

churches to associate in their services those outside the fold : but we do know that it was their constant custom to meet as disciples, to ratify their union and to express their deepest reverence and trust in the symbols of which Christ had said, 'Do this in remembrance of me;' and an apostle had added, 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this wine, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come.' This was their holy service, their Lord's day festival, repeated every week with a faith and gladness ever fresh. Our modern Non-conformist churches have for the most part changed it to a monthly celebration. Is it amiss to ask whether the alteration, however sanctioned by custom, is wise? We, at least, speak often, and rightfully, of apostolic precedents and order; why then should we disregard the precedent here? The recommendation to observe it may sometimes come from suspicious quarters; but it is all the more important to consider it upon its own merits; and what defence have we to make against the 'Plymouth Brother' on the one hand, who points us to the New Testament pattern; or the 'Anglo Catholic' on the other, who pleads the example of the ancient churches? If literalists are narrow, and ritualists are superstitious, should Baptists, therefore, not be scriptural? True, there is a liberty in things indifferent, which churches may rightly claim; but this appears a matter of high importance, and I for one cannot forbear to express the conviction that one mark of a revived and apostolic congregationalism will be that the churches, voluntarily and with one accord, will come together, steadily, like the church at Troas, 'on the first day of the week to break bread.'

"To pass once more from the church to the congregation? we remark that the worship of the sanctuary should be regarded as of supreme importance.

"The reproach is sometimes directed against evangelical Nonconformists, that they give to worship a secondary position. 'The sermon,' it is said, 'is the principal thing. People go to the House of God to hear the preacher, and the prayer and praise are incidental.'

"Some habits among us may seem to give colour to this charge. On special occasions it does occasionally happen that prayer and praise are called 'the introductory parts of the service,' instead of constituting the service itself.

"Prayers are curtailed, even omitted, that more room may be given to the discourse. Or perhaps hymns are introduced, rather as a variety than to utter the irrepressible spirit of gratitude and of holy joy. Speaker wants rest, auditors want a change of posture; so, in a parenthesis, the meeting praises God. Want of punctuality in a congregation is sometimes covered by a preliminary hymn. During prayer, reading, exhortation, all late comers would pause reverently at the door, but while the worshippers are singing the aisles are open.

"Such things, it may be, are but trifles in themselves; yet they indicate a tendency to undervalue that which is in fact the higher social exercise of our religion. Nothing in which we can be engaged is so grand and solemn as prayer and praise. Of these exercises we must think rightly before we can conduct them with all fitting solemnity. And to whatever other religious engagements the 'free spirit' of the Gospel may call us, we shall certainly do well to arrange them all in harmony with the prophetic word uttered in old Testament times to find its highest fulfillment in the New, 'My house shall be called the house of prayer for all people.'

Speaking of extempore prayers the writer says:—"Some prayers indeed