

tion of singing, and especially part singing, in our congregations.

I need not stop to point out how necessary it is that in order to have good congregational singing a considerable proportion of those engaged in this delightful part of the service, should not only be able to read music at sight but should have the musical score in their hands. There are very many men who cannot sing the air of even those tunes with the lowest pitch, and there are many women who have not soprano voices. To them, if they are to sing at all—and much the same is true of tenors—a harmonized score is an indispensable requisite, so that they may be able to sing bass, alto, or tenor just as they may find it most agreeable or suitable. I believe it is the intention to publish a harmonized edition of the Hymn Book and, therefore, I say no more of the necessity of doing so.

But in this connection a question of great importance comes up. There are two general methods of arranging hymns and tunes in the same book; which of these should the committee adopt? One is to annex a single tune to each hymn on the supposition that the tune and the hymn shall be inseparable in the church service. Whenever any given hymn is sung it must, according to this theory, be sung to the tune assigned to it, and to no other. In other words the committee, if this method be adopted, will once for all select the tune best adapted to each hymn, and precentors and choir leaders throughout the whole Church must submit to the arrangement. I say "must submit," because on this plan—as, for instance, in "Hymns Ancient and Modern," and the "Psalms and Hymns for Divine Worship," used by the English Presbyterian Church—there is no provision for turning over the leaves with the hymns and those with the tunes independently of each other. The other method is to have the leaf of the book divided into two parts, the lower containing the hymn and the upper the tune. Each of these parts can be turned over independently of the other, and the precentor, with such a book in his hands, can select any tune he pleases for any hymn.

Now, the question with me is not so much which of these methods is theoretically the soundest, but which of them is most likely (1) to lead to a general improvement in our congregational singing, and (2) to make the new Hymn Book popular, and bring it into general use. There is much to be said in favour of the first and less flexible system. It has been very successful in the case of "Hymns Ancient and Modern," and there can be no doubt that a committee of musical experts is better able to wed appropriate music to hymns than the average precentor is. Nevertheless, at this stage of our history and under existing circumstances, the more flexible plan adopted by the compilers and harmonizers of the Scottish Presbyterian hymn books is the one that should be adopted in Canada. Had we to deal with city churches alone the matter would be one of less importance, but the great majority of our precentors and choir leaders are able to make use of comparatively few tunes, and if the book is not so constructed as to allow them to turn to these at will, no matter what hymn is given out to be sung, they will not use it all. The tendency will manifestly be to retain and extend the use of the "Scottish Hymnal" of the Kirk, the "Presbyterian Hymnal" of the U. P. Church, and the coming Free Church Hymn Book which will, in some respects, be the strongest rival to our own in the field. One great object in getting up the Hymn Book just sanctioned by the Assembly was to secure something like uniformity within the Church. Uniformity will, I am persuaded, be in any case a long time in coming, for it will be found a difficult matter to evict the old and deeply loved hymn books when they are tenants of long standing, and I think it must be evident that to dictate to every precentor just what tune he is to sing, especially when, in nine cases out of ten, he cannot sing the prescribed one at all, is the surest way to defeat the Assembly's object. The range of our congregational singing is, even in our best trained city congregations, extremely limited. One can enumerate two dozen tunes and include in his list the great bulk of all the airs sung to psalms, paraphrases, and hymns from Halifax to Vancouver. We may regret that the attainments of our precentors and congregations are not more varied, but we must take them as we find them. It would be a desirable consummation to have every congregation trained to sing the very best tunes that can be found for each hymn, but surely it is better to have a comparatively unsuitable tune

sung with spirit and harmony than to have the precentor and a small knot of his assistants give a silent congregation an exhibition of their musical skill.

Both because the more flexible plan noted above would do most to improve congregational singing and because it would soonest lead to the displacement of old favourites and the establishment of their younger rival, our own excellent collection, I plead strongly for the adoption of that arrangement. I happen to know that this question is causing a good deal of anxiety in many quarters, and that not a few congregations will be guided in their choice of a Hymn Book by the form of the harmonized edition of our own. Though our collection is a good one it would be presumption to say that its intrinsic merits are sufficient to enable it to oust all rivals, as I for one hope to see it do.

OBSERVER.

TWO WAYS OF BUILDING CHURCHES AND THEIR SUCCESS.

In God's Word the rules laid down for church building are very simple and met with wonderful success, so we will look at the best way first.

When the children of Israel were journeying through the wilderness to the land of promise, the word of the Lord came unto them saying, "Make Me a sanctuary," and gave these rules to work by: "Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring Me an offering; of every man that giveth willingly with his heart, ye shall take My offering."

"Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord; whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering to the Lord: gold, silver," etc.

How did the plan work?

"They came, both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold; and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the Lord."

They gave with such liberality that they had to issue a proclamation to restrain them from bringing, "For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."

