The Anthem.

In many churches, of all denominations, the "anthem" has become as prominent a part of the service of Lord's day as Scripture reading or congregational praise. That "church" which has not its anthem rendering choir or quartette is regarded as decidedly second rate and confessedly unprogressive.

In ritualistic churches like the Papal or the Anglican, such a performance is quite in keeping with other performances; but in such churches as the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregationalist, which ostensibly appeal directly to Scripture for the cast and character of their public worship, whose very existence is historically traceable to loyal adherence to Scriptural institutions only, and solemn protest against all human changes and additions—in these churches how is "the anthem" to be accounted for? Where is such a thing as the anthem mentioned in the history of the apostolic church? We read of the early Christians, when under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost and the personal supervision of the apostles, "continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship, in breaking of bread and in prayers," we see Christians *all* exhorted to "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts," but we never get a hint about their choir anthems. The partizans of the anthem are prepared, of course, instantly to refer us to the elaborate musical services of the Jewish temple and to the book of Revelations. But surely both these references are utterly irrelevant. With the Jewish and Levitical ritual *we Gentiles never had anything to do*, for "Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth," He having abolished all "commandments contained in ordinances." If we can justify ourselves in any portion of our church service by appealing to the Jewish economy, by the very same argument popery can justify the priest, the altar, and the sacrifice of the mass, the use of holy water and extreme unction and incense burning. When we appeal to the book of Revelations for the purpose of sanctioning our peculiar church worship, we only displace and degrade and misrepresent heavenly things. The church of Christ is neither Judaic nor celestial. Judaize her and you degrade her to materialism. Celestialize her and you lift her into a region of transcendental imagination and presumption, where she can neither work nor walk.

It is high time that this modern innovation should be seriously examined as to its authority and its use. It is certainly a genuine "means of grace," forming an essential part of church worship, or it is a mere human invention; either of these it is. Now, all means of grace entitled to a place in the church of Christ, and upon the use of which we can expect the blessing of God, must be expressly sanctioned and enjoined by the God of grace, and must appeal to the understanding of common intelligence. I need not ask, where is there in the New Testament *divine authority* for the anthem? Nor need I ask, when is it *intelligible* to mortals of ordinary mental capacity?

May I be permitted to make three simple remarks about the anthem?

1. *It is not, as a rule, intelligible*—therefore it is not "edification." The musical notes high and low, long and short, sharp and flat are all rendered, I suppose, very faithfully—*piano, crescendo, fortissimo*, according to the book—generally with great emphasis, pretty frequently in fairly good time, and occasionally even with good taste and feeling; but who, save those few familiar with the piece performed, can follow the sentiment or even distinguish the words? Occasionally one word or the fragment of one may be distinguishable by the auricular organs of some of the auditors—one word rescued, as it were, from the chaos of melody—one solitary word from among the intricacies of sound, one word that has not lost its identity amid the numerous repetitions, interlacings and intertwistings of the various vocal parts, and the marvellous performances of the enthusiastic organist; now it is the bass that elides two syllables and a half, when the alto or the tenor jumps on his back and carries off the same two syllables triumphantly, making the half syllable into a whole one, or even running on courageously into half a sentence, when down comes the bass again with the roar of a lion and apparently recovers his prey; then a sudden pause of the entire human element occurs, while the organ's wild throbbings, shrill warblings and melancholy moaning, most appropriately indicate the defeat and the victory. On one occasion I listened faithfully to an anthem which lasted seven minutes at least, and the only two words I could disentangle from the musical uproar were "His children" repeated at intervals; but where the "children" had been or what they had been doing, I failed to ascertain. On another occasion I detected the word "Blessed" three or four times repeated. On another, I caught the words "Water brooks," but, like a stream in the Scottish Highlands, the water brooks suddenly were lost in melodious surroundings, to reappear three or four times more, then disappear altogether. During one performance I remember the words "Forever" and "Evermore"; during another I could recognize no English at all save the pleasant word "Sweet." In but a few cases, not I suppose more than a dozen, during my long ministry have I been edified with a line or two of comprehensible articulation.

