

CHURCH MUSIC.

A wide-spread feeling is prevalent among good people that we should, in some way, improve the standard of music in our churches. There is great unanimity as regards the desirability of such improvement; it is only when discussing the ways and means of attaining such results that opinions differ so widely. It is not unusual to hear the argument that good music should always be used whether the people like it or not, meaning by the term "good music," such as is put together upon the most approved plan—that music which, when well rendered, gives us keen delight more through the intellect than through the emotions. It seems to me that this argument, which would be eminently sound if applied to music intended for the concert-room or conservatory, is sadly out of place when applied to music that is intended to be the vehicle through which we are to worship our Creator. The question, as I regard it, is not what impression the music will have on *me*, whether it will give *me* delightful sensations or not, but rather, is it appropriate and fitting as an act of worship, is it acceptable to God?

Our congregations are made up, for the most part, of persons who have a very moderate knowledge of music. The fact that a very small percentage of those who compose our Sabbath audiences can comprehend intermediate tones, should be taken into consideration in selecting tunes for use in our churches. Anything that tends to distract our attention is sure to dissipate all devotional emotions. If the worshipper is obliged to stop and think of an interval, he may or may not sing that interval correctly, but the very act of thinking about it will interrupt his devotions. Thus it will be seen that a tune with but one difficult interval or progression will effectually prevent it from becoming a proper vehicle of devotional feeling.

Most persons now-a-days *can* comprehend diatonic tones and intervals, and the progressions formed by the use of such tones and intervals, hence only such tunes as are composed almost exclusively of diatonic intervals should be attempted in a purely devotional meeting. It is quite common to hear compositions in church which can only be performed by professional singers, and even thus rendered no one cares to have them repeated; thus, many of our books come to be lumbered down with scholarly attempts at musical composition which are faultless in form and progression, and even brilliant in composition, but which are nevertheless simply *coldly correct*.

You will pardon me if I am forced to the conclusion, from years of experience, that clergymen are largely blameable for the lax public sentiment concerning the sacredness of the musical portion of public worship. In cities, during the singing they often arrange their notices, or step forward and open the Bible at the right place. In country villages, the pastor sometimes says, "While the

choir is singing, will Brother So-and-so just punch the fire." He forgets that a hymn is more edifying without a poker obligato. II. R. PALMER in *Pulpit Treasury*.

THE ITINERANCY—ITS ADVANTAGES.

IN a previous number of this periodical I endeavored to point out some of the disadvantages of the itinerancy. The general acceptance of the system by one of the leading denominations in America, would indicate the existence of solid advantages in its practical working. The following are some of the merits claimed for it by its advocates:

1. It keeps the church together. Although it is a humiliating acknowledgment to make, yet it is none the less true, that in no concerns of our life on earth, are we more obliged to be governed by the waywardness of human nature than in church affairs. In the very association, in which all our selfishness is supposed to be laid aside and the spirit of Christ prevailing, do we find some of the most virulent outbursts of our passions, tending not only to rend the Church of Christ, but to destroy our social peace and comfort. Now it is claimed, and apparently with truth, that the system under consideration reduces this evil to a minimum. Churchmen, not in sympathy with some particular pastor and his modes of work, will be less disposed to cast reflections upon his character, or to incur the odium of agitating for a change, when such a change will soon take place in the ordinary working of the church. The diverse elements of the church can thus be held together with greater harmony and in more united co-operation in the work.

2. It renders the church independent of the "tares." It is claimed that in the ordinary mode of calling a minister to a congregation, the hypocrite has an equal voice with the sincere; that a member's influence is not in proportion to the measure of grace that is in him, but to his comparative wealth or strength of mind. Such persons will not adopt the same criteria of qualifications in the selection of a pastor as will the humble pious of the flock, nor be able to relish that kind of spiritual food which is most conducive to our growth in grace. Men are thus at times called to charges through the influence of members who, it is claimed, have not the spiritual qualifications to have a voice in the Church of Christ.

3. It obviates the necessity in a minister of seeking for a parish. A young man, on being ordained to the ministry, has a circuit at once assigned to him. He is not obliged to spend his time and strength in looking for a place to lay his head. There does not seem to be any mercenary spirit implied in this argument. It is merely a recognition of the circumstances in which the visible church finds itself at the present day. It is a false conception of the present standing of the church which appeals to the missionary spirit of the days of Paul as the only standard for the present age, at least in places where the question under consideration would obtain. The