

AN



ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

**HASTINGS AND MASON
MUSICAL ASSOCIATION,**

At Pittsfield, December 25, 1837.

BY EDWARD W. HOOKER,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN BENNINGTON, VERMONT.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE ASSOCIATION.

PITTSFIELD :

PRINTED BY PHINEAS ALLEN AND SON.

APRIL, 1838.

~~E-44.1~~
H764

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
REV. LOUIS FITZGERALD BENSON, D. D.
BEQUEATHED BY HIM TO
THE LIBRARY OF
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SCC
9549

Division

Section

451
H759



ADDRESS.

THE friends of Sacred Music have occasion for gratitude to God and encouragement to effort, in many things which indicate the advancement of this important part of divine worship. And of music generally, both sacred and secular, there is far more to hope than in many former years.

Among these indications are the following. Associations for the promotion of sacred music, like this on whose performances we attend this evening, are becoming organized, making attainments, and exerting influence. Smaller Societies and Choirs are promoting the object, in smaller fields. Teachers are more numerous ; and generally, better qualified, than formerly, both as to knowledge of their profession, and moral and religious character. Improvements have been made in the art of teaching music. Collections of sacred music are much improved in their character ; and those which deluged our congregations and vitiated the taste of our choirs, formerly, with hasty, crude, quick-step American compositions, have nearly passed away, and given place to books whose editors have drawn judiciously and richly upon the writings of scientific musicians of past ages and the present. So far as American compositions now occupy a place in our collections, they exhibit American talent and taste to much better advantage and far more to our credit, than formerly. The popularity of such tunes as New Jerusalem, New Durham, Florida, Stafford, Northfield, and many others, in which one part or another *gives chase* in an undignified and jingling fugue, we think is on the wane. The science of music is becoming a subject of study, more than in past years ; and American composers are less prolific and more modest, and dip their pens more carefully, for

composition. The practice of holding concerts, and of improving such occasions for discussing musical subjects, is believed to be accomplishing something, for raising the standard of taste and promoting correct views of the design of sacred music. The sentiment has been advanced, and is gaining ground, somewhat, that music deserves a place in our arrangements for the education of the young. We may also congratulate ourselves on the establishment, in one of our New-England cities, of an Academy for the education of teachers of music, and to promote the education of children and youth in this art. American ingenuity, enterprize and taste are becoming more extensively employed in the construction of instruments, especially those of the larger and permanent kind. So that the city is not now the only place where can be found the organ-builder and piano-maker, and manufacturer of smaller instruments ; but also, here and there, is the country village to which resort may be had, by Churches, Societies and Choirs in their vicinity, for instruments. With this we should notice the greater frequency with which, now, in our country places of worship, as well as in our cities, the ear is greeted, and the soul in which is music, is elevated, by "the organ's solemn peal ;" and that religious assemblies are learning to prize this noble and consecrated instrument, as an aid to religious worship. It is also pleasant to find the piano-forte or the organ more frequently in the family residence than in former years.

With all these favorable circumstances, however, we should not be wise in concluding that all has been done, or is doing, which is necessary to make our sacred music what it should be. The circumstances mentioned are evidences of a reformation commenced, and of improvement in progress. But we are a long distance from *perfection*, in our music, yet. Much remains to be done, to make a truly and generally prosperous state of the art ; and to place American music in advantageous comparison with that of other countries.

Let not the speaker be judged captious, and difficult to be satisfied, for the remarks just made. Look at another set of facts ; and let it be done with this consideration in view,—that mindfulness of our defects is always an indispensable requisite to improvement.

Good sacred music, in the strict meaning of the language, is still wanting in a great proportion of our congregations; and in some considerable districts of Churches, good music is far more frequently heard from the professional vocalists and instrumental performers at the theatre; and from the band accompanying the travelling circus or the caravan of wild animals; than in many places of worship. Music is made to contribute its higher attractions to the scenes of amusement and circles of fashion and dissipation. And the Christian, who "has music in his soul," as he passes within hearing of their songs of soft, though unsanctified harmony, almost stops to listen, perhaps quite; and goes his way, sick at heart, that many a Church is so far outdone by the men of the world, in their regards for an art so justly termed heavenly. And on the next Sabbath, perhaps, in some place of religious worship, he hears that offered in sacrifice to God, as *sacred music*, which, from its discordancies, or other faults, would be hissed in the theatre, and jeered and laughed at in the social party. Our best musical associations are still small; and, if they be regarded as a fair index of the number of enterprising and deeply interested cultivators of the art, they shew that they compose a mere fraction of the whole community. Even in this good County of Berkshire, with the name of which is associated, in many minds, ideas of New-England thoroughness, liberality, efficiency, and sound and enlightened views on most subjects; even here, the musical Association assembled, which bears its name, and stands as the principal representative of the state of sacred music and the number of its friends, counts on its catalogue of members less than one hundred and fifty. The Choirs of most of our Churches and Congregations are composed of very small numbers, compared with the number attending our places of worship: and these Choirs, much of the time, are in a low state, and their performances limited to a small number of tunes. Too frequently Churches and Congregations, as such, do nothing for the support and improvement of sacred music; leaving it a burden and expense, both as to time and money, on the hands of their Choirs and a few publick spirited individuals: and rather than pay a reasonable annual stipend to keep their sacred music good, put up with "confusion worse confounded," performed *as sing-*