Can this sort of thing, even in the judgment of broad charity, be called worship or edification? A very amazing and very distracting performance it certainly is. Is it the modern revival of the Corinthian Glossolalia described and condemned by Paul, the unknown tongues which he prohibited unless when followed by interpretation into the vernacular? Once upon a time when I occupied for one Lord's day the pulpit of a big city church, shortly before the public service commenced, a pleasant dapper little gentleman entered the vestry, announced himself as the leader of the choir, gave me the hymns he had selected and then said, "You will notice sir, there is an anthem at this point; but I hear you don't approve of anthems." "Indeed," I replied, "my musical reputation has travelled far. I object to nothing that is scriptural, and calculated to instruct and edify. To incomprehensible sounds and to vain repetitions I have a decided objection in the worship of God. We all expect the hymns and prayers, the reading and preaching, to be in intelligible language; make your anthem intelligible and profitable—and sing away." This is my position now. Sound without sense is non-sense. The vain repetition of sacred words, especially by some thoughtless "performers" is worse than nonsense; it is religious profanity. "Use not vain repetitions as the heathen do" is an apostolic admonition.

Were it not on the Lord's day and in the house of prayer, I could feel interested not a little in "the anthem." For instance, I have felt more than once deeply interested in noticing how courageously the ladies sustain their parts, even the face of a gazing multitude, and even when the masculine parts come tumbling in and tumbling out of the current of melody. I have also been impressed with how manfully the solo bass will keep on his way while ruthlessly interrupted now and again by spasms of feminine ejaculations in the shrillest key, and then, after so many dangers, how successfully the anthem quietly expires. All this is an interesting study, to say nothing of the dresses and manners of the performers.

2. My second remark is this, *The anthem is either singing to the people present or singing for them.* If it be singing *to* the people, then it is a musical entertainment, an æsthetic interlude. If it be singing *for* the people, then it becomes a sacerdotal function, a worshipping of God by proxy. Can we imagine the great God of heaven to be pleased with a performance of this kind by a few thoughtless, often unconverted youth, while the same time might be occupied with a Psalm or hymn in which *all God's chosen* present could take part with the heart?

Instead of being gratifying to the God of saving grace, I fear it must be highly offensive for all His own children to sit in silence while a select few (a number of them not even convicted of sin) undertake to do the worshipping in a style specially perfect. That praise which comes from the lips of the believer most advanced in Christ-life and most mature in gracious sanctification, weak and immusical though his voice may be, sends up to Jehovah's ear the sweetest melody, the choicest song. No enquiry can be more important than this: Is our "public worship" intended to please God or to please ourselves?

3. My third remark is this, *The anthem is seldom, almost never appropriate to the prevailing sentiment of the sermon or the other devotions*, and therefore not helpful.

A judicious pastor takes special care that *all parts* of the entire service should be harmonized, but the anthem moves on totally independent lines. It originated in the musical taste of the choir at the previous Friday evening's practice; perhaps it originated in the happy advent of a new bass or to suit the absence of the chief alto. Thus the prominent thought of the congregational praise, and of the chapter read, and of the prayer offered must all be violently interrupted as by a sudden volcanic upheaval. Even when the choir condescends to repeat two or three verses of a hymn with the words of which the majority of the congregation are familiar, it is astonishing how utterly inappropriate the sentiment usually is to all that precedes or follows. How often is the poor preacher thankful that such distraction does not *follow* the sermon in which he has labored to impress the thoughtless, convict the sinful, and instruct the flock.

