

Dominion Churchman.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 1876.

THE OBSERVANCE OF LENT.

That Lent is a season of humiliation, during which feelings and sentiments such as those depicted in the fifty-first Psalm, are most appropriate, if we are to observe any seasons or keep any days at all, scarcely needs any effort to show. But there are other duties to which more than ordinary attention should, at this time be given, if we would secure the blessing of Heaven, and obtain all the advantages the church offers us. And if we refuse to carry out the Church's system, let us not blame the Church if at length we find out that we are making no progress in the Divine Life, that we experience no growth in grace, that our repentance is no deeper, our faith in the merits of the Redeemer no stronger, and our holiness no more advanced than when we began. Morning and evening prayer throughout the year, are required by the church to be provided for her members, and although in this country especially, arrangements cannot at present be made for this purpose, yet if we are sound members of the Church, if we are her loyal children, if we are faithful to the principles of the Reformation, and value that inimitable *Common prayer* compiled by our Reformers, and found in our branch of the Church alone, we shall avail ourselves of the additional services generally obtainable during Lent. A faithful attendance on the services provided is absolutely essential to the growth of the spiritual life within, which life if not nourished and cultivated by the use of means appointed by the highest authority will most assuredly wither away and ingloriously die. When a Churchman turns Romanist, he becomes the most attentive and the most careful observer of all the forms of the most formal church in Christendom. When a Churchman turns Methodist, no one so exemplary and so zealous in his attendance at class-meetings and prayer-meetings, and all the arrangements of a system whose forms of worship are by no means less multiplied than those of any other. Before however he is tempted to leave his own communion, it is but fair, it is but common honesty and justice, that he should give the institutions and the privileges of the soundest, the most orthodox, and the most evangelical branch of the Church in the world, a full, fair and impartial trial. For this purpose, the season of Lent is admirably adapted, because more services are generally provided, and all the great subjects most immediately connected with our redemption are most prominently brought before us.

But attendance on the outward means of grace in order to be most effective, must be aided by a sedulous use of private devotion. Private prayer will make our public services most profit-

able, just as public worship will send us to our private devotions, with more zeal and with more benefit. We must use the present time to repair such failures as we may have been guilty of in this respect. We are to enter the closet and shut the door, and there commune with the Father of lights, and He that seeth in secret will give us our due reward, in greater devotedness to God, more intimate communion with Him, and greater deadness to the world. Indeed, those who feel they cannot accuse themselves of total neglect of private devotion will find their growth in holiness so much the more advanced by giving themselves more entirely to prayer and religious meditation; including also self-examination, with a reference to its bearing on the public services of the Sanctuary.

THE TEMPLE OF BELUS.

The work of discovery among the cuneiform texts of Babylonia and Assyria still goes on. The light that has already been thrown on the history of these ancient monarchies, has surpassed the highest expectations of the most sanguine. We were regaled a little while ago, with Assyrian and Babylonian accounts of the Deluge; next came an historical statement of the Creation, wonderfully agreeing in detail with the account in Genesis; and now there is brought before us a remarkable Babylonian text, just discovered by Mr. George Smith, the great Assyriologist, and giving a graphic description of the Temple of Belus, the grandest religious edifice in that part of the world, the centre of the national worship, and one of the wonders of the capital. The enrichment of this concentration of oriental splendor with gold and silver and precious stones, the beautiful colors of its painting, and the surpassing richness of its statuary and other adornments, won for it the names of the "Basis of Heaven and Earth," and the "glory of the city of Babylon."

This is the first time that any description of a Babylonian temple has been found among the inscriptions, and it thus also supplies the first information as to the dimensions of the great temples. Mr. George Smith thinks it is fortunate that the one described was the most famous in the valley of the Euphrates. The dimensions are given in the cubit, equal to one foot eight inches, English measure, and the *gar* or *sa*, equal to twenty cubits.

The Mound of Babil is by the best authorities identified with the Tower of Belus. It consists at present of the lower stage of the Tower and the ruins of the buildings around it. The sides of the building face the cardinal points like those of the inscription, and unlike the ruin, Birs Nimroud, on the other side of the Euphrates, whose angles face the cardinal points, and which doubtless represents the site of the Tem-

ple of Nebo at Borsippa. It is supposed that the magnificent superstructure of the Temple of Belus was removed by Alexander in his operations for clearing the site, and rebuilding the temple.

Mr. Smith expects on his return from Nineveh to make a full translation of the document he has been fortunate enough to discover. He says: "In my last work, 'the Chaldean account of Genesis,' I have adopted the opinion that the Birs Nimroud, or Borsippa Tower, was the tower of Babel mentioned in Genesis; but the fact of the existence at Babylon itself of a tower twice the height of Birs Nimroud, materially alters the evidence on this question. I remember well ascending the mound of Birs Nimroud and seeing the wide expanse of the Chaldean plain, visible from that elevation; but certainly, in the time of the glory of Babylon, a much more magnificent sight must have greeted the beholder from the top of the Belus tower. This magnificent temple, rising over three hundred feet above the plain, (twice the height of Birs Nimroud), and towering far above every other building in the country, overlooked the capital, Babylon, and commanded a view of cities and temples, river and canals, cultivated fields and gardens, unequalled in the world.

THE LATE LORD AMBERLEY AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The progress of the human mind is supposed to have been astonishingly rapid during the last few years, not only in the discovery of valuable scientific facts, some of them prehistoric, some of them of present utility, but also in the fundamental principles which should regulate human conduct, should guide us in our social relations, and assist us in building up political fabrics suited to a normal condition of human society. As to any thing further,—in the domains, for instance, of psychology and theology—men's efforts have rather been directed towards the demolition of ancient systems, than to the discovery of new truths. In some quarters it has been supposed that important advances would be made towards the perfection of humanity, if it could be satisfactorily established, that the soul is not immortal, that future punishment shall not be eternal, or that man is the highest intelligence in the universe.

With the amazing advances that have been made in all these respects, we had almost imagined the idea was exploded which supposed it was wrong for the head of a family to instruct his offspring in the principles of religious truth—wrong to bias their minds with the delusion that one system of religion had any greater claim to be considered *The Truth* than another. We are aware that a very large residuum of latitudin-