ing, every Sabbath. Look also at the frequent fact, that for the revival of the sacred music of a Church and Congregation, and for the instruction of a Choir and placing their performances on a good basis, dependence is too commonly placed upon having a singing school "got up" once in five years or more, and a teacher employed two evenings per week for three or six months, to teach thirty or forty young men and women to half sing, and that mechanically, some fifty tunes,—three quarters of which tunes are left out of use, forgotten, or cannot be sung, within three months after the teacher has taken his departure. A system of instruction, this,—if system it can be called,—which, if applied to teach the art of reading language, would not, once in five years, carry a common school of children half through the Spelling Book. Look also at this, that probably not one professed singer out of a hundred, if indeed one in five hundred, in the generality of our Choirs, ever reads through, attentively, one of our ordinary collections of music. Also, among those who are called singers, and many of whom can perform, respectably, tunes with which they have become familiar by considerable practice; probably not one in a hundred, if one in five hundred, can read music "at sight." Let a Hastings or Mason, a Handel or Haydn, pass around in one of our Choirs and open to each person somewhere in one of our books of Anthems, or in the Oratorios of Messiah or Creation; and try who could read any music laid before him "at sight," as he reads his own language; and such a movement would probably be not only a matter of curiosity, but of lively and spirit-stirring solicitude, to many a one who calls himself a singer: and, "*I beg to be excused,*" would not improbably be the plea of the heaviest proportion. A like test in the case of many a gentleman, of his powers upon the flute or other instrument, and of many a lady upon her piano-forte, would probably be shrunk from in like manner. My meaning is this, that with all our love for music, and our taste for it; and with all the skill acquired in performing certain pieces of music; still *not many among us are readers of music*,—if we take *reading*, in relation to music, to mean what it does in relation to language. The singer or instrumental performer, who can execute, at sight, any music, is likely to be regarded as a prodigy in skill and attainments;

and as though there were some necromancy by which he can move on, page after page, through a seeming chaos of crotchets, quavers, semi-quavers, demi-semi-quavers, rests, fugues, chusing notes, rests, and flats and sharps single and double, and out of all read or play a delightful, melting, soul-thrilling piece of music.

If it be thought that we are making unreasonable and extravagant demands of qualifications for being estimated a good reader or executant of music, we shall be vindicated from the charge, it is believed, when we shall have examined for a few moments the subject of *Musical Education* ; a subject appropriate to this occasion, and worthy the attention of the friends of sacred music here assembled.

We may properly call music a species of language. It has most of the attributes of language ; at least as an instrument for producing effect on the finer feelings of the soul. It is a language, too, which almost every one speaks, in some form. For even the person who has never ventured to sing a regular Psalm tune, will be sometimes heard singing, in his own way, some air which he has heard from the fife or the military band ; or some old song he has heard. Very few there are who will not at least claim that they can “ do their own singing,”—albeit they may not please the taste of other people. The boy who rolls his ball or his hoop, in the street ; the mechanic who beats his anvil or his lap-stone ; the labourer in the field ; the hired domestic, at her kitchen labours, or over the loom or the spinning jenny in the factory ; are as often heard singing, in some sort,—(and it may be no contemptible sort either)—as the gentleman merchant, lawyer, or physician, or as the fashionable and elegant lady at her piano-forte in the drawing room. Every body makes music, in some sort, as much as they talk, almost. The elements or symbols of music, moreover, are presented to the eye by certain signs which are understood and read all over the civilized world, as familiarly as the alphabet. Moreover, the natural medium of the communication of music to the ear, is by the voice, like language. To a certain extent it communicates ideas to the mind. Its powers to move men’s feelings are proved, by facts, to be, many times, hardly surpassed by words. It is capable of cultivation, like eloquence, to such an extent, that like eloquence it shall move and

elevate and energize all the powers of the soul. We need not extend our comparison farther.

If, then, it be admitted that music is a species of language; has most of the attributes of language; and is adapted to produce effect on the human mind and feelings like language; then we are prepared for the position that *there must be such a thing as education in the use or practice of this language*: an application of the mind to the study of it, and of the voice to speaking it; and these pursued to the acquirement of a skill, and the exhibition of correctness, facility and taste, like what are attained in proper and eloquent speaking of our own English. And this education *is to be sought by much the same means, and in pursuing much the same process*, with education in good and proper reading of our own mother tongue. A good English reader is made by a well conducted course of practical education in the art, on the basis of a knowledge of the elements of our language and of grammar and composition. And a good performer of music, whether with the voice or an instrument, can also be made by a course of practical education in this art, based upon knowledge of the elements of music, and of musical grammar and composition.