Seldom during my own pastorate have I had to suffer from this, but I have had a little experience of what my ministerial brethren have had to endure. Once when I was supplying for one service a prominent city pulpit (the choir being stationed immediately before the platform) well can I remember, how I was startled by the performance of a female soloist. Just before me there rose suddenly the back of a stout feminine form—she was a Mademoiselle Something, a long, polished name, who, during the week, sang in secular concerts—wearing a head-dress of wonderful shape, and holding in elegant kids a sheet of music; well, she went at her work with a will, succeeding in conveying to me, who was her nearest auditor, I suppose, not one complete thought about anything on earth or heaven; she hung on one word or two for a long time, then she tripped over a dozen syllables as if they were too hot to hold, then she came to a few words she worried over trying to get them disposed of by repeating them first low and then high and then falsetto, then at last she ended with a cry that could be accounted for only by her breadth of chest. Well, after it was all over, without an accident, I sat still a while, wondering if I could muster courage to preach after such a spectacle. I felt a little humiliated on my way home to think that a minister of Jesus Christ would probably be regarded by not a few of the large audience I had addressed as a *co-performer* with Mademoiselle Rollickarowski. "Wasn't that a splendid effort of the prima donna to-day?" remarks Materfamillias. "Beautiful," responds her two fair daughters—"just charming!" "Is it not a tiresome thing to listen to a sermon about sin and death and conversion after such a treat! It's just awful *I* think. I often wonder why ministers have not more sense."

J. DENOVAN.

— To know that there are some souls, hearts and minds here and there [who trust us, and whom we trust; some who know us, and whom we know; some on whom we can always rely, and who will always rely upon us—makes a paradise of this great world. The only solid thing in this universe is love. This makes our life really life. This makes us immortal while we are here. This makes us sure that death is no end, but only a beginning, to us and to those whom we love. It is only love and insight which show us all we have ever done. Cold sagacity misjudges us; mere sympathy, feeble good nature, soothes, but does not essentially help us. But love illuminated by truth, truth warmed through and through by love—these perform for us the most blessed thing that one human being can do for another. They show us to ourselves; they show us what we really are, what we have been, may be, can be, shall be.—*J. F. Clarke.*

Dr. Harper's Views of the Bible.

Dr. Harper, president-elect of the new university of Chicago, lately delivered before the Baptist ministers' meeting of New York city an address which has attracted a good deal of attention. Of this address Mr. Howard B. Grose sends to the Chicago *Standard* the following report:

Speaking of the widespread indifference to the Old Testament, he said: "A knowledge of the contents of the prophetic books is the only remedy for the heartless—you will pardon me if I say the godless—indifference, the conspicuous apathy, and in some cases, almost imperceptible sneer, with which the mass of our ministers and laymen may fairly and justly be charged. When I read that a certain minister has discarded the Old Testament, I put it down for a certainty that he is wholly ignorant of its real meaning. He has got at it about as deeply as a Brooklyn lady of whom I heard lately, who told her pastor she had given up reading the Bible because she had come to know by heart what came next. Without a knowledge of Israelitish history prophecy will either be to you a blank, or what is even worse, a starting point for strange and weird fancies, an instrument for juggleries of the most startling character, or a system of mathematical or astronomical calculations. When I read of a certain lieutenant, detailed temporarily at Yale University, by his interpretation of prophecy bringing terror to the hearts of a Baptist Social Union recently assembled, I am filled with pity that the nineteenth century is so patient as to endure such absurdities and monstrosities."

In illustration of prophetic prediction and its purpose, he supposed himself an ancient prophet speaking to an audience of sinners; "I tell you that your city is to be destroyed, and that you will be carried into captivity. What is the purpose of this? To turn you from your sins. If you turn, then the purpose is accomplished, and the prediction will not come true. But if I stand before you and talk words, and get no grip on you, and you pay no heed to what I say, then my prediction will come true, but my sermon will be a great failure. (Laughter.) If on the other hand my sermon is successful, my prediction will be a great failure. There is a sense thus in which all prophecy fails; but in a truer sense prophecy is a most glorious success. The principles of it never changed, though the situations did."

"Prophecy may be defined as religious instruction. Prophecy of the future was a small part of prophecy. Read the stories of Genesis and Exodus, Samuel and Kings, as prophecy, as exclusively intended to teach religious truth, as declaring and illustrating the principles of divine government, and every word becomes as clear as day; errors and discrepancies cease to have any significance."

