

Selections.

BENEFIT OF A LITURGY.—It is not long since we gave an extract from the Christian Intelligencer of the Dutch Reformed Church, which manifested a strong yearning for the use of a Liturgy. Here is another sign from the same quarter:

READING THE DECALOGUE IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

This is one of the characteristic features of the old Holland mode of worshipping God in the sanctuary, which seems to be in many parts of our Church falling into disuse. Nor can the retention of it be with propriety enforced, because the order of service prescribed in our Constitution leaves this optional with the minister. He may read "the Ten Commandments, or some other portion of Scripture, or both." But while the choice is thus left with the pastor, some reason may be assigned why it is desirable to take the last of the three alternatives given, and unite with the reading of some chosen Scripture, also that of the venerable summary of human duty written by the finger of God on tables of stone.

1. A presumption in its favor may be found in the immemorial usage of our ancestors in the Netherlands, "the Church under the cross." From them it comes down to us, hallowed by the sanction of generations, as a distinctive feature of our manner of worship. If retained it will contribute to identify us as the children of these martyrs and confessors, and to at least one outward sign to observers, that small as our body is, it has a name, history, and character of its own, and ought not, as it desires not, to be confounded with other and larger surrounding bodies which, although filiating from the Reformation, descend by a different line from our own. We have nothing to say against their descent, but we prefer our own.

2. We thus show the use and value of the Gospel. Our ministration is not that of the letter which killeth, but of the Spirit which giveth life; yet by the law is the knowledge of sin; and while the Gospel is the means of conversion, the law is the means of conviction. If men are to reach Christ, it is generally "the schoolmaster" who brings them there. If a man would cleave closely and exclusively to the cross, let the law shake him loose from every other dependence; and to this end let its requisitions be formally reiterated every Sabbath day in the words which the Lord hath chosen.

3. This custom is a practical and efficacious protest against the egregious error which is every now and then raising its head and objecting to the Decalogue as a divine eternal compendium of human obligation. So celebrated and learned and influential a man as Moses Stuart lent his name to this gross mistake. Nor is it merely a question of interpretation or a point of literary resthetics. On the contrary, no man can discuss the Sabbath law without finding it essential to rest the authority of the Ten Commandments on the old foundations. To limit their scope and intention, as Paley and others have done, is as mischievous as it is foolish.

4. It is by no means an idle form to read these solemn and weighty enactments every Lord's day morning in an assembly of worshippers. As a general thing they are listened to with a devout reverence, and prepare the mind for what is to follow. Sometimes, too, precepts are found to have an immediate marked effect upon the heart, as is shown by the case which occurred in England some years since. A thief entered the house of God. Just after he took his position, the clergyman reached the eighth commandment in his course through the Decalogue. As he pronounced with grave authority the stern prohibition of the supreme Lawgiver, conviction struck the thief's heart; he could scarce restrain himself until the service closed, and when the audience were dismissed, went to weep in secret places, and seek for pardon of his manifold sins. Surely, in this instance the clergyman was well repaid for all his labor, even if he had read the Commandments every Lord's day for fifty years.

THE APOSTLE PAUL IN DEBT.—What! Paul in debt! Paul, who wrote to the Romans, "Owe no man anything"—who labored with his own hands so as to support the weak—whose whole character seemed so honest, straight forward and exemplary. Paul in debt!

Yes, and more than that: I do not know that the debt was ever fully discharged. Until he died he labored on, with the consciousness of this debt hanging over him. All that can be said is, that he acknowledged the debt honestly, and toiled most industriously to pay as much of it as he could.

It was a debt due to a great many persons, very much scattered about. We all know that Paul travelled very extensively. Various motives prompt men to take for-

eign tours. Some go for health, and some for wealth; some because they have something to do abroad, and others because they have nothing to do at home; some for curiosity, some because they are tired of their country, and some because their country is tired of them. It may be asked, what was Paul's motive in his various journeys. I think I can tell. He was travelling about, paying his debts.

How were these debts contracted? Paul was not an extravagant man. He had no family. He embarked in no pecuniary speculations. We never heard of his borrowing money, of his signing notes or bonds, or of his endorsing for any one. How did he become so much in debt?

How were these debts to be paid? Paul was a poor man. The labor of his hands supplied his daily wants; the gifts he received were bestowed out of "deep poverty," and had all the smallness, as well as the heartiness usual with such donations.

The fact is, that the debt which he owed, at the money in the world could not pay, if he had had it in his possession. The amount of it was even beyond his own knowledge; the obligation of it higher than any other debt or obligation. What could it have been?

Ordinarily, the persons to whom debts are due go about to collect them. In this case it seems to have been the reverse. Strange to say, the creditors were unaware of the existence of the debt, made no claim or demand for it, and even when informed of it, had no desire that it should be paid. And yet, when in any instance payment was expected, the individual who received it instantly began to regard what he had received from Paul in discharge of this debt as of the highest possible value, far surpassing in importance all his other possessions.

How shall these things be explained?

