

ably possess the essential characteristics of solemnity, chasteness, and simplicity.

Among the very greatest defects in congregational psalmody is the want of *suitable musical expression*. Even where the general effect is pleasing, we often find it either conveys no sentiment at all, or one at variance with that of the hymn itself. If, however, unsuitable tunes be chosen for the people, any attempt to torture out of them a suitable expression, must be utterly futile.

The *reading* of the hymns can hardly fail to exercise an important influence. And this, in not a few cases, admits of considerable improvement. If devout, correct, and tasteful, it is invaluable as a means of impressing on the minds both of the choir and of the congregation the true sentiment of the stanzas. Mr. Curwen has remarked, that if the Minister would at the beginning of every quarter spend an hour with his organist or precentor, in drawing up a list of hymns for congregational use during that period, many important advantages would be gained. Not the least of these is the opportunity, afforded to the former, of studying the reading of the hymns beforehand; which it is hardly possible for him to do effectually, without some deliberately settled plan.

But let us hasten to discuss briefly some of the more prominent details of our question.

The great aim of the singer should be to produce good, rich, musical tone, rather than noise. Such defects as *bawling*, &c., are sufficiently injurious to the voice in private practice; but in the house of God they must certainly be regarded as totally inadmissible. And, again, nothing can have a worse effect than the practice of wandering from one's own part to another: as when, for example, a bass singer, tempted by the beauty of a treble voice in his vicinity attempts to launch out into a higher key. The importance of keeping steadily to one thing is just as great in music as in anything else; and those who are in the habit of suffering their part to be confused in this way, by foreign intermixture, will, instead of assisting the congregational harmony, only serve to lead it astray. An indifferent voice kept in proper tune will be of far greater value than an unregulated voice of double its musical power.

Great care should be taken to avoid the sing-song and mechanical style prevalent in many choirs and congregations. Each syllable should be distinctly pronounced; each line should glide smoothly on; and it is well to avoid drawing the breath, in any conspicuous part of the melody.

Those who are unwilling to give an undue share of their attention, in the house of God, to the technical part of the psalmody, will find it advantageous to remove the temptation by practising at home. A very moderate amount of preliminary training will enable the devout bearer to fulfil all the requirements of good taste, though he be unconscious at the time of any special mental effort. The analogy obtains, also, with reference to other and even higher exercises. Equally in prayer and in ordinary conversation, it is from the fullness of the heart that the mouth speaketh. Any direct efforts to subject the mind at the time to the guidance of well-defined scriptural rules