The people gave unto the Lord, and God shewed His pleasure in the work, for when it was completed, "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle."

Then in the time of David we find the people of God preparing to build the temple. How did they set to work? "They with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord." "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly to the Lord." They took no praise to themselves for what they had done, but said, "All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee." God accepted their willing offering, for at the opening of the temple, "The priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord."

In reading these passages we see in what a wonderful way God blessed His people, who worked by His plan, for the accomplishment of His glory.

Now we will look at the popular way and what success it meets with.

It is decided to build a church. The congregation is canvassed. Some give liberally, some grudgingly, but each tries to give what will make him appear respectable in the eyes of the rest. The most of the amount is thus pledged to be paid in yearly instalments, in three or four years.

The building committee set the thing in operation, but are continually harrassed for want of means, and have to borrow, and pay heavy interest, to carry on the work.

The ladies take up with real the furnishing of the church. A canvass is made among themselves, and so much monthly is promised.

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society is stopped to aid the work, and little by some and none by others is given to missions while this work is in progress, for "charity begins at home."

Then a round of amusements is gone into. Humorous and scientific lectures, socials, concerts, flower shows, art exhibitions, tableaux, parlour concerts, garden parties, etc., etc.

At last the building is finished: and its outward appearance is an ornament to the town or city. Inside how elegant it looks; with its tapestry-covered floor, softly cushioned seats, and stained windows. The day of opening arrives; and a large congregation listen to the preached word, while the cloud of a

mortgage hangs over the church; and the glory of a bazaar fills the basement.

Dear Christian friends, who are engaged in this work, take time to consider which is the proper way, and which way will bring the most honour to the God you love and the greatest blessing to yourselves.

M. D.

DIVORCE.

Will you allow me a few words on the divorce case? I can truly sympathize with the object undoubtedly prominent in the minds of the brethren who brought in what became the finding of the Assembly. We would deplore the unseemly disorder which is likely to arise if loose and discontented husbands or wives were encouraged to pay a visit to the neighbouring Republic, summarily dispose of their marriage covenant on mere pretence, and come back to defile our land with unlawful marriages. We should not however do injustice to any one ever with a good object in view. The Church of Christ must be governed wholly by divine law. "Whether it be right in the sight of God," (Acts iv. 19) is the rule by which a Christian court should determine. I admit that any unnecessary disregard of civil law, if they be just, is not "right in the sight of God." But let us look at the case before us.

1. There is no room for doubt that Mrs. Phillips has a right to divorce. She had come for it according to the Word of God. True, she did not get it on that ground but that was the fault of the civil court; and surely did not invalidate her right.

2. Had she and her present husband gone to Illinois, taken up their abode there, and done exactly what they have done in regard to their marriage, i.e. obtained the divorce to which she had a right, and remarried, which was also her right, would any member of Assembly say that they had violated Christian consistency in the least degree? It follows that if they have done wrong it is not in obtaining the divorce and marriage, for what is right, *de jure divino*, in Illinois cannot be wrong in Canada.

3. The only thing which calls for censure, therefore, if censure be due, is not the divorce and marriage, for to that they had divine right, but the manner in which these covenants have been effected. For this alone they should have been dealt with. It seems to me an error has been committed in looking too much to civil law and less to the sight of the divine which should be paramount. Our Canadian law in the matter of divorce is unrighteous in so far as it is available for the rich and not for the poor. I may be told that one may sue *in forma pauperis*, I answer, (1) it is not the less an unrighteous law that compels one to do that, and (2) the success of such a course is very unlikely, and dependent on accidents, which is also wrong.

Our law is more at fault than Mrs. Phillips, who has not intentionally sinned even in disregarding its requirements. Her divorce and marriage may be invalid in the sight of men who make and administer law *populo volente*, but not in the sight of God whose laws are not bounded by states or provinces.

Yet if the verdict against Mrs. Phillips is to be carried out what monstrous consequences will it entail. 1. She must be held guilty of adultery, living with another than her husband. 2. She must be punished for bigamy. 3. She must separate from her present husband and go back to live with her former one till she obtain a divorce, which by Canadian law she probably never could. Would not the last error be worse than the first? I do not see how she can be chargeable *de jure divino* with anything worthy of suspension. Her sin seems to me only an error of judgment—an unintentional disregard of Canadian law—and even this in consequence of its provisions being virtually out of her reach. Had she and her husband been married in Illinois none would have called in question their standing in the Christian Church, but how could such an accident change their standing "before God?"

JUS.

July 9th, 1880.

FAULTLESSNESS is conceivable, being merely the negation of evil. But perfection is positive, the attainment of all conceivable excellence.—F. W. Robertson.

IT requires more faith and courage to say two words face to face with one single sinner, than from the pulpit to rebuke two or three thousand persons, ready to listen to everything on condition of forgetting all.—Bossuet.