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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON.

Manager and Editor

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 15, 1909.

We do not admire spurts in religion. We have very little confidence in "sheet-iron" Christians. And yet we cannot help saying that those good people who have been enjoying themselves for months and have now returned home should "take hold" of their church work with renewed and increased energy. September and October should be good months for the Church. Many of our city and town readers have not done an hour's work for their church since last June. Let there be earnest, skilful and persistent work now and plenty of it. There is another matter of equal importance. The revenue of many congregations goes down to zero in July and August. People are away and they took their money away with them—and spent a good deal of it too. The first envelope after the holidays should be very full. How about yours?

Many and severe have been the denunciations of what is called orthodox bigotry. It seems to be forgotten by those who delight in denouncing the bigotry that some orthodox people display that their weapons can easily be turned against themselves. The man who boasts about his liberality in religious matters is not unfrequently the most illiberal man in the community. The so-called free-thinkers is quite often the first to refuse freedom of thought to others. This point was recently well put by a prominent Unitarian on the other side of the line:

If there can be anything more hateful than the stupidest forms of superstitious bigotry, it is the intolerance of the heterodox bigot, who makes intellectual assent to certain negations the test of religious character. An illiberal "liberal" Christian is one of the most exasperating of all fanatics; for his fanaticism is based on what he calls his reason, and he ignores every fact of deep religious experience.

## THE ONLY SUCCESSION.

To those who accept the Word of God as the only rule of faith, and discard priestliness in its every form, apostolical succession is nothing but a figment of the imagination. These maintain that the apostles could have no successors. They remember the distinguishing features of the apostolate, that one must have been with the Lord and been able to witness to his resurrection. They acknowledge the claim of Paul to rank as an apostle, because after the ascension he had miraculously seen the Lord, and had listened to His voice. The conclusion is inevitable that the apostleship ceased, when the last of the twelve had gone to his reward.

The very notion of apostolic succession is begotten of the world. There cannot in the nature of the case be any hereditary line either with ministers of religion or Christians generally. Royalty may lay claim to an unbroken descent from some illustrious warrior, though even here many links in the chain may be found to be imperfect. The scion of a noble house may proudly trace his lineage, through the centuries, to him who, by some deed of prowess or some good fortune, became its founder. But there is nothing corresponding to this in the Christian life. In this regard we are without father and mother. We cannot boast of our patent of nobility. Nor can we indulge the pleasing dream of being succeeded by heirs according to the flesh. It is true that Christians are frequently blessed with the glad spectacle of their children becoming the genuine followers of Christ. But how frequently is the opposite to be seen, parents being broken-hearted because of the prodigality of their offspring.

No. Every man, every woman must stand alone. The Saviour has one saying that is applicable to all. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It will not avail even in the case of an Archbishop that he can boast of the Papal blessing, if his heart has not been touched by the Spirit of God. The only true ordination is that of which the Apostle Paul speaks when he says, "and when James, Cephas and John, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship." There is something which lies back of the call of the Church to be a minister, and that is the call of God. It is this which gives meaning to a pastor's ordination. It is this which gives him a place in the true succession of Christian men and women. But without it the Papal tiara and crozier, the cardinal's hats, the bishop's lawn, the minister's robe, are only like the sign-board over an empty shop. If so, then let the vain fancy of apostolic succession be given up, and let Christians consecrate themselves to the work which it has pleased God to assign to them of proclaiming a free and full gospel of salvation.

Think seldom of yourself, often of your friends, and every day of Christ; spend as much time as you can, with body and spirit, in God's out-of-doors—these are little guide-posts on the footpath to peace.—H. Vandye.

## CHURCH MUSIC.

One thing in the Presbyterian Church in Canada that affords great room for improvement is sacred music. A hopeful sign of advance in this divine art is the attention that is being devoted to the subject. People are becoming more alive to its importance, and various efforts are being made to bring about a much needed reform. Music has its attractions for all classes of people, hence the readiness in some country districts to welcome the visits of the peripatetic musical adventurer who opens his singing classes in the rural school houses, and affords, if nothing better, an agreeable pastime for the young people during the long winter evenings. The singing school of earlier days is rapidly becoming a reminiscence of the past. Its usefulness is gone. It would be well if it were replaced by some more efficient means of stimulating and directing the musical education of the young.

Our comprehensive system of education very properly makes provision to a limited extent for teaching music in the public schools. This important branch of culture might with advantage be considerably extended. Besides being helpful in awakening a love for music, and laying a good foundation for subsequent advances, it would afford a welcome and agreeable respite for the monotonous grind to which the pupils of these days are subjected.

There is a noticeable improvement in the general appreciation of high-class music by the community. An oratorio, for instance, is not now listened to with ill-concealed weariness, or, as was not infrequently the case, under the pleasing fiction of listening to the music the people seemed to entertain the opinion that its chief purpose was to provide an artistic back ground for a rattling fire of silly chatter. That has well nigh disappeared, and most auditors seem to catch the spirit of the inspiring strains.

The importance of music in the highest sphere to which it can be applied—the service of God—is demonstrated by the prominent place it has assumed in all great religious movements. Its influence was powerfully and immediately felt during the early days of the Reformation. Luther's fondness for music is proverbial. The Wesleys gave it special prominence in the great revival that issued in the founding of Methodism. In our own time, we have seen the grand effects produced by the consecrated musical talent of a Sankey.

Many are of opinion that Presbyterians have not given the service of praise the attention they should. It may be that they are not behind some of their neighbors in this respect, but such consolation—if consolation it be—is at best but negative. It would be wrong to say that it has been indifferent on the question of sacred music, but it is undeniable that in too many instances there is a lamentable indifference to what ought to be one of the brightest and most impressive parts of sacred worship. The cultivation of music generally has tended to the development of a more artistic taste, but as yet it has almost failed to benefit the service of sacred song. One effect, temporary it is to be hoped, is that in