

which carries the meaning, that 'we have no oil in our lamps;' that we have no real piety, however from a vague sense of obligation, or from hereditary habit, we may deem it expedient to keep up the forms of worship. Such a person, were he informed of the whole truth, would know, that at the very moment of the censured impropriety, there are many devout persons mourning over it in secret; and that of those who are not devout, at least, the majority blame and despise the incongruity. And why has it been all endured? The answer is—For the gratification of a few ungodly persons. An assertion which should not have been hazarded by the present writer, had he ever known a single devout person among the practicers, or the favorers of what is here blamed. He cannot follow them to their closets; he cannot look into their hearts; but he can declare, with truth, that he never knew an individual of them, who denoted, either by deportment or by profession, that he worshipped God in public or in private."

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

The following extracts, from a paper read at a recent-session of the *Baptist Union* in England, are well worthy of attention, and like Newman Hall's address to the *Congregationalist Union*, manifest a growing appreciation of the superiority of the Catholic system, as exemplified in the Church of England, and of the loss sustained by those who separate from her.

"It is worth while to ask whether our public worship faithfully expresses a true and deep spiritual life, whether in any respect it may better accomplish this end, whether again there are any lessons which we may learn from 'Ritualism' itself; and in a word, how we best may honour God while with the multitude we bow before Him.

"Observe, we speak of public worship. There is a fellowship among Christians, expressing itself by prayers and praise, which is essentially of a more social and restricted character. The worship of the Church is a different thing from that of the Congregation. Between the two, the churches of all times have recognized the distinction. The former is especially sacred; that the latter also is scriptural we need not stay to prove: It is right, we hold, for believers in Christ, not only to express their own faith and love in mutual communion before the throne of God, but to gather their families around them there, to invite the world to come in, to pray for those who pray not for themselves; to pray with them also, if perchance some true feeling, or penitent confession, or holy desire may arise from their souls to heaven. We dare not say to them, even before they are consciously regenerate, 'your prayers are unheard, your songs of praise a mockery; you have no part or lot in this matter;' but rather with indiscriminate invitation, 'O, come let us worship!' speaking for all, as we may, to the Father of all. Thus the worship of the house of prayer becomes among the foremost of the means of grace, a help to the weakest, a warning to the most careless, an influence oftentimes which even more than the preacher's exhortation leads to God.

"And yet the specially Christian service should not be disregarded, or take an inferior or an occasional place. It is a serious question whether the Lord's day should be surrendered to the congregation. Would it not be well for us to take one weekly opportunity, at least, like the early disciples, as believers alone? We know but little of the efforts made by the apostolic

