

lit nature, of a character and excellence heretofore unknown, and inferior to no class of productions in adaptation to the end.

"In his profession, Mr. Gurney followed in the footsteps of his father. While his elder brother the late Mr. Baron Gurney, adopted the profession of the Law, and attained eminence both as a barrister and as a judge, he devoted himself to the cultivation of the stenographic art, in which he so far excelled all others, that, at an early age, he was appointed shorthand-writer to the House of Lords, and, at the head of a select body of assistants, discharged the duties of that distinguished office in person so long as health and strength permitted. The emoluments were sometimes exceedingly large, and may serve to account for the munificent liberality with which he contributed to the numerous religious and benevolent institutions which enjoyed his sympathy and support.

"To the religious public he was best known, perhaps, as Treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Society. His father was a deacon of the Baptist church in Maze Pond, then under the pastoral care of the excellent Mr. Dore. It is not wonderful, therefore, that a son who had taken so much interest in the religious instruction of his poor neighbours, should, on the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, have thrown his energies into this branch of religious usefulness also, with so much energy as to attract the attention of its original promoters. Mr. W. B. Gurney eventually became the Treasurer of the Society; the duties of which office, in later years, he has shared with Mr. (now Sir) Samuel Morton Peto. In his hands it was no mere matter of finance. Not more for the largeness and frequency of his pecuniary contributions, than for the zeal with which he entered into all the Society's plans and proceedings, and the active part which he took in exciting a Missionary feeling, especially among the young, both in Sunday-schools and in private families, was it manifest that his whole heart and soul were engaged in diffusing the Gospel.

"Mr. Gurney belonged to a class of pious laymen of whom but few representatives survive. His religion was intensely practical. Possessed of strong sense, and schooled in methodical habits, he always took a plain, business-like view of every subject under his consideration, and approached his point of aim by the simplest means and the directest route. The acuteness of his penetration, his long experience, and the natural tendency of men less versed in affairs to defer to his sound judgment, may sometimes have given to his conduct the appearance of preferring his own opinion with little regard to the opinions of others. But this was only in appearance. His convictions of duty were so strong, and his obedience to them so prompt and implicit, that, had not the sincerity of his character given plainness and directness to his admonitions, he might, nevertheless, be said to have acquired a title to stimulate the lagging zeal of the Church, as, in fact, he never hesitated to do, "with great plainness of speech." As a religious philanthropist, he united the munificence of the prince with the unostentatiousness of the peasant, and did great things with as little apparent consciousness of their being great as if he had been performing the most ordinary acts. His name will go down to posterity with the names of Robert Raikes, John Howard, and Thomas Wilson, whose varied excellences were combined in him, with a wisdom in counsel not less admirable than his zeal in action or his liberality in giving."

One-fourth part of all children die before the age of seven years.

## PETITIONS AGAINST CHURCH RATES.

Sir William Clay having given notice, as we stated in our last, that he will, on the 29th instant, move for leave to bring in a bill entirely abolishing church rates, those who intend to petition in its favour should do so without delay. We should like to hear that every church in the denomination had done so. We give the following as a form of petition; suggesting, at the same time, that it should be regarded as a guide in the preparation of others rather than be closely followed:—

"TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

*The Petition of a Congregation of Baptists assembling in*

Showeth,

That your petitioners regard with much satisfaction a Bill now before Parliament for the entire abolition of Church Rates.

That your Petitioners believe such a measure to be imperatively required, both by the state of public opinion, and by the evident bad effects of the present system in producing and fomenting division and ill-will.

That it appears to your Petitioners that the recent Census, especially as it shows the extent to which the places of worship of all religious denominations have for the last fifty years been multiplied and kept in repair by voluntary contributions, conclusively establishes the safety of exclusive reliance on that principle.

That your Petitioners are satisfied that the legislative support of religious opinion is false in principle, and invariably injurious in practice; and look to the speedy abolition of Church Rates as an earnest of the adoption by the Legislature of the true principles of religious freedom.

Your Petitioners therefore pray your Honourable House to pass the Bill for the entire abolition of Church Rates as speedily as may be.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

The following practical directions may be of utility:—Petitions must be in writing. Each petitioner must sign his own name only, and at least one signature must be on the sheet containing the petition. Petitions may be sent post free to peers or members of parliament, if inclosed in a paper open at both ends, and marked "Petitions."

The following is a copy of Sir W. Clay's Bill. The words printed in *italics* are proposed to be inserted in committee:—

"Whereas, Church-rates have for some years ceased to be made or collected in many parishes, by reason of the opposition thereto; and in many other parishes where Church-rates have been made, the levying thereof has given rise to litigation and ill-feeling: and whereas it is expedient that the power to make Church-rates shall be abolished: be it therefore enacted by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

"I. From and after the passing of this Act, no Church-rate be made or levied in any parish in England and Wales.

"II. Provided always, that in any parish where a sum of money has before the passing of this Act been legally borrowed under the provisions of any Act of Parliament, on the security of Church-rates to be made and levied in such parish, such rates may still be made and levied under the provisions and for the