

such a system here, or in a few years, there will be the utmost difficulty in proving almost any birth, marriage, or death.—*Canadian Independent*.

[We understand that though the required Returns were made, still no registration would take place, without a special application to that effect, and the payment of a fee. The Returns are required only for "Statistical Information." Unless registration be attended to, the inevitable consequence will be trouble, expense, and loss of property. Let parties concerned see to it, every one in his own case. Whoever may be losers by the neglect of registration, the lawyers, at all events, will be gainers.]

CHURCH MUSIC.

Congregational singing will never become general and permanent until the Churches employ tunes which have melodies that cling to the memory, and touch the feelings or the imagination.

Music is not simply a vehicle for carrying a hymn. It is something in itself. No tune is fit to be sung to a hymn which would not be pleasant in itself without any words. Any other view of the function of music, if it shall prevail will in the end bring music to such a tame and tasteless state that a reaction will be inevitable, and the public mind will go to the opposite extreme. Thus, those who are conscientiously anxious to make music a means of religious feeling, will, by an injudicious method, produce by and by the very mischief which they sought to cure.

A corruption of hymns will not be more fatal to public worship than will be a corruption of music. And any theory that denies to Church music, a power upon the imaginations and the feelings, as music, and makes it a mere servile attendant upon words, will carry certain mischief upon its path, and put back, indefinitely, the cause of Church music.

The tunes which burden our modern books in hundreds and thousands, utterly devoid of character, without meaning or substance, may be sung a hundred times, and not a person in the congregation will remember them. There is nothing to remember. They are the very emptiness of fluent noise. But let a true tune be sung, and every person of sensibility, every person of feeling, every child even, is aroused and touched. The melody clings to them. On the way home snatches of it may be heard on this side and on that: and when, the next Sabbath, the same song is heard, one and another of the people fall in, and the volume grows with each verse, until at length the song, breaking forth as a many-rilled stream from the hills, grows deeper, and flows on broad as a mighty river! Such tunes are never forgotten. They cling to us through our whole life. We carry them with us upon our journey. We sing them in the forest. The workman follows the plough with sacred songs. Children catch them, and singing only for the joy it gives them now, are yet laying up for all their life, food of the sweetest joy. Such tunes give new harmony and sweetness even to the hymns which float upon their current.

In selecting music we would not allow any fastidiousness of taste to set aside the lessons of experience. A tune which has always interested a congregation, which inspires the young, and lends to enthusiasm a fit expression, ought not to be set aside because it does not follow the reigning fashion, or conform to the whims of technical science. There is such a thing as Pharisaism in music. Tunes may be very faulty in structure, and yet convey a full-hearted current that will sweep out of the way the worthless, heartless trash which has no merit except a literal correctness. And when, upon trial, a tune is found to do good work, it should be used for what it does and can do.

We do not think that congregational singing will ever prevail with power until pastors of churches appreciate its importance, and universally labor to secure it. If ministers regard singing as but a decorous kind of amusement, pleasantly relieving or separating the more solemn acts of worship, it will always be degraded. The pastor, in many cases, in small rural churches, may be himself the leader. In large Societies, where a musical director is employed, the Pastor should still be the animating centre of the music, encouraging the people to take part in it, keeping always before them their duty, and their benefit in participating in this most delightful part of public worship.—*II. Ward Beecher*.

[It is obvious that many Ministers, by judiciously cultivating sacred music among their people, do much to promote the prosperity of their congregations, and augment