

great king, with not one unfitting joint or uncomely protuberance, yet without noise of axe or hammer. He who denies, or will not recognise, this fact, can never interpret the Bible aright, however closely in his interpretation he may adhere to the common laws of language. There is an element, an important, an all-pervading, an essential element, for which the common laws of language make no provision, because there is nothing else like it in the whole history of the human mind. A work is produced in the course of some two thousand years, by some forty or fifty different writers, on every variety of subject, and in every variety of style, and yet all unconsciously, so far as the writers themselves were concerned, with one uniform purpose, with one identical object, never for a moment lost sight of from beginning to end, by the Divine Mind, the real author of the volume. Of course, this great peculiarity must give rise to some peculiarities in interpretation, and, in some respects, the Bible must receive, at the hands of the expositor, a treatment different from that to which any other volume is entitled. Some of these peculiarities are the typical characters of persons and things and acts in the Old Testament; the twofold, and in some cases, manifold fulfilment of the prophecies, not a few of which, as Lord Bacon says, *being of the nature of their author, with whom a thousand years are as one day, are not fulfilled punctually and at once, but have a springing and germinating accomplishment throughout many ages, though the height or fullness of them may refer to some one age; that is, to the Messianic period and to the person of the Messiah.*—(C. E. Stowe, D.D., Professor at Andover: *Bibliotheca Sacra*, for January, 1853.)

PREVAILING FAULTS IN CONGREGATIONAL MUSIC.

From the Precentor's Guide.

It is much to be feared that our churches little understand the practical advantages of music. Music is a means to an end. It awakens feeling. It is the language of the heart. Emotions are expressed by it, and emotions are cherished by it. It is the medium of nature through which, in the matter of devotional feelings, Christians act and re-act on one another. It is not merely sensuous. By human degeneracy it may, indeed, be prostituted as an aid to voluptuousness. But it is spiritual in its nature and tendency; and as a means to devotion, as a quickener of love, and gratitude, and joy, it is given to man and urged upon the church as a duty and enjoyment. How have we appreciated the blessing? Have we received it in thankfulness, and applied it with fidelity? Have we used it as a stimulant to the soul, and, under its spiritualising power, have we been raised to holier aspirations, acclaiming the excellencies of heaven with higher energy, and uttering our praises to God in purer and loftier transports? Alas! music has been comparatively neglected. Its proper character has been practically denied. And our Christian Psalmody, instead of firing our souls, and enriching our spirits, often tends to damp our energies, and fill our churches with a freezing indifference.

The character or style of our congregational music is very low. In a multitude of cases it can hardly be said to be music at all. There is little in it of the sweetness and elevation of genuine music. And in the case of churches whose proficiency in the art it might be thought presumptuous to deny, the matter is not greatly indifferent. There may be, indeed, a measure of knowledge, and that knowledge may be zealously applied; but, by how many! Six, twelve, or twenty of the whole congregation may be all who have acquired the first elements of the science; and these, taking a prominence in the church, may have somewhat raised the character of its psalmody. Passing the character of the tunes, which are generally selected more for their novelty than their beauty, how often have our feelings been offended by the tasteless and meaningless distribution of the harmony! Male voices are exerted on a part where treble only should be heard; females sing the notes which are intended only for the tenors; and a rude bass carries down to the lowest depths of the scale, a strain which is adapted only to soprano. Such a style of music may please where there is no taste to be shocked, and no knowledge to be violated—where the demand is for the amount of sound, without regard to its quality.

One obvious defect in all our congregational music, is the neglect of musical expression. Little regard is paid to the character of music as the language of feeling. The same note, not only in its loudness or strength, but also in its tone, or what musicians call *timbre*, is made the expression of very different sentiments. Love, anger, gratitude, admiration, grief, are all uttered in the same unvarying accents. The natural distinction which a mother is careful to preserve in her intercourse with her babe, is overlooked as unnecessary in our communion with God. We think it enough to draw forth our songs of praise in long familiar sounds, without a regard to the sentiments. Are we guilty of this in our intercourse with one another? Who of us, in relating our tale of woe, would express our feelings in accents of mirth, or, in recounting our joys, would employ the tones of sadness? And yet, we have often wondered at the innocent unconsciousness of a people, chaunting the grandeur of redemption and bewailing the miseries of judgment in the same unvaried strain. The evil is not ascribable exclusively to the precentor. When different subjects of feeling are comprised in the verses to be sung, the skilful precentor will select a tune which admits of easy adaptation; and the congregation, if properly trained, will give, in the singing of the verse, that varied expression of tone which the different sentiments of the psalm may require. Feelings excited will express themselves in their own appropriate tones, and the absence of these tones is a doubtful indication of the presence of the feelings.

