

I. Song and instrumental music possess in common the power of melody, and in this respect they are both alike capable of either stimulating the sense of melody or of expressing it.

II. Song possesses fully the power of expressing or of addressing all the multifarious ideas and emotions of the mind; because (1) in song we can articulate words representative of the ideas, etc., and (2) in song, just also as in speech, we can use such tones of the scales, major or minor, and such length, loudness, etc., as are naturally suggestive of, or appropriate to, the sentiments which we wish to express; thus in song, as in speech, a plaintive tone is appropriate to sorrow, a high note to joy, a low note to intense feeling, etc.

The chief element of all such expression lies, however, in the power of articulation, as the pitch, length, and general character of the tones, used by one person to express a particular emotion, often vary widely from those of another person expressing it, and the tones of the same person even differ in these respects at different times.

Wide license is often allowed in these respects both in singing and in speech, the same tone is often used to express sentiments widely different. Our best orators also differ widely from one another in this matter.

III. Instrumental music possesses, only in a most limited degree, the power of expressing or of addressing the multifarious ideas and emotions of the mind; because (1) in instrumental music the articulative power, which is found to be the chief element of multifarious mental expression, is wholly wanting; and (2) though the second element of such expression, which consists in pitch, length, loudness, etc., of tone, is possessed by it, yet as we have already seen, these properties of mere tone are so variable and uncertain in their character, that, divorced from articulation, they are next to useless as an exponent of the general sentiments of the mind.

So far then as this second element of multifarious mental expression, which is the only one possessed by instrumental music, is concerned, if it be possible by means of it to convey a general idea at all, it will do it so vaguely or indefinitely as to be at the best but a good help to a guess. In listening to an instrument playing an air which is intended to express or to stimulate gratitude, I may possibly gather gratitude from it, or as likely I may think it expresses something else, or I may put ideas into it and make it express what I please.

But suppose, what is not likely to happen, that I should conceive it to mean gratitude, it leaves me completely in the dark as to whom gratitude is to be expressed, as to what I am to be grateful for, and to a thousand other vague conjectures. Now the power of articulation possessed by song leaves me to no such vain guesses.* Instrumental music then, as an element of general mental expression, is comparatively valueless. So far as multifarious mental expression is concerned, an attempt to supplement the expressive power of the voice in song by so futile a help as a man-made instrument, is like the attempt to add to the expressive powers of a living face by setting up alongside of it a huge, unshapely profile of man's own invention. If we wanted help to express generally our mental ideas or emotions, we should certainly least of all choose so worthless a help as instrumental music to enable us to do so. The extent an instrument can afford any help of this kind, depends wholly on its power to imitate the tones of the human voice; but, setting aside the power of articulation, which it lacks,

* We honestly fear that a promiscuous crowd of the Lord's people, listening to some of Handel's best oratorios (the "Creation" for example), and having no foreknowledge of the character of the piece would scarcely be able, out of all the possible things which its instrumental music might express, to select the Creation as its most appropriate theme. This is expression vague indeed.