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POWER OF SACRED SONG.

SERMON AT THE DEDICATION OF THE ORGAN AT THE TABERNACLE.

The glorious inheritance of Church I solemnly—"Let the People Praise Thee, O God! Let All the People Praise Thee." Affecting Instance of Conversion by song.

BROOKLYN, Sept. 25.—The magnificent organ of the new Brooklyn Tabernacle was dedicated to-day. The services were veritable musical festivals. While the regular musical programme at the Tabernacle is always attractive, that of to-day was exceptionally beautiful, the congregational singing, offertories and interludes being rendered with marvelous volume and expression. Dr. Talmage's sermon, which was appropriate to the occasion, was on the text, Genesis iv, 21, "His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."

Lamech had two boys, the one a herdsman and the other a musician. Jubal, the younger son, was the first organ builder. He started the first sound that rolled from the wonderful instrument which has so much to do with the worship of the ages. But what improvement has been made under the hands of organ builders such as Bernhard, Sebastian Bach and George Hogarth and Joseph Booth and Thomas Holjohm, clear on down to George and Edward Jardine of our own day. I do not wonder that when the first full organ, that we read of as given in 757 by an emperor of the east to a king of France, sounded forth its full grandeur a woman fell into a delirium from which her reason was never restored.

The majesty of a great organ skillfully played is almost too much for human endurance, but how much the instrument has done in the re-enforcement of divine service it will take all time and all eternity to celebrate. Last April when we dedicated this church to the service of Almighty God our organ was not more than half done. It has now come so near completion that this morning I preach a sermon dedicatory to this mighty throne of sacred sound. It greets the eye as well as the ear. Behold this mountain of antiphony! This forest of hosannahs! Its history is peculiar.

The late Mr. George Jardine recently made a tour of the organs of Europe. He gathered up in his portfolio an account of all the excellencies of the renowned instruments of music on the other side of the Atlantic and all the improvements and brought back that portfolio to America, declaring that Brooklyn Tabernacle should have the full advantage of all he had obtained, and although he did not live to carry out his idea, his son, Mr. Edward Jardine, has introduced into this great organ all those improvements and gratifiers, and while you hear this organ you hear all that is notable in the organs of Lucerne and Fribourg and Haarlem and St. Paul and Westminster abbey, and other great organs that have enraptured the world.

In it are banded up more harmonies than I can describe, and all for God and the lighting of the soul toward him. Its four banks of keys, its one hundred and ten stops and appliances, its four thousand five hundred and ten pipes, its chime of thirty-seven bells, its cathedral diapason and pedal double diapason, its song trumpet and night horn and vox humana, all, we dedicate to God and the soul. It will, I believe, under the divine blessing lead uncounted thousands into the kingdom. Its wedding marches, its thanksgiving anthems, its requiems will sound after all the voices that follow it to-day shall have sung their last song. To God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost we dedicate it!

WHEN THE MORNING STARS SANG TOGETHER.

There has been much discussion as to where music was born. I think that at the beginning, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, that the earth heard the echo. The cloud on which the angels stood to celebrate the creation was the harp of song. Inanimate nature is full of God's stringed and wind instruments. Silence itself—perfect silence—is only a musical rest in God's great anthem of worship. Wind among the leaves, insects humming in the summer air, the rush of billow upon beach, the ocean far out sounding its everlasting psalm, the bobolink on the edge of the forest, the quail whistling up from the grass, are music.

On Blackwell's island I heard coming from a window of the lunatic asylum a very sweet song. It was sung by one who had lost her reason, and I have come to believe that even the deranged and disordered elements of nature would make music to our ear, if we only had acuteness enough to listen. I suppose that even the sounds in nature that are discordant and repulsive make harmony in God's ear. You know that you may come so near to an orchestra that the sounds are painful instead of pleasurable, and I think we stand so near devastating storm and frightful whirlwind we cannot hear that which makes to God's ear and the ear of the spirits above us a music as complete as it is tremendous.

The day of Judgement, which will be a day of uproar and tumult, I suppose will bring no dissonance to the ears of those who can calmly listen; although it is as when some great reformer is executing a boleros piece of music, he sometimes breaks down the instrument on which he plays, so that it might be on that last day that the grand march of God, played by the fingers of thunder and earthquake and conflagration, may break down the world upon which the music is executed. Not only is inanimate nature full of music, but God has wonderfully organ-

ized the human voice, so that in the plainest throat and lungs there are fourteen direct muscles which can make over sixteen thousand different sounds, and there are thirty indirect muscles which can make it estimated, more than one hundred and seventy-three millions of sounds!

Now, I say, when God has so constructed the human voice, and when he has filled the whole earth with harmony, and when he recognized it in the ancient temple, I have a right to come to the conclusion that God loved music.

I propose this morning in setting apart this organ for sacred use, to speak about sacred music; first showing you its importance and then stating some of the obstacles to its advancement.

"SING YE TO GOD!"

I draw the first argument for the importance of sacred music from the fact that God commanded it. Through Paul he tells us to admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, and through David he cries out, "Sing ye to God, all ye kingdoms of the earth." And there are hundreds of other passages I might name proving that it is as much a man's duty to sing as it is his duty to pray. Indeed I think there are more commands in the Bible to sing than there are to pray.

God not only asks for the human voice but for instruments of music. He asks for the cymbal, and the harp, and the trumpet, as well as the organ. And I suppose that, in the last days of the church, the harp, the lute, the trumpet and all the instruments of music, whether they have been in the service of righteousness or sin will be brought by their masters and laid down at the feet of Christ, and then sounded in the church's triumph, on her way from suffering into glory. "Praise ye the Lord!" Praise him with your voices, praise him with stringed instruments and with organs.