Under proposition seventeen, the idea was impressed that the entire Israelitish history was inspired history, the history of which there is a record, as well as that of which there is no record. "Inspiration is not the record of the event. An event without any record may, and in the history of the Bible and the world always has, exerted its influence before the record of it. In our ordinary view we have, to use a common expression, put the cart before the horse. It is the event that is of importance. It is the death and resurrection of Christ that saves men, not the record of it. History comes first. This history, all miraculous, not dotted with a miracle here and there, includes the most degrading things, such as polygamy and slavery, and these were regulated, too, though some say that to regulate evil is to legalize and sustain it; yet it was divine history, unique. God was in it. Let us talk about the inspiration of history. Brethren," said Dr. Harper, impressively, "there are still some things for Baptists to learn. We must come to this view of an inspired history. Then we shall have no trouble with any errors and inconsistencies in the inspired literature which is the outgrowth of that history. In this theory there is no minimizing of the Divine; there is everywhere a magnifying of it. There is no mechanical theory to sustain and explain. This is a theory, I am aware, which has not been taught in our seminaries, and perhaps will not meet with the approval of our theological teachers, but it is the theory I maintain. It gives firm standing ground. It confirms and strengthens faith in the Bible as the inspired word of God."

When he reached the point of inconsistencies and errors, in Proposition 18, he spoke most frankly and impressively. "You will say, prove the existence of errors. It is easy to assert; but no man has ever yet proved an error. Even should one be found, it is a copyist's error and not in the original statement. What have been supposed to be errors, time shows to have been correct. Now, brethren, it is a thankless job to try to convince Christians that there is a single error in the Bible. There is no motive to find errors. There is every motive to influence me to deny the existence of error. Why, I would give my right arm to be able to deny this. Let me ask how many of you have ever read Isaiah, fourteenth chapter, critically. Will they deny errors? What I ask you is to allow me, if I have found what I honestly believe to be an error, to state it, and not charge me with doubting the inspiration of this Book, or with heresy." (Applause.)

The conclusion which followed in the next proposition, that the Bible not only contains, but is, the word of God, was received with great approval. This was shown to be the necessary result of the theory. "It was Rabbinical exegesis that crucified our Lord—nothing else in the world. This same literal and artificial method, this same Rabbinical exegesis, slavish literalism—the curse of all the ages, Satan's most devoted friend, has blinded the eyes of men to-day, and as a result the Old Testament has been practically rejected from being recognized as a part of the divine word. By skeptics? Yes, and by multitudes of others. Hundreds have told me, 'You have saved to me the Old Testament.'"

"God in His wisdom did not see fit to make it impossible for Israel to sin; nor did He see fit to make it impossible for one of Israel's writers to blunder. It is nevertheless divine literature. The Semitic race is an unscientific race. Not even God could make them scientific without making them un-Semitic. They had to be treated like children. God gave these men His word, to be declared by them to man; but there were limitations. And shall we occupy our time and attention with the thought of these limitations? Let us rather stand in wonder and reverence before this Book, which, in spite of limitations, in spite of human imperfections, contains such indubitable evidence that it is the Word of God."

"Brethren, there are new ways of looking at things. It seems to me that for the Baptist denomination there is an opportunity which no other has. Baptist principles allow men to interpret the word of God, each for himself. (Applause.) I am fully persuaded that the Baptist denomination still believes in this principle. The hardest thing, and the thing which some of you will not understand, is this, how a man can confess that he admits historical and scientific errors and at the same time maintain the perfection and infallibility of the Bible. We have read within a few weeks in one great Baptist paper an editorial, in which it was stated that the Bible was infallible in moral and religious truth. It said nothing about history and prophecy; and I was informed by the editor to-day that the omission was intentional. I asked him if I could quote him, and he said, 'Yes, but with caution.'"

This was greeted with laughter and applause, and Dr. Harper added: "The editor said to me, further, that no man is called upon to believe in the absolute accuracy of every statement in the Bible." Then the closing words were most impressively spoken, the brethren having urged him to go on: "It is my firm conviction that we must stand on the fact that the Israelitish history is inspired. Grant that, and then find in the literature of that history error and inconsistency, and these cease to have any effect. Now I say to you, who differ with me, don't believe this if you can help it. But if the day comes when you have to think so, then remember that there is a way out of your difficulties, without sacrificing one iota of the inspiration of the Bible."

Great applause followed, and a vote of thanks for the clear and strong presentation of truth was passed by a rising vote. Dr. Harper said he was willing to remain and answer questions, as one brother desired him to do, but the conference decided it was long past lunch time, and too hot to tarry; as indeed it was the hottest fifteenth of June on record.

