

be doubted that congregational singing as such is very far from being what it might become. Is it inevitable that tasteful, correct and artistically expressive singing must repress the full-hearted and strong utterance of a large and united congregation? The power of sacred song in intensifying and exalting devotional feeling is universally recognized. It is a power felt by preacher and people alike. Few will be prepared to affirm that this power is adequately realized in the average congregations of the present time. In all other departments of Church work there is marked and encouraging progress. Why should a matter so conducive to profitable religious service as good congregational singing be allowed to lag behind?

It may be that growing activity and earnest devotion to practical Christian work has a repressive effect on the better cultivation of Church music, to this extent at least, that in view of varied and clamant duties it is relatively unimportant whether this part of the public service be suffered to stand still or retrograde. If it is true that in all essential parts of Christian worship the service should be of the best, then it follows that neglect of good congregational singing is altogether unjustifiable. It cannot be neglected without serious loss. That good Church music is in itself a means of attraction and helps attendance at Church services is the least part of it. That it is a means of attraction, and one that is quite legitimate is not for a moment denied. The effective service of praise, however, like prayer and preaching, may be properly regarded as a means of grace. Indifference to any means of grace is certainly spiritually injurious, and we cease to profit by it, when we cease to regard it as important. As an instrumentality of spiritual progress we ought to make much more than we now do of the service of sacred song.

Why is it that in so many congregations the great body of the people fail to join heartily and fully in the singing of psalms and hymns? Organ and choir, quartette and soloist, are all very well in their places, and much depends on them, but can a worshipping congregation delegate to others that portion of the service which is peculiarly their own? People whose musical education has been totally or partially neglected may hesitate to raise their voices lest they mar the beauty and spoil the effect that artistic excellence produces, but it has to be remembered that artistic perfection, however desirable it may be, is not the highest purpose of congregational singing. It is a part of the solemn worship of Almighty God, and one in which every devout soul should take a part. The improvement of congregational singing was greatly helped by the good old-fashioned meeting expressly for practice in sacred music. To a large extent this has been crowded out by matters of more or less importance, but it should not be altogether discarded until a more effective agency has been devised to take its place. Another means of helpfulness in this respect is that praise enters more fully than formerly into the ordinary services of the Church. The stunted number of verses to be sung is now a thing of the past and at all meetings praise has become a much more prominent feature than was the case hitherto. Whatever tends to the development of this essential part of the service of the sanctuary is deserving of consideration. There is surely no good reason why congregational singing should remain so comparatively feeble and unsatisfactory as it confessedly is at present. If blessings are received in answer to the prayers of the sanctuary, why should they not be looked for in response to its heartfelt and full-voiced praises?

MRS. SCOTT-SIDDONS is announced for an evening of Dramatic Recitals, in Association Hall, on Tuesday, 3rd April. A large and enthusiastic audience is sure to greet Mrs. Siddons on this occasion.

THE increasing business of the Standard Life Insurance Company in Toronto demanded larger and more accommodation. The company have moved to larger and more commodious offices in the same building on Toronto Street. Mr. Hunter, the superintendent of agencies, and Mr. F. Sparling, city agent, have their offices in the main entrance, whilst the cashier, Mr. John W. Kerr, has a convenient and spacious office for the discharge of his duties. Mr. Kerr, the inspector, leaves for British Columbia this week in the interest of the company.

Books and Magazines.

HINTS TO YOUNG MEN. From the Parable of the Prodigal Son. By the Rev. John Leyburn, D.D. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication.)—The author is well known as an eloquent preacher. This book consists of a course of sermons on the parable of the prodigal son addressed to young men. They are full of wise counsels and suggestions, which the young men of these modern days would find it to their profit to read and deeply ponder.

BETTER NOT. By J. H. Vincent, LL.D., Chancellor of Chautauqua University. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—The author needs no introduction to the reading public. This, his latest work, is a brief, spicy yet calm and eminently catholic letter to young people, parents and leaders of society upon the non-Christian tendencies of wine-drinking, card-playing, theatre-going and dancing. Dr. Vincent's advice being "Better Not." It is needless to say that the book has literary qualities that commend it, while its motive and the spirit displayed in the treatment will win for it friends even among those who are votaries of fashion and revolve in society's whirl. It is a capital book, and deserves a large circulation.

STILL HOURS. By Richard Rothe. Translated by Jane T. Stoddart, with an introductory essay by Rev. John MacPherson, M.A. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—Richard Rothe, in his life time, was one of the leading factors in German thought. As professor in various theological seminaries, and a voluminous author, his influence was long and powerfully felt. "Still Hours" is a posthumous work, prepared by Prof. Nippold, of Berne, one of Rothe's admiring students, and shows him to have been a man of deep personal piety of pure and simple heart. Of this excellent work one says: "To many this collection of choice reflections by so profound and earnest a thinker as Richard Rothe will prove a rich mine of intellectual and religious suggestion, helpful and stimulating in no ordinary degree. So varied, too, are the themes discussed, that all classes of readers may find something to interest, something fitted to throw new light on oft-discussed and long-studied themes, or to lead to new departures in thinking not ventured on before."

