest consistent effort for the object prayed for. With such objects in view as the ingathering of the young to Christ, the conversion of adult and aged sinners, the restoration of backsliders, the reformation of drunkards, the revival of religion at home, and spread of the truth abroad, the removal of special local hindrances, were treated in this way, can we doubt that the result would soon be evident in the production of new life and interest. What hinders such efforts amongst us? Let each one concerned in the matter, and still more those whom it does not trouble, go to his or her

CLOSELY,

and inquire—for after all, it is there that the remedy must first be applied. "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord." Let us "prove Him herewith, if he will not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive." W. M. R.

COMING EVENTS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—All writers on prophecy agree we are approaching a period of convulsion, the last and the greatest this world has seen; and the condition of Europe singularly corroborates the expectations of these writers. The aspect of affairs is sufficiently alarming to cause the most thoughtful anxiety on the part of those who wish well to the world, and pray, "Let Thy kingdom come." France is arming, Prussia is arming, Austria is holding herself ready, Spain is in convulsion, and to all appearance going back to the arms of Popery. And last, but not least, Russia is vexing her subjects by a rigorous conscription; and Britain is building iron clads and forging cannon the like of which the world has not seen. All these dreadful notes of preparation are soon and heard on every hand. Nor is the spiritual world any quieter than the outward. Cardinal Manning spoke truly when he said that the Church of Rome was entering on a struggle such as had not been for three hundred years. Popery and her younger sister Ritualism are busy and active—and making advances where they have not done before. The Mystery of Iniquity is working with a vigour and earnestness which it has not manifested for many years before. Thus the Book of Prophecy and the events of Providence concur in marking this closing quarter of the nineteenth century as the scene of the last and greatest struggle between truth and error, light and darkness, the Lord Jesus Christ and Satan. We know the result.

Some interpreters of Revelation thought that Popery would be destroyed about the year 1365. It was a mistake, as we all see. Bad as it was, it had not reached its culmination. The doctrine of infallibility floated about in the Church of Rome without a fixed place. Some Roman Catholics did not believe it at all; others thought it resided in a General Council; others again that it was only in the Pope and a General Council that it was to be found. But now it has been authoritatively declared that the Pope himself is infallible. But what is it to be infallible? Is it not to usurp the attributes of God? To be infallible is to be omniscient, for only an omniscient being can be infallible. It is true the sacred writers—inspired by the Holy Ghost—were kept from error in that particular work given them to do. But the Pope, as Pope, claims infallibility. He has already seated himself in the temple of God, and been worshipped as God. Now he claims to exercise divine attributes. We mistake much if this is not the culminating point of that wickedness which precedes judgment. And this is another sign of the times.

Again, the city is being divided into three parts, that is, the nations over which the Pope specially holds spiritual sway are being gradually diminished to three—Austria, France, and Spain or Italy. We say Spain, for under Alfonso that nation is returning to its subservience to the Pope. Italy, on the other hand, is fast losing all fear of, and reverence for the Pope. Her King is excommunicated, and on the other hand, he has possessed himself of the Pope's possessions, thus depriving the latter of his temporal crown. But more, Italy is fast becoming Protestant. The Bible is there read and preached. The old church of the Waldenses is growing and sending forth her shoots. That *lux in tenebris*, light in darkness, is shining in brightness now, and in the stronghold of Popery, in Rome itself, is holding out the lamp of life. Therefore we think that Italy will be found, not one of the parts into which the city is divided, but that France, Spain, and Austria are the three divisions. The ten kingdoms there are reduced to three, and this is another sign of the approaching doom of the Papacy. These three kingdoms are the only ones which profess any formal allegiance to the Pope, or with which he has anything like an alliance.

Another thing betokening that the end is approaching, is the diffusion of the gospel. The word must be preached unto all nations, and then shall the end come. This has been in great measure accomplished, that the idolatry of Judaea is tottering to its fall. And Africa is being penetrated by the gospel. China also, that great nation, is opening its heart to receive the gospel. And so of the islands of the sea. But there is no need for enlarging on this.