How, then, does a teacher of the art of reading the English language,—for example,—set himself about educating a reader? He generally prefers to take a child on which to make his experiment, rather than a person twenty or thirty years of age, who never has read a word; for a good reader is not easily made of one who has come to adult years in ignorance of written language. He will begin with this child as soon as he can fix his attention and use his mind to learn any thing. He will commence with carefully teaching him the names, forms and sounds of the letters of the alphabet. Then to combine letters into syllables; syllables into words; words into sentences; sentences into paragraphs: then, to consider the meaning of what he reads, and to bring out that meaning impressively, in the use of accent, emphasis, inflection, &c. &c. To this he will join a course of instruction in grammar, as laying the foundation for a proper acquaintance with composition. Moreover, as he begins early, so he expects his undertaking will require time, patience, careful practice in the use of various kinds of composition, didactic, dramatic or dia-

logic, poetic, &c. ; and this accompanied with judicious and thorough criticism, for the correction of a thousand mistakes and faults in the learner. With these he will join the cultivation of the voice, in the use of various experiments for giving it depth, strength and compass. These are things professedly attempted by all good school-teachers. A good reader, in truth, any one knows, is not born so. He must be made so by a thorough process of education in the art of reading. Nor is this education accomplished in a day ; nor by instructing the pupil one or two evenings in a week for three or six months out of five years ; and these evenings spent in his commitment to memory, or in drilling him to read mechanically, a selection of extracts, while he acquires no habits of reading which he can carry to the perusal of any thing else ; but he must be educated by years of daily practice, and in reading any where, and in hundreds of books added to those used in the school. All this process of education in the art of reading his own language, goes on without any interference with the pupils progress in other branches of school education, pursued at the same time.

Now, from the School-Master, aiming to make a good English reader, we get some hints for the improvement of our system of musical education ;—or rather for the *creation* of such a system.

In the first place, then, to make a good performer of music, *begin early* in life. A young gentleman or lady, of eighteen or twenty years, who cannot tell one note from another, nor ever half sung any thing, except an old love-song, or a reel learned in the ball room, is a discouraging subject out of which to undertake the making of a singer. I do not say it can not be done ; but it is neither easily nor often done. “ Just as the *twig* is bent the tree inclines,” says a poet. But here you have a thrifty tree which has attained its growth ; and you may try to bend, and prune and train it ; and after all, your object will be very imperfectly accomplished, because the favourable time is long since gone by.

Into the same place, then, where, and at the same time when there is undertaken the education of readers of language, we would recommend the introduction of education in the art of music. It is a branch of education which,—it should be known and felt, by

all intelligent christians,—is of high importance to the interests of religion and religious worship. So important is it, that no christian parent, especially no minister of the Gospel, ought to be indifferent to it. A christian parent, of the Episcopal Church, would feel himself to be greatly guilty in neglecting to teach his children to read, as preparing them to join in reading the church service. There should be a like conscientiousness in every christian parent in regard to the education of his children in the art of sacred music, as an aid of their preparation for that part of divine worship. Let every child be early examined as to his possession of an ear and voice for music, and put under a course of instruction. It will be found that there are comparatively few children who cannot be taught to sing.

2. Begin at *the beginning*,—the A. B. C. of the process of musical education. In almost every thing else except music, common-sense has generally taught this simple rule. Whether the neglect of this rule in regard to teaching music is the fault of teachers or learners, admits of question ;—perhaps it is with both. Begin with simple sounds. Make sure of the right formation of a single note : which, in its production, shall not be a *noise* of the voice, merely, made in the rush of the breath, one half through the nose and the other through the teeth ; but a formed sound, which shall have the element of music in it. For a child can as easily be made to form a musical sound, as to form the proper sound of a letter in the alphabet. Take the pupil from one sound to another ; and after such a course of instruction in distinguishing and comparing one with another, as is necessary, then take him back and forth through one or more octaves, according to the compass of his voice, and teach him the proper formation of intervals. In short, teach him “ the eight notes,” as they are called, as you would teach him the alphabet. And no more overpass the sounding of four out of eight notes wrong, than you would his calling thirteen out of twenty-six letters by wrong names. *Accuracy* should be made an indispensable matter, in the outset of musical instruction. Thus also teach all the musical characters. I am thus particular on this point, because, if I mistake not, deficiency here is at the foundation of much professed in-
correctness in music.

3. The process of the voice in correctly sounding the notes of an octave, in succession, is the beginning of the third thing, *combination* ; and prepares the way for the succeeding steps in combining notes of different intervals, and the execution of musical phrases, of any number of notes ; and thence to the performance of passages, of such simple composition as to lead the pupil gradually forward in learning to read music. It used to be the fashion, so soon as the pupil had learned to sound the eight notes and “ got the gamut,” (as the quaint expression was)—to put him directly to singing tunes. Now no school teacher, not a simpleton, ever thinks of taking a child, from having learned his alphabet, directly into Murray’s English Reader, for example ; nor sets him to reading sentences and paragraphs, before he has learned to put together and pronounce the letters a–b, or b–a–g, or b–a–k–e–r. Let the progress of the pupil in music be made step by step ; as much so as the pupil in reading the English language ; combining notes into bars, phrases, strains, &c.

