

## DECENT CHURCHES.

We lately heard an essay read on Moravian Missions, in which especial notice was taken of the transforming power of the Gospel upon the character of the most barbarous savages. Even in the view of their temporal comfort, there is a tribute to religion, in the decency of their deportment, in their dress, in their dwellings, and in their intercourse with one another. When the essayist mentioned the case of the poor degraded Hottentots, that when they came to the knowledge of the truth, they rose so much in the scale of civilization, and gave an evidence of this fact, the improved accommodations in their dwellings, and especially their strict attention to the comfort and decent arrangements of their places of worship, we thought, that some congregations amongst ourselves might take a lesson from these poor Hottentots. When we see a dirty unswept church, polluted by the vile odour of tobacco, and approachable only through seas of mud, or over mountains of rubbish,—broken windows—broken plaster—rickety seats, and—pulpit,—apply not the name to that coarse, ill contrived box, like a pillory, which a careless people have provided for an ambassador of the King of Zion to occupy, when he comes amongst them to declare his Sovereign's message—we can, without the spirit of prophecy, safely declare, that religion in such a place is at the lowest ebb. We do not by any means suppose, that an elegant church is a certain proof of a high state of religion, any more than that fine dress betokens spirituality of mind, but, a certain degree of external decency, is intimately connected with the profitable use of the means of grace. Poor people often find it difficult to provide the meanest accommodation. There is no reason, however, why the most humble place of worship should not be clean and neat, and as far as practicable, so arranged that worshippers may without distraction, attend to the service of God, with that decorum which is becoming its solemnity.

It is difficult to conceive how a minister without inspiration, can preach to a listless auditory in such a house as we have described, or how people in such circumstances, can expect to profit by their attendance.

Such relics of a dark age, are happily very rare, and since the Hottentots will not tolerate them, we may expect that they cannot long exist in a christian country.

## OUR CHURCH AT WHITBY.

"A Presbyterian" taking offence at a short notice in our January number, under the above caption, "deems it due to truth, to state that for sixteen years there has been a zealous and efficient ministry, and a large and influential congregation of Presbyterians in the Township." We have no reason to question this statement, and only wish that our hasty paragraph had been worded, so as to have applied to the town of Whitby in the rich and growing Township of the same name. We intended the town and the immediate neighbourhood. "A Presbyterian" construes our language as applying to all the Township, and locali-

ties in it, a dozen of miles distant. We are not so "egotistical" as to suppose that we have the only, or all the pure Presbyterianism, but it is just because we believe ours to be the purest that we have a separate communion, and that we raise our standard wherever Providence opens up the way.

We disclaim every feeling of hostility to other evangelical churches. There is room enough for them and for us. Let the only rivalry between us be,—which shall do most for the cause of truth.

## SACRED MUSIC—MEETINGS FOR PRACTICE.

Of late, attention has been more directed to this delightful exercise. In most congregations efforts are made to improve the singing, by practice through the week. Much as we approve of these weekly meetings for so laudable an object, and much as we respect those, whose untiring exertions render them profitable, we have thought there was something wanting to prevent the mechanical drilling from deadening the devotional spirit which is, and ought to be, so closely connected with our Sacred Music. We commend the following remarks which we find in the *New York Observer*, to the attentive perusal of our readers, as suggesting a plan calculated to obviate such objection. Every parent should encourage his family in acquiring and cultivating this most valuable accomplishment. How many young men, especially in towns and villages, would be saved from ruin, if, instead of spending their evenings among dangerous companions, amid the fumes of tobacco, and strong drink, and the kindred, but no less pestilential atmosphere of ribald mirth and profane jest, would meet together in some suitable place, to learn or practice music. Its softening and elevating influence would soon tell upon their characters.

