

part of the choir would come in with overwhelming response; "For His mercy endureth forever," until in the latter part of the song, the music floating backward and forward, harmony grappling with harmony, every trumpet sounding, every bosom heaving, one part of the great white-robed choir would lift the anthem, "Oh! give thanks unto the God of Heaven," and the other part of the Levite choir would come in with the response; "For His mercy endureth forever." But I am glad to know that all through the ages there has been great attention paid to sacred music. Ambrosius, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Charlemagne, gave it their mighty influence, and in our day the best musical genius is throwing itself on the altars of God. Handel, and Mozart, and Bach, and Durante, and Wolfe, and scores of other men and women have given the best part of their genius to church music. A truth in words is not half so mighty as a truth in song, Luther's sermons have been forgotten, but the "Judgment Hymn" he composed is resounding yet all through Christendom. I congratulate the world and the church on the advancement made in this art. The Edinburgh societies for the improvement of music, the Swiss singing societies, the Exeter Hall concerts, the triennial musical convocation at Dusseldorf, Germany, and Birmingham, England, the conservatories of Music at Munich and Leipsic, the Handel and Hadyn, and Harmonic, and Mozart societies of the country, and academies of music in New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Charleston, New Orleans, Chicago, and every city which has any enterprise! Now, my friends, how are we to decide what is appropriate, especially for church music? There may be a great many differences of opinion. In some of the churches they prefer a trained choir; in others, the old style precentor. In some places they prefer the melodeon, the harp, the cornet, the organ; in other places they think these things are the invention of the devil. Some would have a musical instrument played so loud you cannot stand it, and others would have it played so soft you cannot hear it. Some think a musical instrument ought to be played only in the interstices of worship, and then with indescribable softness;

while others are not satisfied unless there be startling contrasts and staccato passages that make the audience jump, with great eyes and hair on end, as from a vision of the witch of Endor. But, while there may be great varieties of opinion in regard to music, it seems to me that the general spirit of the word of God indicates what ought to be the great characteristics; and I remark, in the first place, a prominent characteristic ought to be adaptiveness. Music that may be appropriate for a concert-hall, or the opera-house, or the drawing-room, may be shocking in church. Glees, madrigals, ballads, may be as innocent as psalms in their places. There is no reason why music should always be religious music. So I am just as much in favor of concert-halls as I am of churches. But church music has only one design, and that is devotion, and which comes with the toss, the song, and the display of an opera-house is a hindrance to the worship. From such performances we go away saying: "What splendid execution! Did you ever hear such a soprano? Which of those solos did you like the better?" When, if we had been rightly wrought upon, we would have gone away saying: "Oh! how my soul was lifted up in the presence of God while they were singing that first hymn; I never had such rapturous views of Jesus Christ as my Saviour as when they were singing that last doxology." My friends, there is an everlasting distinction between music as an art and music as a help to devotion. Though a Schumann composed it, though a Mozart played it, though a Sontag sang it, away with it if it does not make the heart better and honor Christ. Why should we rob the programmes of worldly gayety when we have so many appropriate songs and tunes composed in our own day, as well as that magnificent inheritance of church psalmody which has come down fragrant with the devotions of other generations—tunes no more worn out than they were when our great-grandfathers climbed up on them from the church pew to glory? Dear old souls, how they used to sing! When they were cheerful, our grandfathers and grandmothers used to sing "Colchester." When they were very meditative, then the clapped