Our collections of music, in years past, have commonly contained from two to ten or twelve pages of what have been called *ground rules* of music ; necessary,—we are gravely told,—to be understood, before the learner can undertake to sing. This, now, is like publishing a collection of pieces of prose, or poetry, or both ; and at the beginning of the book giving some ten or twelve pages of *ground rules of reading* : to wit, the alphabet, a table of sounds, the vowels, and diphthongs, a table of stops and marks, a few lessons in spelling, and some few directions on reading ; all very wisely and respectfully recommended to the reader as being quite necessary to be understood before reading the book. A wonderful compliment, truly, the makers of collections of music have been in the habit of paying to the might and majesty of the human mind ; as though it could, in a few hours, perhaps minutes, take in a few general principles of an art or science ; and then stride, leap, or fly, at once, over a thousand intermediate steps, into the perfection of skill in the application of them. We would, with all due respect, submit the question, whether at this distance of time from the days of Jubal, it may not possibly be safe to put *ground rules of music*, for learners, into books by themselves ; amplified and particularized and illus-

trated, as may be necessary, for *learners* ; and that Editors of our Collections of Music should take it for granted that their readers are far enough advanced in principles, to use them without a preface of such a kind? Then, the difference between a mere learner, and an actual reader of music, might perhaps be better understood and acted upon. With my own very limited capabilities for reading music, and my hopes that the present generation of learners will be better educated than the last, I would confess myself thankful to some recent professional teachers in our country, who have furnished us some first books of music, designed to precede the use of Collections ; and to help the learner to walk, safely, one step at a time, into the art of reading music, without any temptation to the hazardous experiment to which we have alluded. The principle of combination, in learning to perform music, must be made a *practicable* affair, in order to the education of good singers.

Before leaving this point, a word on the *object* of it. It is not simply to have the learner commit to memory, or drill himself into the ability to perform a few tunes ; as has been the practice in " days departed,—never to return," we hope. It is nonsense to talk of one's having learned to sing, who has done *only* this. Has a school boy learned to read, who has committed to memory, so that he can repeat, without book, a few pieces of prose or poetry, or a few hymns ; or who has learned mechanically to read *them*, while he can read nothing else, at sight? To recur again, for illustration, to the art of reading language. The object of the teacher is not simply to have the pupil learn to read mechanically ; or perform, from the familiarity acquired by many times reading, *parts* of the spelling or reading book, with no expectation that he will ever read any thing else, except by the same process of preparation. The object is to have him acquire that acquaintance with the elements of language and their use, which shall prepare him to read millions of times more compositions than he could ever commit to memory or make familiar to his mind by many times reading ;—and so that he shall have such a facility, and that facility become a fixed habit, in reading, that he shall read correctly, at sight, any composition he may never have seen before. The exercise of *conning over* a page of a book, be-

fore daring to attempt to read it aloud, for fear of not being able to go through with it ; and to be obliged to spell this and that hard word ; and to observe, beforehand, the position of this comma, and that colon, and this period, are things which any New-England gentleman or lady, calling themselves *readers*, would be ashamed to be caught doing. “ I never saw that tune before,” said a “ singing master,” of twenty years since, when excusing himself from the attempt to sing a part with others, in a common tune in one of our collections. What kind of a teacher of a New-England common-school would he be esteemed, who should offer a like apology for not being able to read a paragraph in a school book with which he was not familiar ? The object of musical education is to learn to *read* music,—*any* music,—by the kind of facility in combination, and that acquaintance with musical composition, which, in reference to language, makes a good reader ; and thus to get command of all the music ever written, as much as of all the books ever written in our own language. A singer thus educated can be as much at home on the pages of Handel’s *Messiah* or Haydn’s *Creation*, as in singing any tune in our most common collections. Such facility will secure the storing of the memory with tunes for common performance, in publick religious services. For the memory retains nothing with more ease than it does music, when there is taste for it. And were this not the fact, there would be a substitute for it, in that facility at reading music, which would ensure the correctness of a singer’s performance with his music book before him, as much as of his reading of a psalm or hymn, with his book open. I have known a choir of singers,—and would hope it is not the only one,—who would perform, in the services of the Sabbath, any tune which should be set to psalm or hymn by their leader ; without stopping to inquire whether they had practised upon it before. They could read it at sight, and that was all which was necessary. It is earnestly to be hoped that the time is coming when such will be the ability of all who call themselves singers.

4. The study of musical composition is another requisite in good musical education. We see not why the knowledge of musical grammar and composition are not as attainable and necessary to the singer as those of language to a reader. We need

not enlarge on this point, for the illustration, beyond what has already been done, of the importance of this as concerned in laying a foundation for good *musical* reading or execution.

