

ought to be the leaders of religious thought; not only indulging in a weary round of platitudes.

While, however, we abate no effort to retain our hold on the thoughtful and inquiring, there is no reason why we should repel those who are professed of taste and refinement by performing in a careless and slovenly way the devotional parts of the service. This remark applies to both Prayer and Praise. There are some who think that the introduction of a modified liturgy would tend to render the public prayers of the Church more solemn and devout. Without going so far as this, however, it is certain that every Minister may do much to enrich the service of prayer by drawing from sources which are to a great extent the common property of the Church.

With regard to the "Service of Song," there is obviously room for improvement. A very interesting discussion took place in the Synod on the subject of Hymns. We are only followed the example of the Mother Church by preparing a selection of Hymns suitable for public worship, to be used along with the Psalms and Paraphrases. It is a pity that the Synods of the East could not co-operate with our Synod in this important matter. Indeed, it would be very desirable that all branches of the Presbyterian Church should unite in framing a Hymn Book, and thus preserve that pleasing uniformity in this part of public worship which has hitherto characterized us.

In connection with this subject it may be well to mention that at the annual meeting of the Congregational Union of Canada, which was held at Kingston, in the month of June, a very interesting paper on "Sabbath Devotional Exercises" was read by the Rev. Prof. Barnish of Montreal, which created a warm discussion in the Union. The writer objects to many of the Hymns in almost every Hymn Book used by the congregations represented in the Union as being unfit, on various grounds, for use in public worship. He thinks that 100 or 150 good Hymns might be found, which would prove amply sufficient for the devotional service of the Church. Those who have read the valuable articles on "Church Hymns," in the Church of Scotland *Record*, will be aware that the writer of those articles agrees very nearly with the Professor in his estimate of the number of really good Hymns suitable for public worship. With regard to the manner of expression of praise, Prof. Barnish thinks that the first point to be aimed at is simplicity; that, in order to secure this, the singing should be in *unison*; that *art singing* is objectionable, as it tempts people to pay more attention to artistic effect than to devotional feeling; that there can be no objection to the use of an organ to aid the singing, "provided it be used decorously and discreetly;" that choirs should, as a rule, be avoided, as being more frequently a source of trouble and discussion than of profit. In re-

gard to public prayer, he would approve of the introduction of a modified liturgical service, though not so as to exclude "free prayer."

We may not agree with all the opinions expressed in this paper, but it is instructive to note that leading minds in more than one Church in which free prayer has hitherto been the rule are beginning to feel that there is a need of improvement in this part of our public service, and that possibly the remedy may be found in the partial adoption of forms hallowed by the usage of the ancient Church. Many of the nonconformist divines in England are seriously considering whether it might not be well to resume the use of the Church of England Liturgy, or a considerable portion of it, in order to draw many who are dissatisfied with the tendencies manifested in the Church of England. The formation in Scotland of the "Church Service Society," which numbers among its members many of the ablest and best men in the Church of Scotland, is a step in the same direction.

The "Organ question" excited a good deal of discussion at the meeting of the Canada Presbyterian Synod. An instrument had been in use for a short time in Knox's Church, Montreal, and an overture was presented to the effect that the Synod grant liberty to such congregations as may wish the same, to employ the aid of instrumental music. It was decided, however, that the session of Knox's Church should be instructed to discontinue to use of the organ until the mind of the Synod be ascertained by the reports of Presbyteries and Sessions at next Synod.

Our own Synod acts upon the principle which guides the Church of Scotland in this matter, namely that any congregation should be allowed to introduce instrumental music, provided the harmony of the congregation is not thereby disturbed. St Andrew's Church, Montreal, has a very fine instrument of Canadian manufacture, which cost five or six thousand dollars, St Paul's will no doubt have one equally good. Ottawa I understand is following in the wake of Montreal. The people of St. Andrews Church, Toronto, are also taking steps to have an organ substituted for the melodeon which has for many years been employed. At Whitby, Clifton, and other places, melodeons are used.

An interesting letter from the Rev. Thomas Somerville appears in this Month's *Presbyterian*, urging on the attention of Synod the claims of British Columbia as a Mission field. Mr. Somerville suggests that two ministers should at once be sent, one for Cariboo, and one for Carvichan, as well as a Grammar School teacher, if possible. Here is another matter in which the Synods of the east might co-operate with us to advantage. Many of the settlers in British Columbia have gone from our Canadian towns and vil-