There is another remarkable sign, the drawing closer together of the various sections of the Protestant, or rather let us say, the Christian religion. It would almost seem as if a sort of premonition of coming danger was operating in the minds of all those who love the Lord and hate Antichrist.

All these and other symptoms betoken the coming of a struggle. It is true the politicians and governments are saying, "Peace! peace!" while they are steadily preparing for war. Are we after all, however, preparing as we should, for this mighty and final struggle with Antichrist? We fear not. Already we see symptoms on the part of that church which is Antichrist. Jesuitism is more earnest than ever, and the Pope is sustained by Jesuitism. To say nothing of what is being transacted in Britain, we have only to look at our sister Province to learn what the Jesuits aim at, and the protests they put forth. Fleming in that remarkable work, "The Rise and Fall of the Papacy," p. 65, says, "As Rome Pagan was gradually ruined under the seals, and many of which it seemed to increase to outward observation, and to become more rampant than before, when yet it was indeed declining, so must we suppose it will be with Rome Papal." Is not this so? Does not Cardinal Manning say we are entering on a struggle the like of which has not been seen for three hundred years? Does not the creation of cardinals in England, in the United States, possibly ere long in Canada, indicate that Rome is sending her generals to the points of attack where they will be most available?

Would it not be well then, that our ministers should sound the note of warning? It is comparatively easy to point out and prove that the teachings of the Church of Rome are false to both Scripture and history. But we would like to see the Churches of Christ aroused to a sense of the great struggle, fearful beyond measure, (Rev. xvi. 17, 20), so that they may be prepared for it, and ready to meet and take their part in it. Although, I suppose Europe will be the principal scene, yet we have more than enough of Popery in this Western hemisphere, to give us our share of the trial and trouble first and victory afterwards.

Yours, respectfully,
C. C.

The Organ Question.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—I question very much if any lecture ever delivered in Knox College, Toronto, has given rise to a more lively discussion than the one lately delivered there by Professor McLaren. The views held and expressed by the Professor in said lecture, with regard to the use of Instrumental Music in public worship, have found a few opponents; but I do not think as yet, any of them has shown where the Professor is wrong, or even justify themselves in opposing him. In your issue of the 8th of April, last, one "Beth," and another, "The Hitch Unraveller," have taken in hand to bring the Professor to task; and it is strange to see even those two condemning each other, more than they do the Professor. "Beth" says, "its use has no divine warrant," and "The Hitch Unraveller" says, it has, and proves it. In this respect I agree with "The Hitch Unraveller." "Beth" seems to be at a great loss, for want of learning and logic, for he says, "that he has neither learning nor logic enough to determine how the same thing in God's worship can be alike regulated, as to its use, both by the Word of God, and at the same time, by mere human expediency." His production, no doubt, proves him to be possessed of a limited supply of either; it proves that more than any thing else. For he has not learning enough to find "the commandment of the Lord," and further says, "if the use of instruments of music under this dispensation of the Gospel be prescribed or appointed, it appears to me very strange that those in favour of their use stop with one, and limit themselves to an organ, instead of having as they had in the Tabernacle and in the Temple, a number." It may seem very strange to one in his position, but can he tell me if there was always a number used in worship under the old dispensation; and was the Tabernacle and Temple the only places where God was worshipped with them; also, was God never worshipped publicly without them? If he says so, he again proves his lack of learning, and if he does not say so, he proves his logic worse than useless. But I cannot see any difficulty in this matter; perhaps it may be accounted for by my not having learning nor logic enough to see it. But when we have the divine command for their use, we are surely regulated by the Word of God, and when God was worshipped acceptably, both with and without their use since, the command was given, shows plainly the command is not binding, but alike regulated, as to its use, by mere human expediency. If "Beth" is satisfied to abide by the new