5. *Patient and long-continued training* of the pupil is another requisite in musical education. Has any acquirement of skill, in any art, ever been made, without this? Common-sense generally teaches its indispensableness; and if this fail, in one instance, to teach it, disappointment certainly will make a man sensible of it. Progress in any art is usually slow, is acquired by degrees,—by not more than one degree per day; if indeed so much. But the progress which may be *slow*, if it proceed upon the settled principles which lie at the foundation of excellence, is generally *sure*, also. In first learning to perform music well, many faults and inaccuracies, of course, are to be pointed out, and their correction insisted on with the same particularity as in any other art. It is the omission of this, and letting choirs try to sing before they are ready to do it, which makes musical performances, in so many places of worship, little else than a concatenation of blunders. A criticalness in performance, and a niceness of ear, as to time or harmony, which would make the blood of singers chill in their veins, and their flesh to quiver, at a discord, or a jarring of time, would be blessings in our choirs; and would often be a very great mercy to their fellow-worshippers, who have ears, and nerves which will not bear rasping. A standard of accuracy and habits of correctness should be formed and established in the performance of music, so that it shall be natural, and a matter of course, to *sing right*,—a thing not of every-day occurrence. While on this point, I would observe, that it is gratifying to perceive, in the practice of this Association, in their rehearsals, that they make systematic and thorough criticism one of their first objects.

6. Practice, in the reading of music of different kinds and styles, is another requisite in good musical education. And this, on the same principle that a judicious teacher of the art of reading puts into the hands of his pupils compositions of different classes and authors. In the compositions of Luther, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and many other writers of past and present time, we might point out specimens, various, peculiar to the genius of each; and exhibiting all the variety of musical talent and excel-

lence which we are accustomed to admire in the poetry of Milton, Cowper, Young, and others ; or in the prose of Addison, Burke, Johnson, and other writers. What good singer has never noticed and felt the rich harmony and solemn majesty of Luther's Old Hundred ; or the sweet, Scottish, "wild warbling" of Dundee ? In higher compositions, who has not felt his soul melt under the plaintiveness of Handel's Dirge in the Oratorio of Saul ; or the pathetic and touching appeal in his recitative in the Messiah, "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." His Hallelujah Chorus might well lift a king and his court from their seats. His chorus, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c. cannot well be sung or heard, by a true-souled singer, except standing. His Dittengen Te Deum, it would seem to a mortal man, might be almost elevated enough to be sung from the orchestra of heaven. So of many passages of Haydn's Oratorio of the Creation, we might speak ; in which we hardly know whether most to admire the bewitching delicacy and sweetness of his conversations between Adam and Eve in Eden ; or the beauty and majesty of his dialogues of the angels ; or his choruses of all creation, which seem made for all creation to sing together.

7. One more requisite in good musical education we notice, *extensive reading*, as a matter of taste, and of intellectual and religious enjoyment. No one calling himself a singer ought to have the confession to make, that he has not read all the music of the collections in common and approved use in his choir. And on the same principle that you would furnish your library with standard authors in the English language, possess yourself also of choice musical authors. Purchase and read, especially, such of the works of Handel and Haydn, and the selections from others, which have been published in this country. Add a new collection of music to your stock of books, as you would a valuable volume of sermons or essays. Have in your house some musical instrument, and use it, daily. There are many minutes, and sometimes hours, in the lives of the busiest, when, with a taste for music, time can be found for its cultivation and practice, vocal and instrumental. Commend to us the singer, who as a skilful performer, but better still as a christian, can sit down to the study of such a work as Handel's Messiah, in the retirement of home ; and read, with at-

tion and enjoyment, its various parts, as a kind of commentary on that interesting collection of scriptures; and feast his soul, taste, intellect, on the matter of his pages.

In a well conducted course of musical reading will be acquired additional skill in performance, in many points. As a means for cultivating musical expression, especially, no one is of more importance than this. Here also let us recommend the reading of musical history and biography. It is much to be wished that the American press might be patronized by the friends of music, in the re-publication of some of the most approved European works of this class. To know what music should be and may be, in this country, we need to know what it has been in other countries; not only as to be learned in the writings of eminent composers. but in their professional characters, and in those of eminent performers. A Society like this will doubtless find a Musical Library an important means for the advancement of their acquaintance with the art of music and its eminent men, and an aid in raising the standard of musical taste.

If, now, we be asked, Is such a system of musical education practicable? we point to what has been done in individual cases; and to the old proverb, worthy to be repeated in other places besides the school room, "*what man has done, man can do.*" The practicableness of attaining such skill in reading music as we have urged, is illustrated in the case of every decent reader of his mother tongue.

