

Our Contributors.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Song in the Sanctuary.

BY WILLIAM BELVY.

Byrde, a noted musician of the 16th century, gave eight reasons why people should sing; the 7th and 8th read as follows:

"There is not any music of instrument whatsoever comparable to that which is made by the voice of man, where the voices are good and the same well sorted."

"The better the voice the meetier it is to honour and serve God therewith, and the voice of man is to be chiefly employed to that end."

The Rev. W. H. Havergal, in his preparatory remarks to the fourth Edition of "Old Church Psalmody," gives a word of warning which is needed:

"If music is substituted for religion, and singing for devotion, the best tunes, and the best voices, will neither increase religion, nor aid devotion. It is much to be regretted that display bears rule, where it is the most out of place."

There is no doubt that in some churches there is a tendency to run in the display line. Some wealthy congregations going to considerable expense in sustaining a professional quartette. A case in point is noted by "The Pilgrim Teacher" where a congregation pays \$2000 for its choir, and appropriates \$300 for its Sunday School; the latter amount being barely sufficient to pay running expenses; and they have to economize by doing without Sunday school papers.

There is an ebb and flow in all progressive movements and reforms; and the extremes are sometimes reached before the happy medium becomes permanent. It is a pleasing fact to note that sometime ago, St. Andrew's Church, St. John, N. B., dispensed with its paid quartette. What should be aimed at is good congregational singing, and that cannot be attained without training under competent teachers.

It is an interesting enquiry. Why music has been appointed by God to enter so largely into his worship? No one has to go outside of his own experience to find the answer; and it is printed in large type in church history. We see the power of sacred song in the important part it performed at the Reformation. How materially it assisted in spreading the pure Bible religion. Its powerful effects in the early history of Methodism and in recent revival movements, both in Great Britain and the North American continent, are facts equally patent. Music exerts an influence over the minds of men, giving life and power to the truth it accompanies. As thoughts pass from mind to mind by means of words. So the emotion due to the import of these words, spread more easily from heart to heart by the help of the music (melody and rhythm) in which it is clothed. When words are set to music they are imbued with life, and become powerful factors in character building. "Let me write the songs of any nation; I care not who makes its laws." This saying of an eminent writer further emphasises the power of music. In broad general lines the same fact is embodied in the teaching of Scripture. It is because of this life giving element that Moses is commanded by God to teach the

children of Israel the song recorded in the 32nd chapter of Deut. A fitting close to a great life. A song that has lasted through the ages, and is sung by the redeemed in glory. The song of Moses and the Lamb.

Another reason we find in what we might call *The preparatory power of music*. The complexity of life tends to place us out of harmony with things divine—a disordered state of the body—whether it produces pain, excitement or lethargy, and particularly agitation of the nervous system from almost any cause, presents, while it lasts, positive obstacles to the entrance and influence of divine truth. Whatever assists, therefore, in calming that agitation, or in soothing that excitement of the nerves, may be and is subservient to the truth of God. And such we know to be the tendency of sacred music.

The power of music in this direction was well known in ancient times. And the Scriptures give us several instances which can be easily recalled to ones mind; but there is one not so well known, and which is most applicable in this connection, as it shows its power over anger; and he who calls for its soothing and calming influence, is the one who is filled with anger and notwithstanding it was what we would call justifiable and righteous wrath. Yet that had to be subdued and quelled before he could enter into communion with God. The incident is recorded in the 3rd Chapter 11 Kings. The personages are the prophet Elisha, and the three kings Jehoram, Jehoshaphat and the King of Edom. To the request and petition of Jehoram, Elisha in anger replies, "What have I to do with thee, get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother—As the Lord of Hosts liveth before whom I stand surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, or see thee. But now bring me a minstrel, and it came to pass as the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him."

One wonders why so little use is made of this preparatory power of music in our services. By most ministers singing is apparently held as being of little importance, something that can be curtailed or omitted at pleasure. We exclaim, How shortsighted; yet they are not altogether to blame. The colleges turn them out with no training or knowledge on this important subject. Singing and hymnology has no place in the curriculum. That students would enter into the work with avidity is evidenced by the fact that for recreation and amusement they organize glee and other musical clubs.

Music is a divine gift, and God has provided for its cultivation in giving us the voice; and as Byrde says; "There is not any music of instrument whatsoever comparable to that which is made by the voice of man." It is surely most becoming that we should train it for this, the highest of all uses, the glory of God.

When one hears of \$2000 and like large sums being paid out for choir purposes, how much more beneficial it would be to spend it in training the congregation, that they may be enabled in sweet harmony to render praise acceptable to the most high God; that service in the sanctuary may become a delight and that each one be enabled to take part intelligently in the service of song,

and learn more perfectly that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

The talent is in everyone's possession; for its growth or decay, we are responsible. In this connection the tale told by Darwin is said in the extreme. In his autobiography, he says: "Up to the age of thirty or beyond it, poetry of many kinds gave me real pleasure, pictures formerly gave considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read Shakespeare. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures and music. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts; but why should this have caused atrophy of that part of the brain alone in which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

This strong testimony given by so sturdy a man as Charles Darwin, on the value of music as an influence for good in a man's life is doubly valuable because of its rareness. And it calls in trumpet tones for the church to use this great and powerful gift in the upbuilding of God's kingdom here below.

Toronto

Christ and the Scriptures.—V.

BY GEORGE W. ARMSTRONG.

It is a most interesting study to trace the prophecies of the Old Testament seers with the historical records of the Evangelists in the New Testament, concerning the incarnation and life of Christ. Prophecy is history anticipated; and history is the confirmation of prophecy. It would not be difficult to compile a biography, in its main features, of Jesus, the Messiah, from the writing of the Old Testament. His birth, His public ministry, His death and His resurrection were all known hundreds of years before His advent. In my last paper I took a superficial and running review showing that Christ was the central figure and theme of the inspired writers from a lost to a regained Paradise; from the Fall to the Sacrificial restoration on Calvary.

Christ speaking to the Jews concerning their Scriptures said: They are they which testify of Me.

The Jewish Scriptures overflowed with unmistakable testimony about Christ, the doctrines He would teach: the mode He would employ to enforce the truths and also revealed His general character. My purpose in this paper is to show that Christ's life on earth was a fulfilment of Hebraic prophecy.

Micah bore testimony as to the place of His birth. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah though thou be little among the thousands of Juda, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be ruler of Israel, whose goings forth have been of old even from everlasting." That is prophecy! What says history? "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of India, Isaiah predicted his name: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel." Matthew in narrating the circumstances in connection with Christ's birth alludes to this prophecy and shows its fulfilment, Matt: 1, 21-23.

Anticipating the coming of Christ the Psalmist says: The Kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the Kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts,"