

Our Contributors.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Notes on Hymns.

BY UNCLE WILL.

The name of Harriet Auber will be remembered in connection with a single hymn, No. 111 in *The Book of Praise*, "Our blest Redeemer ere he breathed His tender last farewell," and claimed as the best to the Holy Spirit in our language. It comes as near perfection as a hymn can possibly come.

Apart from its great beauty the hymn is remarkable from the fact that the authoress first wrote it on a pane of glass in a window of her house at Hoddesden, where she resided for many years.

Mr. Lock of that town says: I remember the house well in which Miss Auber used to live, and where she died in 1862 at the patriarchal age of 80. She was buried in the churchyard immediately opposite the house. She and a Miss MacKenzie lived together, two saintly old ladies who were known and loved for many miles round. The hymn has been translated into many languages and is in use in all English speaking countries.

She was the authoress of a metrical version of the Psalms, which she styled: "The Spirit of the Psalms," some of which are mentioned by Duffield as included in some of the hymnals published in the United States.

The better of the musical settings is St. Cuthbert by Dr. Dykes. The harmony is perfect and great care should be taken to sing it in correct time. It should be sung in strict time throughout. The beauty of the harmony is spoiled, if there is a retard on the last line.

I read the other day that "Nearer my God to Thee," a notice of which was given in a former article, is a great favourite with King Edward. When Mr. McKinley was almost in *extremis* he derived great comfort from the hymn.

A correspondent to one of the London papers relates a story told by the Rev. Dr. Moulton who was for over thirty years a missionary in the Tongau Islands. "On his periodical visit to the Smaller Islands" wrote the anonymous correspondent, "he landed at one rarely even visited by missionaries and there heard that an old Tongau, who had some years before been converted to Christianity, was dying. The Doctor hastened to the hut of the sufferer, and there a curious sight met his view. The old man had been propped up by his friends so that he clung by his two arms to a beam stretching across the room; there he half hung with closed eyes and a face drawn with agony constantly murmuring some words. The Doctor drew silently near him, thinking that the dying man was making some last request, 'Judge my astonishment' he said in relating the incident, 'when I heard these words uttered over and over again—in Tongau of course—"Nearer, O God, to Thee! Nearer to Thee." In those days almost forty years ago—the hymn of the cultured, saintly, English woman had not reached the Tongan natives, but the same spirit that inspired the thought in her doubtless inspired it

in the heart of the poor, untutored Christian Tongan.

It is related, that while undergoing imprisonment in Newgate gaol, for the crime of writing a spirited defence of the French Revolution, the father of Sarah (Flower) Adams met his future wife, Miss Eliza Gould. That while in gaol he was visited by Miss Gould. The friendship thus formed ripened into love, and when his term of imprisonment was over they were married.

What the Bible Says about Religion.

Close Communion.

BY REV. W. A. MACKAY, B. A., D. D.,

The regular Baptists hold and practise the doctrine of close communion. Dipping is with them a term of communion, and they hesitate not to debar from the Lord's Table the ministers and members of non-immersing churches, as unfit for fellowship so sacred. A man may be as evangelical in his views and as holy in his life as were Owen or Edwards, Wesley or McChyne, but he cannot, according to this doctrine, partake of the Lord's Supper without profaning it, because he has not been immersed. It is sad, indeed, to see a large denomination, containing many good and zealous members, so carried away with the mere outward mode of administering an ordinance that they break the communion of the Church, and treat those whom they acknowledge to be fellow Christians as aliens. I have known a Baptist husband refuse to have communion at the Table with his wife because, although a most devoted Christian, she happened to be a Presbyterian. I have known the Baptist son deny his mother's right to sit at the Lord's Table because she was a Methodist; and a Baptist daughter refuse communion with her Presbyterian parents.

This exclusive practice is stoutly defended and advocated by many of the ablest writers in the Baptist Church. Here are two or three quotations, and I hold myself ready to produce almost any number of similar ones; the Western Recorder, a widely circulated Baptist paper in the United States, says: "For Baptists to call Pedo-Baptist bodies churches having the right to administer the Lord's Supper is logical insanity and idiocy." A writer in the Religious Herald, another leading Baptist paper, says: "Christian baptism is immersion of a believer in water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—nothing else is. Baptist churches are the only Christian churches in existence. Pedo-Baptists have no right to the Lord's Supper. Whenever they partake of the Lord's Supper they partake unworthily, and eat and drink damnation to themselves." The question of close communion resolves itself into this: Is the want of dipping into water a divinely recognized disqualification for commemorating the Lord's death? Is the injunction, "This do in remembrance of Me," given to none but Baptists, and do all others violate their Master's will whenever they partake of the sacramental bread and cup in remem-

brance of Him? This is the question before us.

In justice to the Baptist Church, let it be observed that although close communion all but universally prevails in Canada, yet many Baptist ministers and people strongly disapprove of it, and denounce it as selfish, intolerant and Pharisaical. I have before me a book of 180 pages against close communion, by Rev. George C. Moore, a Baptist minister of Ontario. It is entitled, "Bigotry Demolished." On page 95 Mr. Moore, speaking of his close communion brethren, says: "How any man or body of men can complacently fraternize with other Christians, supremely orthodox and strictly moral Christians, many of them zealous and eloquent ministers of the Gospel; and yet look to the Book of God for an example to justify them in debarring such from any ordinance in Christ's kingdom, almost surpasses the conjectural powers of the most fertile imagination." Dr. Alexander Carson, one of the ablest and best known defenders of immersion the Baptist Church has ever produced, never believed or practised close communion. "That," said he, "which takes a man to heaven ought to take him into any church on earth." Howell, a Baptist writer on "Communion," page 127, says: "All the Lord's children have an undoubted right to His table, because whatever is His is theirs." So also the great and good Robert Hall and John Bunyan. The late C. H. Spurgeon thus speaks of his close communion brethren: "They separate themselves from the great body of Christ's people. They separate from the great universal Church. They say they will not commune with it; and if anyone comes to their table who has not been baptized (immersed), they turn him away. The pulse of Christ's Church is communion, and woe to the Church that seeks to cure the ills of Christ's Church by stopping its pulse." Baptists tell us that without close communion their system cannot stand. Let it perish then. Let it no longer act as a wedge to split the Church of the living God asunder, separating believing parents from believing children, the believing wife from the believing husband, and unchurching nineteen twentieths of the body of Christ.

When we inquire upon what evidence close communion is based, we meet with two statements made in its defence: (1) That baptism was a term of communion in the Apostolic Church; and (2) that immersion only is baptism. Both these statements we deny. As to the first one, we do not believe that water baptism fits men for sitting at the Lord's Table, or that it was an indispensable prerequisite to the Supper in the Apostolic Church. The Supper was instituted and partaken of before the commission to baptize was promulgated. We have no proof whatever that the first communicants received Christian baptism. There is no record of the baptism of any of the twelve Apostles, of Matthias, of any of the seventy preachers (Luke 10: 1-16), or of any of the one hundred and twenty. As to the second statement, viz., that "immersion only is baptism," no statement could be more utterly at war with the universal testimony of all literature, sacred and profane. It is the paltriest of assumptions, and without the slightest foundation in fact. The doctrine that dipping alone is baptizing was never heard of for sixteen hundred years after the command to baptize was