As skill in combination is a leading requisite, and as more doubt may be felt on that point than some others, let us illustrate this by reference to certain things which are done, from which we may legitimately infer the entire practicableness of this. You can sing the tune of Old Hundred, doubtless, in a long metre psalm; and herein is the combination of two things, commonly done; and with entire facility. Practice will enable you to join with these several other things. While you sing the air or bass of this piece, in words, you can carry in your mind another part, still; and probably you often do it; for if another person is singing that part, you observe whether he harmonizes with yours, and perceive any mistake which he makes;—a *third* thing. Again, you are perhaps a player upon a viol; and,—which is not uncommon,—you play

the bass, sing in words the air, and carry, (as before supposed,) a third part in your mind or watch its performance with your ear: four things combined, which you do not call difficult. To change our illustration to another instrument; here is a young lady at her piano-forte, who sings this Old Hundred in words, plays the air with her right hand, the bass with her left, carries in her mind a third part, and in proof of this throws in notes here and there as chords: *five* things. And nothing wonderful, this; for it is done, after a fashion, by every young lady who sings, and professes to play on that instrument. Now a step farther: here is an organist who does all these things and adds a sixth thing, throws in bass chords, an octave below. We suppose this to be no uncommon thing.*

The complicated *combination of parts* which can be accomplished is exemplified in these remarks; if the speaker has made no mistake in his observation of performers and his estimate of the things which are embraced in their executions. If, now, these things can be accomplished, then surely it is entirely practicable for you to accomplish *the combinations necessary to read your single part, at sight*, in common performances; and in any music whatever. And no gentleman or lady ought to make professions of being a *very* great singer, who cannot read well, at sight, one part, in any musical composition. It ought not to be any longer regarded as such an impracticable and wonderful attainment. Why do we not wonder to see any one read, at sight, a letter from his friend, which he has just opened; or a paragraph of news in his paper just taken from the post-office? There is nothing in the science of music, nor in the art of performing it, to prevent such singers from becoming as common every-day beings as decent readers of our own language. This would be a natural result of a system of musical education, conducted as much on the principles of common sense, as education in other branches in our common schools.

* Handel, on an occasion when he felt the need of more hands, to accomplish all the combinations he wanted, bowed his face down to the keys of the organ, and employed his nose to do the duties of a third hand.

I point to the fact, also, that in some countries in Europe, the experiment of musical education by system has been extensively shewn successful. Of Germany, particularly, remarks a late writer : “ It is perhaps more truly the country of music than any other in Europe. It makes a part of the business of almost every common school, of every town and village and cottage ; so that genius has opportunity for early instruction, and the patronage and even example of the princes of the empire give every encouragement to the exertions of professed musicians.”

In looking for the means by which such a system of musical education may be introduced, we may take encouragement from the fact, that already experiments are making in some primary schools in our country. It is to be hoped the experiments will be rendered complete, by conducting instruction in this art in the same manner in which other things are taught. It can also, doubtless, be introduced into our American schools, as easily as into those of other countries ; and it is to be hoped that our children have as much music in their souls, and as flexible organs for singing, as Germans or any others. Parental instruction may do something in aid of this object. Moreover, let the demand be made for qualifications to instruct in music, in those who shall teach our primary schools, and it will operate, eventually, to produce a supply. The attractions of the art itself, also, as it advances into notice, will probably aid its progress.

We should briefly notice some of the obvious advantages of such a system of musical education.

Its influence on the state of our choirs, as to their numbers, would be important. Many more voices would be brought under cultivation, than at present. Instead of a handful of singers, almost lost in the orchestra of a large congregation, fifties and hundreds might be employed in this delightful part of divine worship. Such a system would, in time, indeed, make singers of the largest proportion of our congregations ; and the advantage of this, to the interest and impressiveness of this part of publick worship, would be of great worth.

It would give better permanence to the sacred music of our congregations, from the fact, that such a system of education

In reading music is not liable to the catastrophe which so often befalls memoritei or mechanical singing. Once a good *reader*, and in the common practice of it, always a good reader. And with equal truth we may say, once a good *singer*, *always* a good singer.

Such a system will be best economy, both of time and money.

The influence of such a course of musical education on the habits of our choirs, in publick performances, would be of high value. Give a choir the facility at performance which would be thus imparted, and we should have performances marked with that simplicity, and expressiveness, which come of their being conducted in habits based on principles.

Another important advantage of such a system of musical education will be, that singers will be far more at ease in their publick performances. They are not liable to fail, in time or harmony. On the plan of learning tunes heretofore practiced, a choir will not dare attempt the performance of a tune, in publick, which they have not first nearly worn out, by the kind of school practice of which we have spoken. It is doubtless familiar to many a singer in this Association, how great an undertaking it is for a common choir to perform an anthem, in publick. After having practiced upon it, many an evening, in singing school, they undertake its performance at the ordination, or thanksgiving, or some other occasion for which it has been selected; each performer, in all probability, trembling, and afraid lest some unlucky mistake in time or tune should throw them into confusion. The feelings of a religious assembly will commonly be in very wakeful sympathy with those of the trembling and anxious choir; and all are probably more occupied with the object of executing the piece without mistake,—with getting through it *alive*,—than with the devotional feelings appropriate to the occasion. I have seen choirs thus appear most distressedly ridiculous. A want of thorough education in the art of reading music, as preventing composed facility in performances, is a very great hindrance to the devotional feelings of an assembly.

