

Pastor and People.

TEMPLE BUILDERS.

You have read of the Moslem palace—
The marvellous fane that stands
On the banks of the distant Jumna
The wonder of all lands.

And as you read, you questioned
Right wonderingly, as you must,
"Why rear such a noble palace,
To shelter a woman's dust?"

Why rear it? The Shah had promised
His beautiful Nourmahal
To do it because he loved her,
He loved her—and that was all.

So minaret, wall and column,
And tower and dome above—
All tell of a sacred promise,
All utter the accent—love.

We know of another temple,
A grander than Hindoo shrine,
The splendour of whose perfections
Is mystical, strange, divine.

We have read of its deep foundations,
Which neither the frost nor flood,
Nor forces of earth can weaken,
Cemented in tears and blood.

That chosen with skill transcendent,
By wisdom that fills the throne,
Was quarried and hewn and polished,
Its wonderful corner-stone.

So vast is the scale proportioned,
So lofty its turrets rise,
That the pile in its finished glory
Will reach to the very skies

The flow of the silent Kedron,
The roses of Sharon fair;
Gethsemane's sacred olives
And cedars are round it there.

The plan of the temple, only
Its Architect understands;
And yet He accepts (O wonder!)
The helping of human hands!

And so for the work's progression,
He is willing that great and small
Should bring their bits of carving
As needed to fill the wall.

O, not to the dead—but the living,
We rear on the earth He trod
This fane to His lasting glory—
This church to the Christ of God.

For over the church's portal,
Each pillar and arch above,
The Master has set His signet,
And graven His watchword—Love.

—Mrs. Margaret J. Preston.

GOLDEN GRAIN BIBLE READINGS.

BY THE REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, B.D.

THE GODLY MAN'S GIVING TO CHRIST'S CAUSE.

1. He cultivates giving as a grace of the Christian character, 2 Cor. viii. 7; Mark xii. 41-44; 2 Cor. ix. 5.
2. He gives in a proportion to his income, 2 Cor. viii. 12; Deut. xvi. 10-17.
3. He gives at a stated time, 1 Cor. xvi. 2; Deut. xvi. 16.
4. He gives out of love to Christ, 2 Cor. viii. 8, 9.
5. He gives liberally, 2 Cor. viii. 2, 3; Ex. xxxvi. 5; Prov. xi. 24, 25.
6. He gives cheerfully, 2 Cor. ix. 7; 2 Cor. viii. 12; Ex. xxv. 2; Ex. xxxv. 5.
7. He gives, remembering God's Word, 1 Cor. ix. 8.
8. He acts on the command, and accepts the promise, Prov. iii. 9, 10.
9. He gives occasion to others "to glorify God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ," 1 Cor. ix. 13.
10. The needed closing word, 2 Cor. viii. 11.

CHANTS, ANTHEMS, VOLUNTARIES.

The metrical Psalms have much inherent majesty and more historical interest, but it is to the prose version that we turn for the glorious poetry and the noble language in which the sacred writers embodied their great conceptions. The strong poetic and religious nature of the Jews found an outlet for its rich stream of energy in poetry and music. That must have been a magnificent service in the Temple, when a great army of singers, strengthened by the noise of psaltery, trumpet, etc., called to one another, "Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the name of the Lord: praise Him, O ye servants of the Lord. Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the Lord."

Chanting is the oldest known form of Christian praise. Some of the Gregorian chants are most probably songs carried over from the old Jewish temple to the services of the new faith which was to be the complement and fulfilment of the old. The chant lends itself with peculiar effect to the stately music of the Psalms and the majestic poetry of the prophets; to the pathetic, "He was despised and rejected of men;" the gentle, "The wilderness and the solitary place

shall be glad;" and the reverential, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

As far as the setting is concerned, chanting is also the most congregational form of praise. The music is simple and broad, and is most effective when most generally joined in by the congregation, as it does not depend on that delicacy of rendering which adds so much to the effect of hymns and anthems. This does not mean that any way will do to sing chants. The only difficulty for members of a congregation who have a chant book pointed in the same way as that in the hands of the choir, lies in what is known as the "recitative" bar. Even the second rendering of a common chant ought to be quite easily joined in by any one with a pointed chant book who has carefully followed the first rendering.