form of divine worship, established by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, in which no music was allowed, but plain singing, no one will object, still I am of the opinion, what God does not condemn, need not. He need not think it very strange that the New Testament is silent on this subject, both as to precept and practice, for it is also silent on other subjects beside this, and when he accepts its silence on them, why cannot he accept it on this? The Apostles did not require to say anything in reference to the mode of using instruments, such mode being authorized and commanded by God ages before, and if they and the church for nearly the first seven centuries used them not, who can show anything to the contrary but that it was on the ground of expediency, and not from its being wrong and sinful. Paul says: "all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." This is proof enough that Paul rejected lawful things on the ground of expediency, and who can say that the use of instruments was not one of those things rejected on that ground. For the position in which Paul as well as the other Apostles were placed by having to go about from place to place, warrants us to believe that it was only on the ground of expediency they rejected its use, it may be said. Paul says "all things edify not." True he says so, but who has any authority to apply that expression to the use of instruments? God says they are to be used, and He knows best whether they are for our edification or not; we have simply to ask, "what saith the Lord," and when we hear the answer, "thus saith the Lord," our duty is to obey, asking no questions. With regard to the remarks of "The Hitch Unraveller," I shall say little in the meantime, yet he has proved a divine warrant for its use, but adds, "the divine warrant is in connection with ceremonial economy and observances." I think I know this "Hitch," and would like him to unravel it, by proving it to be only in connection with the ceremonial economy. He knows he must do that before he can abolish it, but he has not done so yet. For if their warrant was only in connection with the offering of sacrifices, they could not have been used at any other time or in any other place except when, and where sacrifices were offered, any more than any of the other associates. Now he must acknowledge they were used at times and places when sacrifices were not offered and that sacrifices were offered without them, so when that is true, how can he assert that the warrant is only in connection with sacrifices? There is a "Hitch" here, and I wish him to unravel it. Then as to practice, it must be observed that they were never used in the worship of God, but only in connection with the service of song. And if practice is of so much importance, why neglect it here? And as for "Beth," when "he has been trying to determine how anything in the public worship of God becomes lawful, has come to the just conclusion that it is only by divine appointment." I hope he shall by this time have learning and logic enough to see the divine warrant for the use of instruments, and if he cannot follow, he should at least not condemn any divine appointment prescribed in the Holy Scriptures; and while I do not condemn him or any other person for not using instruments, I wish it to be understood they should not condemn those who do use them, seeing they have the divine warrant for their use. Yours truly,
PRO ORGANIST.

A Parallel.

Dr. Carson, the great Baptist writer, says that the Greek word *baptizo*, has only one meaning—to dip. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that in some places of the New Testament it describes an act, which, clearly, was dipping, we are not on that account, warranted to say that it has the licited meaning which Dr. Carson gives it. Take the case of the Hebrew word *shachar*. In the Old Testament it most commonly means to be drunken. Of this the following are a few, out of many proofs, which might be brought forward: "Noah (on a certain occasion) was drunken," (Gen. ix. 21). "Drunk with their own blood," (Isaiah xlix. 26). "Drink and be drunken, and smite," (Jeremiah xxv. 27). Eli thought that Hannah was drunken, (1 Samuel i. 13, 14). David, on a certain occasion, made Uriah drunk, (2 Samuel xi. 13). A word meaning a drunkard is formed from it. "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard," (Isaiah xxiv. 20). "As a drunken man staggoeth in his vomit," (Isaiah lxiii. 6). If we infer from such passages as these, that the word *shachar* has only one meaning—to be drunken—we shall be forced to put a very strange interpretation on some others. For example, the word is used when it is said that Joseph's brethren drank and "were merry" with him, (Gen. xlii. 34). It follows then, that this was a drunken orgie. Joseph and his brethren, as the Scotch say, "got a blind drunk," "a fou' together." In the song of Solomon, the bridegroom invites his friends to drink abundantly, (v. 1). According to the principle of interpretation referred to, this is an invitation to become drunken.—T. F.

Oh surely that blessed Jesus who can heal and save poor dying sinners, may well be called the "Plant of Ronown."

Every true hero grows by patience. People who have always been prosperous are seldom the most worthy, and never in moral excellence the most strong. How he has not been compelled to suffer, has probably not begun to learn how to be magnanimous; as it is only by patience and fortitude that we can know what it is to overcome evils, or feel the pleasure of forgiving them.