But by proper musical education let it be made easy, and a

matter of course, for a choir to sing correctly ; and they are far better able to make the exercise truly a religious one. They are at all the liberty necessary to enter into the spirit of the Psalm, Hymn, or passages of Scripture to be sung. And if there be any feelings of common reverence, as engaged in a solemn act of worship to God ; and if there be in their hearts true devotion ; they cannot well help singing expressively.

Another advantage of such a system of musical education, will be, its aid to the impressions of the ministry of the Gospel. Let any one, of good musical taste, united with correct christian judgment, search for the actual benefits of much that is called sacred music, to this end ; and let him point out to us any benefits which would not have been as well secured,—and perhaps better,—by a psalm or hymn being well read, and then followed by five minutes of silence in the congregation, to be occupied in meditation on what has been read. Yes, and better too, than to have the violence done to the auditory nerves of an assembly, which is frequent. An interval of perfect *silence* would be far preferable to much of the *singing* which is applied to sacred poetry. The effects of bad music on a preacher are unhappy, both for himself and his congregation. It is related of the venerable Dr. Bellamy, of Connecticut, that on one Sabbath, after the choir had sung a psalm very badly, he arose and read them another, saying, “ *You must try again, for it is impossible to preach, after such singing.*” There is not a little of what is called sacred *music*, which ought to be named *sanctimonious discordancy* ; and is much better adapted to make a hearer angry, than to promote his devotional feelings.

On the other hand, make this part of divine service what it ought to be, to answer its design ; let it be the raising of a sacred song, which, from its proper performance, shall have awakened right feeling, and promoted devotion ; and preaching is a different exercise, both with minister and congregation. Instead of having to recover from the discomposure of feelings produced by a disagreeable and irritating strain of discords,—costing the time of half a sermon to recover from,—they can enter upon this part of divine service under positive and important advantage. Such music is sometimes to be heard,—when

shall it be always?—which carries forth the heart in the spirit of true prayer; and is adapted to be, to the heart and the lips of a preacher, like “a live coal from off the altar.”

The remarks which have been made respecting the education of vocalists, apply also to instrumental performers.

And here we would speak of another requisite to good sacred music, *a well conducted instrumental accompaniment*. The Providence of God, who has given man faculties for the art of music, has also led man’s ingenuity to the invention of instruments, by which the powers of the voice may be aided, and the impressiveness of this part of divine service augmented. While this is true of various kinds of instruments, there is one which seems to have been designed by the God of the sanctuary, more especially than any other, for the publick services of religion; I mean the organ. The Providence of God in causing an instrument to be invented, so perfectly adapted to sacred music, is as noticeable as in leading Watts and other christian poets to the version of the Psalms and other portions of Scripture which we use. The powers of that noble instrument are beyond those of any other one yet invented. Under the hands of one who understands and can bring out its fine powers, its effect for giving dignity, solemnity, and I will say sublimity, too, to the songs of the sanctuary, is altogether peculiar. Nothing can surpass the full, sweet, harmonious and solemn tones of a good organ to give depth, strength and effect to the music of a choir; and to assist the worshipper to feel that he is in “the house of God”—“the gate of heaven,” and to send up, with fervency, the pious aspirations of his heart to the throne of “the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity.” This noble instrument is to be regarded as a gift, of peculiar value, from Him who designed every thing about his Zion and her ordinances to be desirable and beautiful; to impress sentiments of veneration and love upon those who “walk about her,” and mark her spiritual excellence, and the means of its promotion. Not that we advocate, in religious services, that which shall strike the senses and regale the taste, irrespective of the great objects of christian worship; but we are to remember, that in this imperfect and sinful state, the heart is to be reached and in-