Paul owed the Lord Jesus Christ his *all*. The grace of God had been freely given to him; and now the debt was—if I may use such an expression—assigned over to all the perishing sinners on the globe. He was under obligation to labor for their spiritual good. We see now how this debt was contracted, and also how it was to be paid. I must add that the very same debt rests on all that have been redeemed by Jesus Christ. And I have written these lines, my Christian friends, simply to press on you the question—"How much owest thou unto my Lord?"—*H. and F. Journal.*

HORROR OF THE ROMISH RELIGION.—Burnet (His Reformation,) in concluding the account of the Romish persecutions under Mary in 1556, during which year eighty-five persons, among whom was Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, were burnt, adds the following: All these persons were presented as suspected of heresy, and were required to answer the questions that the bishop put to them; which related to the corporeal presence in the sacrament, the necessity of auricular confession, or the sacrifice of the mass; and upon the answers they made, were condemned to the fire—but none of them were accused of any violence committed on the persons of any churchmen, or of any affront put on their religion; and all their sufferings were merely for their conscience, which they kept as private as they could; so that it rather appeared in their abstaining from the communion of a Church which, they thought, had corrupted the chief parts of worship, than anything they had said or done. It was an unusual and an ungrateful thing to the English nation, that is apt to compassionate all in mis-ry, to see four, five, six, seven, and once, thirteen, burning in one fire; and the sparing neither sex nor age, nor blind nor lame, but making havoc of all equally, and above all, the barbarity of Guernsey raised the horror in the whole nation, that there seems ever since that time such an abhorrence to that religion, to be derived down from father to son, that it is no wonder an aversion so deeply rooted, and raised upon such grounds, does, upon every new provocation or jealousy of returning to it, break out in most violent and convulsive symptoms.

THE CLOUD OF MERCY.—How vast the range of blessing your prayers may take. Who can tell the history or trace the wandering of your cloud that sails in light and glory across the sky, or indicate from what source its bosom was filled with the vapors it is yet to shed back upon earth? Perhaps though now wandering over the tilled field and peopled village, its stores were drawn from some shaded fountain in the deep forest, where the eye of man has scarce ever penetrated. In silent obscurity that fountain yielded its pittance, and did its work of preparing to bless the far-off lands that it shall yet be glad for. And even thus it is with the descending Spirit. Little do we know often of the

secret origin of the dews of blessing that descend on the church of God. In the recess of some lowly cottage, in the depths of some humble heart, may be going on the work of pious intercession, in answer to which the grace of heaven descends on us and our children, on the labors of the wandering and joyful pastor, and on the hearts of the far heathen, until the wilderness and the solitary place are glad for them.—*Dr. W. R. Williams.*

ORIGIN OF HIGH PEWS.—Bishop Burnet complained that the ladies of Princess Anne's establishment did not look at him when preaching his thundering long sermons, as Queen Mary called them, but were looking at other objects. He, therefore, after much remonstrance on their impropriety, prevailed on Queen Anne to order all the pews in St. James's Chapel to be raised so high that the fair delinquents could see nothing but himself when he was in the pulpit! The Princess laughed at the complaint; but she complied when Burnet told her that the interests of the Church were in danger. The whim of Bishop Burnet was imitated in many places which had not been pewed before, and are at this hour to be seen in remote country parishes.

DUTY AT THE TIME.—There is one lesson that the example of the Duke of Wellington taught, and which we are especially desirous of pointing out, viz: that his Grace throughout life made it a rule to do whatever he saw to be his duty at the time—a more rare and valuable quality than men suppose, unless they remember that it was a rule which he applied to small things as well as great—to the answering of a letter, and to the movement of an entire army. While he notoriously confined himself strictly to his own duties, anything and everything was regarded as a duty when laid upon him by legitimate and competent authority. It was no question with him whether the thing were too small for his powers or his dignity; he was required to do it—did it with all his might, whatever it was. Great as it was, he has, in this, left an example to the least, as well as to the greatest—to the young as well as to the old.

THE PORTFOLIO.—"Truly there be imperfection in our best works; we do not love God so much as we are bound to do, with all our heart, mind, and power: we do not fear God so much as we ought to do: we do not pray to God but with great and many imperfections; we give, forgive, believe, and hope imperfectly: let us not be ashamed, therefore, to confess plainly our state of imperfection."—*Homily.*

A SHORT SERMON.—An old preacher once took for his text—"Adam, where art thou?" and divided his subject into three parts: 1st. Some men are where they ought not to be; and 2d, unless they take care they will find themselves where they would rather not be.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHURCH TIMES.

If you think fit, you may publish the following extract of a letter I recently received from Australia. It may perhaps tend to diminish a little of the Australian fever, which has seized so many of our Nova Scotia youths, who generally might find a better living at home, than any that is to be found at the Antipodes.

"Melbourne, Victoria, 2nd Nov. 1852.

"After a pleasant passage (in the *Chelverton*) of 95 days, we dropped anchor in Port Phillip Bay. On the 10th October, two days after our anchoring, a steamer from Williamstown, a village at the mouth of the river, came alongside and took us and our traps to the city, which is situated a mile up the river Yarra, for which service, each paid 5s. sterling. It may be mentioned that all money matters are here reckoned in sterling, there being no currency peculiar to this country, as you have it in Nova Scotia. When we landed on the wharf, five of us joined our luggage into one, and chartered a dray for 7s. to take it to the nearest storeroom; but, just as we were leaving the wharf, and were flattering ourselves that we were free to go where we should list, we were stopped by a man with a two foot rule in his hand, who after a farce of measuring our load, declared that it amounted to 1½ tons, and that for wharfage, we must pay for the same £2 4s. although it had not been on the wharf 14 or at most 20 minutes. Arrived at the warehouse, our next charges were 1s. entrance money for each parcel, 1s. advance for each parcel per week; 1s. each time we visited our baggage, and 1s. for each parcel on taking it away.

I shall write more fully by next mail,—in the meantime, tell any one whom you ask, that the Diggings prove a delusion to all but about one in a thousand, and that the reports in the newspapers on the subject are not to be trusted. Tell John —, not to think of coming to this country.

[The above extract had been unfortunately misheard. It may not, however be too late to have some of the effect which our esteemed correspondent intended.]