Of no little value also is the consideration, that it is quite possible to sing a whole psalm, instead of mutilating the unity of the author's conception by an arbitrary selection of a few verses, as our psalm tunes compel us to when singing from the metrical version.

The other form of praise in which the words of our Bible are used is the anthem; and round this point a strong difference of opinion still carries on a controversy. The battle for æsthetics in worship has won the fight successively for congregational singing in Luther's time; for hymns in the time of Wesley; for instrumental assistance in our own time; and now the contention is for the reasonableness of anthems. I think the question is widely misunderstood. The great argument in the hands of the opponents of anthems is their uncongrogational character. But is that a necessary quality? I do not advocate anything of great musical intricacy, of compositions which give most florid work to the singers in the choir. An anthem in an ordinary Presbyterian Church ought to be comparatively simple, and not long, in order to satisfy the canons of æsthetics; but, in my opinion, the last condition required ought surely to be that the congregation can join. How, without attendance on practice, can the people expect to join in an anthem, as they can in a hymn, when the choir, presumably more accustomed to sing, and to sing in a body, finds it necessary to meet to practise it? And what is more incongruous than to hear one bass voice in a considerable area in the church—otherwise silent—rolling out a part which has meaning only when incorporated with the other parts? Let us, however, consider for a moment whether it is necessary for a congregation to join in an anthem. An anthem is an attempt, on the part of a musician, to embody and set forth a truth, a promise, or a prayer. It is thus embodied as cannot be done in reading, even by the most eloquent human voice; and may not the congregation listen, as they would to a verse being read or a prayer being offered by the minister, joining in it only in spirit?

Some regard to the development of musical power in the choir seems no less desirable than consideration of a natural feeling. Congregations are apt to forget that members of the choir are, after all, human. They attend practices more or less regularly, in the interest of congregational service. The singing of an anthem is, no doubt, a pleasure to them, and the regular practice and performance of such music always prove a means of attracting members and keeping them interested. They can hardly be expected to turn out a night every week only to enjoy the privilege of singing over hymn tunes which they know, or think they know, very thoroughly already.

The accompaniment is a part of the organist's duty, and I only include it in this sketch for the sake of trying to define a much misunderstood term to the members of a congregation. That instrumental music was only admitted as an accompaniment, is a favourite position with many. But accompaniment in the church is, firstly, for the purpose of fixing and supporting the key and time of a tune; and, secondly, for the purpose of giving the necessary colour which will best illustrate the words of a hymn. Soft stops will be used where they are appropriate; a brighter register for brighter hopes and happier thoughts; thick loud stops will help to convey awful impressions; and no instrument can better give voice to notes of triumph than the organ. If the organ drowns the choir there is a grievous mistake, and in no sense a triumph of the instrumentalist. If the organ allows the choir to get flat or slow where either is avoidable, the mistake is the same, and should have the same condemnation.

The desirableness of voluntaries is a question which many churches with organs have not yet settled. It has certainly elements of danger in the opinion of a large section of the Church; but any organist who has proper æsthetic ideas ought to be able to avoid hurting the feelings of those who have no great objection to voluntaries *per se*, but who withhold their support of them for fear of misuse. A voluntary before the service ought to soothe the minds of the worshippers, and induce that quiet in spirit and behaviour which is so necessary, and so desirable at the opening of divine service. In churches where a voluntary precedes the service, you will usually find that people enter the building more quietly, and on sitting down are more generally and completely isolated. A voluntary at the close of the service will tend to postpone the joining in conversation immediately after the benediction. It is surely desirable that people leave the presence of God quietly and decorously. This voluntary need not always be solemn, but should be chosen in harmony with the spirit of the close of the service.

A few remarks on æsthetics apart from music may fitly close these remarks. It is highly desirable, in the best interests of divine service, that the people be aided, both by precept and example, in maintaining quietness and decorum. The choir must be excused a little in preparing for each item of the service of praise, but there is in nearly every choir there

is a great deal more noise and talking than is necessary. This should be steadily avoided as a contravention of true order and right feeling, of which members of the choir ought to be examples.