We have marked another evil in the music of our congregations, and one of the greatest magnitude. It is that which arises from the tasteless selection of the tunes. We refer not to the use of new tunes, though to many this is a serious offence; for while the style of modern composition—we refer to them generally—may not be altogether suited to your taste, they may please and gratify the taste of others; and while we would prefer other tunes—tunes more grave, solemn, and devotional—we overlook the taste of the selection, in the hope that cultivation will improve it. But the evil we complain of is not a mere error of taste; it is an error of judgment and feeling. It consists in the selection of inappropriate tunes. Every tune has its own character. It is bold, or solemn, or tender, or cheerful; and while, perhaps, it may require a little more than ordinary knowledge of music to mark and decide these distinctiveness, yet the possession of that knowledge is of the greatest practical importance. Who of us in our intercourse with our friends, would express our joy in sighs, or our sorrows in laughter? Can the mother whose feelings to her child are communicated only by tones, give utterance to her fondness by shrieks, or to her happiness by sob; and is it less a violation of propriety, that the Christian, in his intercourse with God, should be wholly regardless of the first principles of nature? We have heard, and that in a congregation not far removed from the civilisation of the city, the bold, elevating, commanding sentiments of the 48th paraphrase,—

"Let Christian faith and hope dispel
The fears of guilt and woe;
The Lord Almighty is our friend,
And who can prove a foe?" etc.,—

chaunted in the weeping strains of Shields. And what was the effect? We were denied the feelings of the hymn? and while indignant at the stupidity of the leader, we wondered at the calm unconsciousness of the people proclaiming the grandeur of redemption as a theme of lamentation. Such an instance of barbarism in music is to be imputed to the ignorance of precentors, and the people may be satisfied that in this they have no personal concernment; but we ascribe it greatly to the ignorance and culpable indifference of the people. If they themselves were improved as they should be, could precentors be guilty of such a gross impropriety? Would their improvement not lead to the improvement of the leader, and, in the improved state of their psalmody, would not their devotional feelings be aided and strengthened? Sometimes the evil may be traced to the vanity and ostentation of individuals. When a choir is formed, and a little familiarity with the practice of music is acquired, the attainments of the band must, of course, be exhibited to the people. Some tunes are selected which are thought to give scope for display, and these, however inappropriate to the psalm, must be inflicted on the church. We remember an instance of this kind: at the conclusion of a solemn and impressive sermon, these awful words were prescribed to be sung:—

"They, seized by justice, shall be doom'd
In dark abyss to lie,
And in the fiery burning lake,
The second death shall die."

Amid the silence of a seemingly impressed congregation, the strains of Transport broke forth from an exulting band, and, as they were taken up by the people, the feelings of the sermon were forgotten, and a roaring triumph was proclaimed over the miseries of the lost. How insulting this to common sense! Oh! when will our people awake to a sense of their interest and duty? When will they be aroused to the claims and obligations of life, and, under a sense of their dignity and privilege, cease to desecrate the house of prayer by such fantastic performances?

EPHESUS.

It is with feelings of no common interest that the eye of the Christian traveller catches the first sight of the castle and ruins of Ephesus. As he advances, the large mosque, supposed by some to be the church of St. John, begins to attract the attention; but all around it is a sea of ruins and desolation. Imagination can scarcely picture the change which two thousand years have made on this place. Some centuries passed on, and the temples of Messiah were thrown down to make way for the mosques of Mahomet,—the keble is substituted for the altar,—the cross is removed from the dome, and the crescent glitters in its stead. A few years more, and all is silent ruins. A few unintelligible heaps of stones with some empty mud cottages, are all the remains of the great city of the Ephesians. The busy hum of its noisy population is still as the grave. "Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, are fallen." The Epistle to the Ephesians is read throughout the world, but there is not one Christian residing at Ephesus to read it now. The Ephesians are now a few Greek peasants living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility,—the representatives of an illustrious people, and inhabiting the wreck of their greatness; some, the substructions of the glorious edifices which they raised; some beneath the vaults of the stadium, once the crowded scene of their diversions; and some by the abrupt precipice in the sepulchres which received their ashes. In January, 1824, the desolation was complete. A Turk, his Arab servant and a single Greek, composed the entire population. So hath the secret providence of God disposed affairs, too deep and mysterious for man to search into, that the decay of the three great religions of this world is here presented at one view to the eye of the traveller as lying buried in the same tomb. Not a vestige remains of the heathen worship, or of the silver