

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION.

A LECTURE.

"Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—Ps. 133:1,11

PREFATORY NOTE. The Rev. Dr. Burns spent the closing years of his active ministry at Halifax. He was by birth a Scotsman, the son of an eminent Scottish divine, the Rev. Robert Burns, D.D., latterly one of the Professors of Knox College, Toronto. Young Burnsearly made up his mind to devote his life to the ministry of the gospel. Distinguished as a student, he made his mark at an early stage as a preacher, as a lecturer, as a home missionary and as a pastor. He exercised his ministry with distinction in several congregations, his closing years of active work being spent at Halifax where he had proved himself eminently useful not only in Fort Massey Church and in this city and in the Province of Nova Scotia but in all the sea provinces, and in Ontario and Quebec. Dr. Burns was a sound theologian, profoundly versed in the history of the Church in all its branches, and thoroughly loyal to the glorious Reformation. In the year 1890 the theory of "Apostolical Succession" as held by "High Anglicans and Roman Catholics" received more than usual prominence in this city. Dr. Burns knew the futility of the dogma, its flimsy foundation, its absurd appeal to history, and he treated it in a lecture, in two parts. No reply was attempted, so far as known. In fact, no effective reply can be made to this admirable historical presentation of the case. It has been felt that the Lecture being out of print, is a distinct loss to the student of history who desires to obtain a correct view of the course of events.

Dr. Burns was no lover of controversy, but he welcomed discussion when truth was at stake. He was a large hearted man, totally devoid of the narrow prejudices that too often cloud the mental vision of sectarians. Dr. Burns was a Presbyterian with as generous and broad an outlook as John Calvin himself, who was willing to cross seven seas to promote the union of the Evangelical Churches. He bore no grudge against the Church of England, but greatly admired its reforming founders while he would not hesitate to expose the heresy of Laud and his errant school. R.