I was much interested in watching the faces of the brethren during the progress of the address. There were a goodly number present who had on their heresy-hunting spectacles and were keenly watchful. The underlying basis of an inspired history seemed to leave nothing to see which they expected to find in the superstructure; and the way in which the indictment of indifference to the Old Testament was laid by a man whose heart was so plainly in the whole Word of God put them to shame and confusion. It was a marked triumph for Biblical scholarship. And at the close Dr. Harper received the congratulations of many who had believed him heterodox, but who expressed their accordance with his views, now that they understood them clearly and fully for the first time. The conference has had no address in years, I believe, so thought-provocative as this. It will send men to the real study of the Bible, as his work and teaching have ever done.

Go and Tell Jesus.

BY REV. THEODORE L. CUYLER.

One of the most important offices of a kind and faithful pastor, is to be the confidential friend of everybody in the parish. His ear ought to be open to the narrative of everybody's sorrows, difficulties, and spiritual discouragements. When he cannot relieve, he can sympathize, and that goes a great way if it is expressed out of a full, warm heart. The most popular feature in Romanism is its "confessional." With all its evils and its tremendous power over those who enjoy it, the confessional is founded on the perverted use of one of the deepest instincts of humanity. When we are in trouble we want sympathy; and a guilty conscience also longs for somebody on whom it can unload its oppressive secrets, and from whom it can get a bit of comfort. The great longing of the human heart which neither pastor nor priest can satisfy, is met completely by but one Being in the universe. The disciples when they were in trouble, "went and told Jesus."

The New Testament contains many a touching narrative of those who came to the Master for relief. The sorrowing Jairus from the bedside of his dying daughter, the nobleman whose son was sick, the anxious Nicodemus who craved spiritual light, the poor woman who "was a sinner," and multitudes of the sick, the blind, and the suffering all make up a constant procession. For every one of them the sympathizing Saviour had a kind word or a cure of "whatever disease they had." He turned nobody away.

Now why should not we all do what they did, and carry our guilt or our griefs directly to that same compassionate Saviour. If not near us in bodily form, He is near us in spirit. Among the readers of this article may be a discouraged and desponding Christian. My friend, do you make Jesus Christ the *real personality* that you ought? Do you actually *realize* Christ? Treat Him as He invites you to treat Him. Go to Him with your plans or your perplexities, your doubts and your difficulties, your temptations and your trials. Be sure of this fact that your loving Redeemer is interested in everything that concerns your welfare.

Your friends and neighbors are often too busy to devote much time or thought to you, even if it were possible for them to afford you effectual relief. The blessed Jesus can never have too many applicants; that divine ear is open to all. Other people cannot exactly understand your case. But He knows just where the arrow entered, or where the blow falls heaviest on your suffering heart. His eye is on you when the tempter is busy with his cunning snares. He notes every tear that stains your cheek. He followed your weary steps when you went out to that new-made grave to weep there.

How many there are who seem ready to rush to human friends for counsel or comfort, and yet strangely neglect to go and tell Jesus! Anxious sinners often crowd into inquiry-meetings to seek guidance or to be prayed for. This is a wise step if it be taken in the right spirit, and with the right expectation. But the meeting that an awakened soul needs most, is the direct *meeting of their own souls with their own Saviour.* The Rev. Newman Hall once said to me, "I preach less and less about people's frames and feelings and troubles, and I preach more and more about Christ. That is what all kinds of people need; they need Christ." The most eloquent preacher, the most faithful pastor, or parent, or teacher, are only helpful when they direct a troubled soul immediately to the Lamb of God.

"Requests for prayer" are often presented in meetings. All very well if they are not presented out of mere formality, or if they are not relied upon as the main thing to be done. Intercessory prayer is of great value, but it cannot be a substitute for the direct approach of every needy, or guilty, or burdened soul to Him who alone can bestow blessing. Do not look to man, or lean on man. All that a human hand can do is to point you to Christ, or lead you towards Him. That poor woman in the "coasts of Canaan" knew what she was about. She threw her load of trouble upon the only Person in the world who could relieve her, and she would not take "no" for an answer. Her story is told in the Bible, to teach you and me the only road to sure relief. No skeptic can gain-say her testimony. Then our first duty in every hour of need, of temptation, or of trouble, is to do what she did—*go and tell Jesus.*—*N. Y. Evangelist.*

The Rambler.