In the Toronto Academy, and some other well regulated schools, music is introduced as a branch of education. This is a step in the right direction. It is interesting to think that we may be learning here on earth, the rudimental part of one of the delightful exercises, that will constitute, perhaps, a large proportion of the employment of the redeemed in heaven:—

"We have seen that religious affections will be wanting in this connection, unless we cultivate and cherish them in our efforts for improvement; and we have seen that efforts of this nature must find admittance in our schools and rehearsals, or continue to be neglected. Suppose, then, we adopt some such order of exercises as the following: First, an exercise of prayer and praise, occupying but a few moments of time. Second, exercises in notation and in the culture of the voice. Third, exercises on enunciation, in connection, perhaps, with tunes, new or old, which are so familiar as not to embarrass the attention of the pupils. Let the second and third exercises be variously interwoven, or be protracted or abridged, as circumstances may suggest: but, in the fourth place, let another hymn be sung in a devotional manner and spirit, aside from every thought of criticism; though in connection, perhaps, with a brief word of comment on the meaning of the words, or a suitable hint upon the devotional uses of the hymn, and upon the proper employment of the affections in acts of praise.—The object here should be, to promote real spirituality in distinction from the mere sobriety of a

decent formalism. The hymn should be judiciously selected, so as to be somewhat in keeping with the state of mind observable in the school. Sometimes a didactic or a hortatory hymn might be preferable: for we must never attempt practical impossibilities. Our minds, for example, may have been so fatigued with hard drilling, as to be unfitted, at the moment, for the loftier sentiments of praise. Ye these, and all other classes of religious sentiment which appertain to practical Christianity, should occasionally form the theme of the closing or the opening hymn. The last hymn should be followed by a short appropriate prayer. Let the religious exercises be fervent. They need not occupy a great deal of time; but their influences, if they are well conducted, will be sweet and heavenly—just such as we love to cherish: and in this way the spirit as well as the manner of praise will be subject to improvement. The method here proposed is a perfectly plain one: and it has the advantage of having often been tried with gratifying success. A single short, dull, and formal prayer, after two or three hours hard drilling upon artistic elements, will be of little avail. The exercises, too, should be well balanced, and have reference, not to the greatest amount of proficiency in some one given direction, but to the indispensable claims of religious edification. Let these claims be fully met by an appropriate system of training, and all will be well. Try this experiment. Try it faithfully, and then tell me if it does not succeed. For one, I can say that, after more than forty years' experience and observation, I do not recollect a single example of ultimate failure. H."

## PRESENTATION.

We have felt much pleasure in being honoured to present to a zealous and most unassuming Sabbath School Teacher, in the name and on behalf of the young persons who have been his pupils, and the objects of his solicitude and prayers, a very handsome testimonial, consisting of "Scott's Commentary," "The Life, Remains, Lectures, Letters and Sermons of Rev. R. M. McChesney," upon which is the following inscription:

To Mr. William Johnston, Student in Knox's College.

We, the scholars of the Free Temple Church Sabbath School and Bible Class, feeling that we are under many deep and lasting obligations to you, for your unwearied exertions in teaching us the sacred truths of Scripture, beg your acceptance of the accompanying books, as tokens of our gratitude, and may the Lord make you successful in the work of the ministry, to which you aspire.

(Signed)

HUGH CLARKE,

On behalf of the Sabbath School children. Chinguacousy, March, 1850.

EKFRID.

At a meeting of the Presbyterian congregation of Ekfrid, which took place on Saturday, February 23d, a chaste and elegant set of silver-plated Cups, Flaggon, &c., intended for the service of the communion, was presented, in name and on behalf of the Ladies of the congregation, by Capt. Wm. Symes. Thanks were cordially tendered to the ladies, for their attention to the affairs of the house of God, and their zeal in procuring such an appropriate and acceptable gift.—Com.

The Presbyteries in the National Church have begun to persecute the evangelical brethren for reading the Scriptures. A Mr. Thornton, lately appointed as a Scripture reader, in the parish of Cirencester, has been refused the sacrament by the Vicar.