THE JEWS, or Prediction and Fulfilment, an Argument for the Times. By Samuel H. Kellogg, D.D. New edition with an Appendix. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co.)—That this is an able work on a subject of great interest, is proved by the fact that a second edition has already been called for. It is characterized by careful and painstaking study of the sacred Scriptures, and all the best sources of information available. Dr. Kellogg is a clear and logical thinker, eminently candid and fair. Whether the reader is prepared to accept all the Doctor's conclusions, he cannot fail to respect the earnestness and sincerity with which the author states and enforces his convictions. The book contains five chapters, Separated from the Nations, Foretold and Fulfilled, To be Fulfilled, Theories and Facts, and Recapitulation and Conclusions. The Appendix contains much valuable information concerning the present condition of the Jews, concisely and clearly stated. In addition to the intrinsic merits of the work, it has also a great apologetic value.

SCRIPTURE READINGS, for Use in the Public and High Schools of Ontario. Revised Edition. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—To meet all reasonable objections raised against the Scripture Selections for use in school, the committee, representative of the various Churches to whom was entrusted the task of their preparation was again convened and the work of revision committed to them. In this edition chapter and verse are given, and the portions selected for reading are complete in themselves. They are carefully and systematically arranged: the Old Testament into two parts, the first historical, the second devotional, didactic, prophetic; the New Testament is arranged in three parts, first, historical and didactic—the Gospels; second, historical and didactic—the Acts of the Apostles; and third, didactic and prophetic—the Epistles and the Revelation. The work of revision has been done with care and patience by scholarly and devout men who are highly esteemed in their respective communions. It is hoped that unseemly strife over the Book of Selections is now and finally settled.

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

A LETTER FROM SANTO.

The following letter, addressed to Mrs. Burns, wife of Rev. R. F. Burns, D.D., appears in the last issue of the *Halifax Presbyterian Witness*:

MY DEAR MRS. BURNS,—Your last information from us told you of our settlement on Tangoa, Santo. Though we were nominally settled certainly our home here was but a settled appearance. The state which our things were in was "confusion worse confounded." Could you have seen our house as we first took possession you might have supposed that order could never be brought out of such a mixture of timber, boxes, furniture, etc., piled inside and out. However, after a few weeks the several kinds of goods seemed to reach their respective places, and now after three months have gone, our little cottage of four rooms is very comfortable. It is a weatherboard building with back and front veranda and galvanized iron roof. It is lined throughout and painted white with chocolate coloured doors and windows; a small pantry, bath room, and store room are joined to the house, while our kitchen and yam house comprise another building a little detached from the dwelling. Tangoa isle rises some fifty feet above the sea. It is upward of a mile in length and about a third of a mile in width. It is dry and rocky. We depend upon our tanks entirely for water. We have not had time to feel lonely since coming here. Our work has been superabundant. Owing to the shipwreck we have had much more to do than we otherwise should have, so many of our things were broken and others destroyed with the sea water. I am glad to say that so far our people are very friendly, coming about the premises every day. We are only a few yards away from the native village. Though the people live here on account of health, they all have their plantations on the mainland where they go to work every day, rain or shine. They seem industrious, having plenty of food both for their own use and for sale. They are a people of some importance as things go here. They build large canoes, and go quite long distances on trading expeditions. Polygamy is practised. One man has eight wives, another three, and quite a number have two, all have one each at least. They pay from five to twenty pigs according to the rank of the girl. One day a few weeks ago a poor timid little girl was brought to see us, who had been bought by a man whose wife had died three weeks before. He had paid six pigs for her. She would be twelve or thirteen years old, but did not look more than nine. She had never seen a white face before, and was very much afraid of us. The women, as on the other heathen islands, do the drudgery of the work. There are ten villages on the mainland speaking this language, while on the south side of Santo there are people speaking three other dialects, all of whom we call our people. We hope that by acquiring one language we shall in time be able to work the whole of this south district of Santo, leaving three-quarters at least of the island uncared for. The dress of our people is very much in need of reform, that of the men is passable, but that of the women I cannot describe. They have, however, shown less distaste to wearing our clothes than on some of the other heathen islands, a good many of the men have got shirts from us, also some of the women dresses, and have brought us some yam in return. There are two high chiefs at this village. One, Molimatu, seems to be the most important, and is a very nice man and quite dignified; the other, Molisokisoki, we do not care much for, though he is quite friendly. He is said to be a cannibal; indeed all these people are said to be cannibals, but we have seen nothing of it as yet. At present peace reigns all this side of Santo. We have had visits from six of the inland chiefs with some of their wives and people to see the missionary and the big white house of which the people of Tangoa seem quite proud of showing to their neighbours. We have noticed them show some kindness and sympathy for Mr. Annand, who has been laid up for over three weeks. While assisting at the building of Mr. Landel's house on Malo, he strained his back badly. It has never become strong, and I fear that he has been working too hard since coming here. The pain commenced again about four weeks ago, and went down into his right leg in the form of sciatica, from which he is still laid up. At times he suffers most intense pain. Some of the people come to see him every day. Molimatu spent most of a day with him lately, bringing him some green coconuts to drink. Molisokisoki also came and sat with him an afternoon, and wished to cut or scrape the leg, but Mr. Annand declined his kind offer. I trust that he may soon get about again. It seems impossible to get anything that will give him permanent relief.

Tangoa, Santo, New Hebrides, Oct. 29, 1887.