Other parts of the musical service suggest many more things to be considered, but I must content myself with an appeal on this subject to all connected with our churches—to the party of progress, to proceed quietly and considerately; to the minister, to assist and direct any endeavour to improve congregational praise; to the whole congregation, that the choir be practically and sympathetically supported, and its numbers reinforced from time to time. It is the duty, as it ought to be the pleasure, of the singing members in a congregation to make the services in their own church as effective as possible. And, lastly, I would appeal to those of more conservative opinions, who insist that they are too seldom considered. "All good legislation is of the nature of compromise." Let every one look not on his own things, but also on the things of others. —*Organist, in U.P. Magazine.*

IRREVERENCE.

It is amazing how much irreverence there is in the world, and how exceedingly irreverent some persons are. The house of God, the ordinances of the Christian religion, the Sabbath day, and the dispensations of providence are treated with an indifference which is irreverence itself. Even God Himself is spoken of in language that is coarse, and with an accent that is profane. The building in which individuals meet to worship God is, when viewed in one aspect, simply a house. It may be a very unpretending edifice, without any ornaments. Still it is the house of God, and God has promised to be in the midst of those who assemble under its roof to worship Him. Wherever and whenever God's people meet to worship Him there is a church in that place. It seems that a sense of propriety would prompt us to act and speak reverently while in the house of God, or even while near it. It may appear smart to laugh and whisper while in the house of God, but it is not reverent. Such conduct is treating the worshippers with disrespect, and it is insulting God in the assembly of His people. The individuals who are guilty of such improprieties may say that they did not intend either to treat with disrespect the worshippers of God, nor to insult God. No matter what they say is thus intended. There is no way of judging of an individual's intentions but by his actions. God demands that we treat His house, His people and Himself reverently. The Sabbath day is often treated with great irreverence. By a large number it has been converted, apparently at least, into a weekly holiday. The church is converted into a place of general rendezvous. Here, too, many assemble as if to while away an hour pleasantly in secular conversation. This is irreverent, God gave man the Sabbath for a special purpose, but it was not for secular conversation. The ordinances of God's house are by many of us treated in a way which reveals the fact that we regard them as very common things. The Bible is quoted in a kind of jocular way, as if it were the production of some mere man, and he an old foggy—a stickler for old manners and customs, but a century behind the times.

This irreverence for sacred things is not confined to those who are usually called men of the world. Were this the case it would be in accordance with the nature of things, but when those who have been born of Christian parents, who have received a Christian education, who have by precept and example been taught to reverence God and the ordinances of religion which He has appointed, treat sacred things as secular things, the matter assumes a most solemn aspect. It is a dangerous experiment to treat with disrespect or irreverence God's people, God has a "peculiar propriety in them." A mother may forget her sucking child, but God will never forget His people. They may be poor, they may be unlearned, they may be very awkward and uncouth in their manners, they may be unable to enter a modern parlour, but God is preparing them for a seat at His right hand, where there are pleasures evermore. Let parents, both by precept and example, teach their children to reverence God and treat with respect all the ordinances of God's house, and let children learn to fear God. Let them remember that the Fourth Commandment is still binding, that God is now in the assembly of His saints, as He always has been, and that those who habitually treat with disrespect the Sabbath and the sanctuary have grounds to fear that God will abandon them to live in the practice of the sin of irreverence. Let them also remember that there is a kind of reflex influence in sin. God often pays us in our own coin.—*Associate Reformed Presbyterian.*

COURAGEOUS PIETY NEEDED.

This is not an age of heroic Christianity. There is more pulp than pluck in the average Christian professor, when self-denial is required. The men and women who not only rejoice in doing their duty for Christ, but even rejoice in overcoming uncomfortable obstacles in doing it, are quite too scarce. The piety that is most needed is a piety that will stand a pinch; a piety that would rather eat an honest crust than fare sumptuously on fraud; a piety that works up stream against currents; a piety that sets its face like a flint in the straight, narrow road of righteousness. We need more of the Christianity that steadfastly sets its face toward Christ's word and holy will. An ungodly world will be compelled to look at such Christly living as at "the sun shining in its strength." God loves to look at those who carry Jesus in their faces. Of such is the kingdom of heaven.—*Dr. Cuyler.*