American Evangelists Abroad.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—I hope you will find room for the accompanying notice which I clipped from a recent number of the New York Tribune. I am sure its fine judicious Christian spirit will commend itself to your readers, and possibly meddle, if not rebuke, the intolerant tone of your correspondent, on the one side and the other of the controversy. CARITAS.

DR. JOHN HALL'S ESTIMATE OF THE SERVICES OF MOODY AND SANKEY.

The Rev. John Hall, D.D., in the "Prefatory Note" to the forthcoming volume on "The American Evangelists" (to be published by Dodd & Mead), takes pains to explain that the motives of the editors in undertaking the work "will be found in their personal knowledge of Messrs. Moody and Sankey, deep interest of the scenes of their Christian labors, and acquaintance with the 'brethren beloved' who have stood by them, co-operated in their efforts, and borne cheerful testimony to the moral and spiritual results." They, however, present the facts of their labors without questioning or criticising their methods, although the tenor of the preface is strongly in their favor. The order followed in this volume is very simple. "Who are these men; how did they come to the front in America; how did they enter Great Britain; what has been their progress; what did they teach; what are the results?" These are the questions which Dr. Hall has sought to answer. Several of Mr. Moody's addresses are embodied in this volume, and special stress is laid in the "Prefatory Note" upon the co-operation of the ministers which the evangelists have sought and secured. The following is a passage:

"So rigid is his rule on this point that he declined a visit to Sheffield until substantial unity was secured in an invitation from the evangelical ministers of the town. On the same principle, meetings are not held at the usual hours of divine service, unless, in the judgment of the local ministers, they are desirable. He has always felt that it is mischievous in the highest degree for occasional laborers however admirable and useful, to weaken the hands of the stated ministry, on whose efforts the systematic and permanent instruction of the people must, under God, depend. To this wise policy—the same pursued by Nettleton in this country—has been due in a large degree the blessed unity of action, and may we not add, the large spiritual success vouchsafed. If anything is fitted to mar a spiritual work, it is surely vituperation of its pledged friends and supporters. That opposition to this movement has appeared is known to all, though its amount has been far below what might have been expected. It has come from three quarters: Those to whom all spiritual religion is fanaticism; those who can only conceive of true work within their own ecclesiastical lines; and those who have either looked at it from a distance, or formed their estimate of it from unfavorable critics. The first class learns nothing; the second learns slowly; and to the third good men can only say, 'Come and see.' That the interest shown in mass meetings and by eager crowds whose the evangelists have been present should continue, is not to be expected in the nature of things. Only the most superficial will consider the results on this account evanescent. Sunshine, dews, and rains that water the earth, are evanescent in the same sense. The mightiest movements advance, often enough, as does the tide, each successive wave, though reflux, in a degree, rising higher on the beach than did its predecessor. This wave, whose progress we are watching, has carried light and love where certainly they had not gone in our time, and, as the very report of what God does in one region has often raised inquiry, hope, and effort in another, we are not without the expectation that the record of progress in our mother countries may stimulate zeal and effort on this continent, where the children enjoy a no less free Christian life, and where thought and feeling travel no less rapidly. Humbly beseeching Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose gospel we count the means of the hands in the Holy Ghost of all true life and progress, to further His work by this lowly instrumentality, we respectfully dedicate this volume to the ministers of the Gospel, to the Sabbath-school teachers, to earnest laborers with tongue and pen and purse, who pray and toil, that this fair America may be as the garden of the Lord, and her people a 'righteous nation that keepeth the truth.'

"Scriptural Mode of Baptism."

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—If your correspondent from Dundas, is the A. MacPherson who wrote to me recently, you may judge how truthful, how kind and honorable he is, when you know, that instead of falling in with your tract, he wrote asking me if I would "kindly send" him a "sample," (not a specimen or a copy) that I sent him a copy post paid, and that the only recompense I received from him, is the effusion in your last issue. I leave his criticisms to the judgment of your readers.

Yours, truly,
JOHN MACPHERSON.
Woodstock, 10th May, 1875.

Miss SMILEY recently suggested that empty churches on rainy days represented a question of clothes rather than heads. After reading Isaiah's enumeration of ancient ruins (iii. 23-25), she remarked, "This is a small catalogue. Isaiah how would have needed a volume."