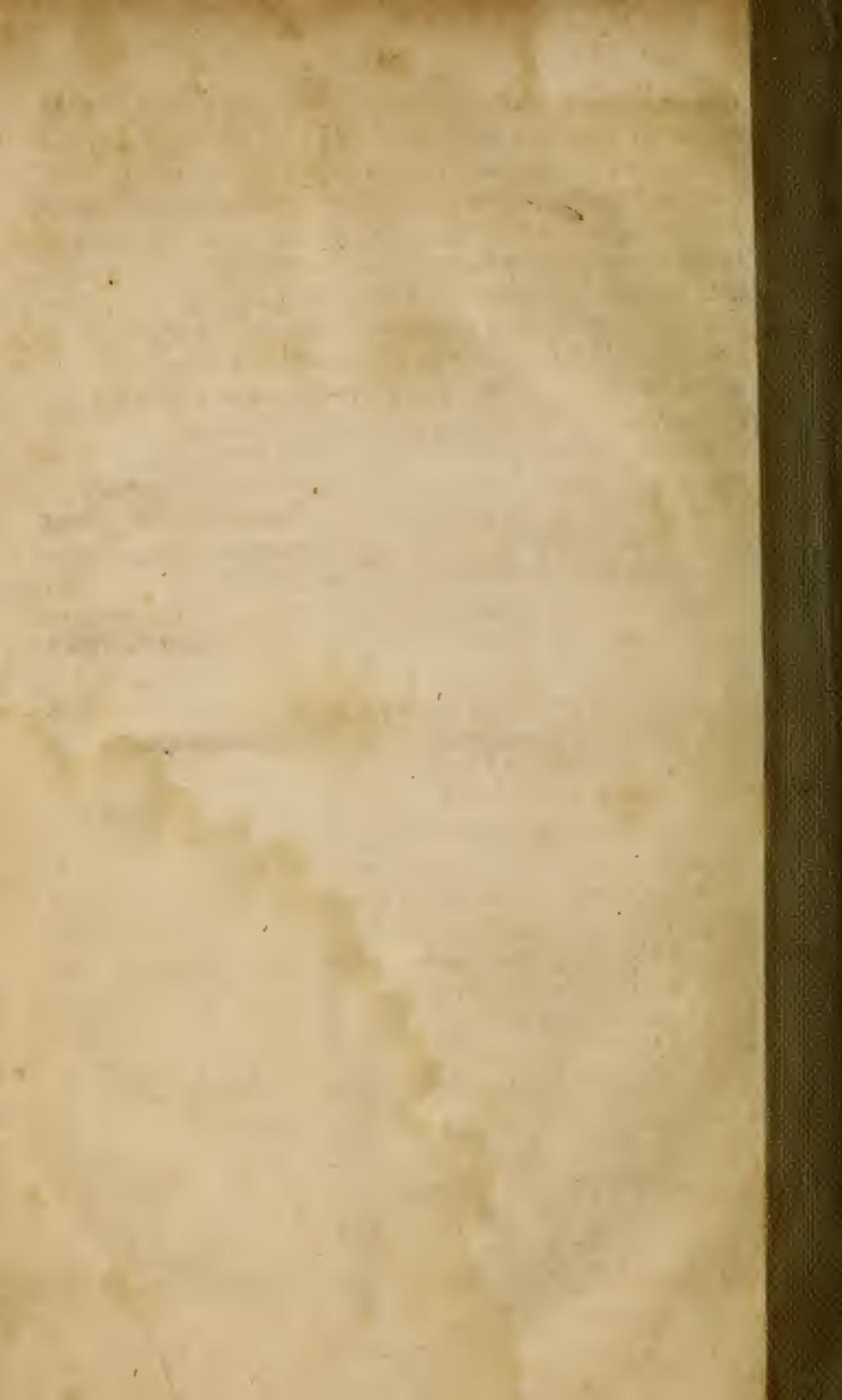
fluenced through the instrumentality of such means, associated with more strictly spiritual ones. What is true of the art of eloquence, as necessary to enforce divine truth, is equally true of the art of music, as to aid the devotions associated with the ministry of the word.

One more requisite,—this part of divine service should be regarded more distinctly than it has been, as being, itself, *worship of God*.

There is far more instruction in the scriptures, to the duty and manner of singing the praises of God, and to the use of instruments in aid of this exercise, than seems to be considered by one christian in a thousand. Far away be banished the idea of its being a kind of interlude, for the entertainment of a congregation, and the relief of the preacher from continual exercises. Look into your Psalm and Hymn books, and consider the spirit which breathes through their pages. It is the spirit of adoration to God, and of praise, humility, supplication ; and of gratitude, faith, love, hope and joy. It is the spirit which should breathe in every note of music : and to this end, the music should be made such that it shall be *a suitable vehicle for such sentiments*. Insincerity should be dreaded, as sin, in this exercise, as much as in prayer. The hearts and voices which join in it, here, should have the feelings which swell the anthems of the redeemed and of the angels of GOD around the eternal throne. This, therefore, obviously renders personal piety an important qualification, in those who conduct this part of religious worship. They need to know what it is to melt in tender penitence for sin ; to adore and love the holiness of God ; to live by faith in Christ Jesus the Lord, and in the spirit of prayer.—With none else can this be an act of worship acceptable to a holy God.

With such requisites as these, it is to be seen what the sacred music of any church and congregation may be made. Gather a choir, thus educated and aided, in the place of worship ; their hearts burning with the spirit of true devotion, and with theirs the hearts of their fellow-worshippers. Let their songs, exhibiting all which is sweet, inspiring and sublime in harmony, be rendered expressive and lively, by all which is tender, sol-

enn, and devout, in the aspirations of the soul to God. And, though on earth, the worshippers may, in spirit, enter into the high praises of heaven. Though in an earthly temple, they may, in the holy fervours of the soul, go up before "the throne of God and the Lamb." And the Sabbaths thus employed will be seasons of happy preparation for the Sabbath which is eternal. And the services thus rendered and enjoyed, will richly and rapidly advance the preparation of the true child of God, to strike his golden harp, and raise his enraptured voice, in the anthems of eternity, to the praise of "Him who hath loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood."



Gaylord Bros.

Makers

Syracuse, N. Y.

PAT. JAN. 21, 1908