Of course, everybody recalls the story (mentioned, perhaps, by Mr. Paton) how once on a time, James Buchanan, being then Senator and on a very familiar footing with President Andrew Jackson, went to the White House with a lady of distinction, who desired to be presented to the General. Mr. Buchanan found the General in his chamber, clad in the oldest and shabbiest of clothes, with his feet upon the mantle, and himself unshaven, smoking a cob pipe. Mr. B. made known his errand. "Very good; I will see the lady in the parlor in five minutes." "But, General, allow me—excuse me—but perhaps a slight change in your apparel would not be amiss." "Buchanan (replied the irate warrior), I once knew a man in the north part of the State of New York, who made a very good living by minding his own business."

It occurs to the Rambler to ask whether it is not possible that the sage counsel of that hard-headed old Scotch-Irishman may not be addressed with advantage to many persons in our own generation, especially to the large and respectable class of theologians. There are some things which are eminently our own business. Saving the souls of our neighbors is our business. Commending religion by our words and our lives is our business. Denying ourselves for the good of the suffering and needy is our business. Learning all we can about the Bible is our bustness. Praying to the Lord is our business.

But, on the other hand, understanding all about the decrees of God is not our business. Interpreting mysteries which God has left buried in impenetrable darkness is not our business. Determining times and seasons of which our Lord has declared that "no one (not merely "no man" but, as in the Revision, "no one") knoweth, no, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father," is emphatically not our business. Deciding what God will do about the unevangelized heathen is not our business. Reconciling Divine Sovereignity with man's free will is not our business.

And it appears to the Rambler, after some reflection, that it is quite likely that within the line of what is our business, there is enough to occupy all our time and energies. And it further appears likely that, if we shall attend to what is strictly our business, the Divine Being will be able to conduct to a successful conclusion what is His business.

* * * * *

Everyone remembers Dr. Holmes' poem, "The Height of the Ridiculous," in which he tells how, once upon a time, he wrote a poem of extreme humorousness; the person to whom he entrusted it to be carried to the printer, most unwisely allowed himself to look within the paper; as the result, he was thrown into convulsions of laughter, culminating in a fit. The poem concludes:

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man:
And since, I never dared to write
As funny as I can.

It is very dangerous to be funny, to be sportive, to be humorous, to be, as one good man said, "levitous." Not only is there direct danger, as experienced by Dr. Holmes, but there is the incidental danger that one may be taken in earnest. It will be remembered that Daniel Defoe once got into trouble in this way. Defoe was a staunch Nonconformist. As a protest against the unjust treatment of Dissenters, he published "The Shortest Way with Dissenters," in which he urged that all the dissenting ministers should be hanged, and all their people banished. Unfortunately, the world at large was too dull to see the point of the joke; it was taken as serious, and Defoe found himself in prison. Often, the more perfect a piece of pleasantry or sarcasm, the more sure to be misunderstood.

The other day, the valued contributor who hides his light under the bushel, as it were, of the signature "Barnburner," wrote an article suggested by the appointment of three eminent gentlemen at the South to manage the Slater Fund. His design, no doubt, was to show the folly of looking with suspicion upon well-known and patriotic citizens of the South, because, at one time, they were under an optical illusion which led them to mistake another piece of bunting for the flag of their country. But so perfect was his sarcasm that not a few persons took it for earnest, and the editor has received two letters crying aloud against the injustice done to the South.—*National Baptist.*

— The soul that knows the sweetness of His presence and His face shining on it will account no place nor condition hard, providing it may be refreshed with that; as the saints have been in caves and dungeons enjoying more of that light in those times when other comforts have been abridged. Then they have had a beam from heaven into their souls in their darkest dungeon far more worth than the light of the sun, and all the advantages the world can afford.—*Archbishop Leighton.*

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CHRONIC DYSPEPSIA.