I draw another argument for the importance of this exercise from the impressiveness of this exercise. You know something of what secular music has achieved. You know it has made its impression on governments, upon laws, upon literature and upon whole generations. One inspiring national air is worth thirty thousand men as a standing army. There comes a time in the battle when one bugle is worth a thousand muskets. I have to tell you that no nation or church can afford to severely economize in music.

Many of you are illustrations of what sacred song can do. Through it you were brought into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. You stood out against the argument and the warning of the pulpit, but when, in the sweet words of Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley or John Newton or Toplady, the love of Jesus was sung to your soul when you surrendered, as armed steel that could not be taken by a host lifts its window to listen to a harp's thrill. There was a Scotch soldier dying in New Orleans, and a Scotch minister came in to give him the consolations of the Gospel. The man turned over on his pillow and said, "Don't talk to me about religion." Then the Scotch minister began to sing a familiar hymn of Scotland that was composed by David Dickson, beginning with the words:

Oh, mother, dear Jerusalem, What shall become of thee?

He sang it to the tune of "Dundee," and everybody in Scotland knows that; and as he began to sing the dying soldier turned over on his pillow, and said to the minister, "Where did you learn that?" "Why," replied the minister, "my mother taught me that." "So did mine," said the dying Scotch soldier; and the very foundation of his heart was upturned, and then there he yielded himself to Christ. Oh, it has an irresistible power. Luther's sermons have been forgotten, but his "Judgement Hymn" sings on through the ages, and will keep on singing until the blast of the archangel's trumpet shall bring about that very day which the hymn celebrates. I would to God that those who hear me to-day would take these songs of salvation as messages from heaven; for just as certainly as the birds flourish for food to Elijah by the brook Cherith, so these winged harmonies God sent, are flying to your soul with the bread of life. Open your mouths and take it, O hungry Elijahs!

THRILLING LINES OF THE OLD HYMNS.

In addition to the inspiring music of our own day we have a glorious inheritance of church psalmody which has come down fragrant with the devotions of other generations—tunes no more worn out than they were when our great-grandfathers climbed up on them from the church pew to glory? Dear old souls how they used to sing! When they were cheerful, our grandfathers and grandmothers used to sing "Colchester." When they were meditative, when the board meetings hung with great tenderness they sang "Woodstock." Were they wraped in visions of the glory of the church, they sang "Zion." Were they overborne with the love and glory of Christ, they sang "Ariel." And those days there were certain tunes married to certain hymns and they have lived in peace a great while, these two old people, and we have no right to divorce them. "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder." But how hard hearted we must be if all the sacred music of the past, and all the sacred music of the present does not start us heavenward.

I have also noticed the power of sacred song to soothe perturbation. You may have come in here this morning with a great many worriment and anxieties, yet, perhaps, in the singing of the first hymn, you lost all those worriment and anxieties. You have read in the Bible of Saul and how he was sad and angry, and how the boy David came in and played the evil spirit out of him. A Spanish king was melan-

choly. The windows were all closed. He sat in the darkness. Nothing could bring him forth until Farnesella came and discoursed music three or four days to him. On the fourth day he looked up and wept and rejoiced, and the windows were thrown open, and that which all the splendors of the court could not do the power of song accomplished. If you have anxieties and worriment, try this heavenly charm upon them. Do not sit down on the bank of the hymns, but plunge in, that the devil of care may be brought out of you.

It also arouses to action. A singing church is always a triumphant church! If the congregation is silent during the exercise or partially silent, it is the silence of death. If, when the hymn is given out, you hear the faint hum of here and there a father and mother in Israel, while the vast majority are silent that minister of Christ who is pre-empting to have a very strong constitution if he does not get the chills. He needs not only the grace of God, but nerves like wire. It is amazing how some people, who have votes enough to discharge all their duties in the world, when they come into the house of God have no voice to discharge this duty. I really believe that if the church of Christ could rise up and sing as it ought to sing, that there would be a hundred souls brought into the kingdom of Christ there would be a thousand.

ALL PURE MUSIC IS WHOLESOME.

But I must now speak of some of the obstacles in the way of the advancement of this sacred music, and the first is that it has been impressed into the service of superstition. I am far from believing that music ought always to be positively religious. Refined art has opened places where music has been secularized, and lawfully so. The drawing room, the musical club, the orchestra, the concert, by the gratification of pure taste, and the production of harmless amusement, and the improvement of talent, have become great forces in the advancement of our civilization. Music has as much right to laugh in Surrey gardens as it has to pray in St. Paul's.

In the kingdom of nature we have the glad filling of the wind as well as the long meter psalm of the thunder; but while all this is so every observer has noticed that this art, which God intended for the improvement of the ear, and the voice, and the head, and the heart, has often been impressed into the service of false religions. False religions have depended more upon the pulpit proclamation of their dogmas. Tartini, the musical composer, dreamed one night that Satan snatched from his hand an instrument and played upon it something very sweet—a dream that has often been fulfilled in our day, the voice and the instruments that ought to have been devoted to Christ, captured from the church and applied to purposes of superstition.

Another obstacle has been an inordinate fear of criticism. The vast majority of people singing in church never want to hear anybody else sing. Everybody is waiting for somebody else to do his duty. If we all sang, then the inaccuracies that are evident when only a few sing would not be heard at all; they would be drowned out. God only asks you to do as well as you can, and then if you get the wrong pitch, or wrong time, he will forgive any deficiency of the ear and imperfection of the voice. Angels will not laugh if you should lose your place in the musical score, or come in at the close a bar behind.

There are three schools of singing, the Italian school and the French school of singing. Now, I would like to add a fourth school, and that is the school of Christ. The voice of a contralto, broken heart, although it may not be able to stand human criticism, makes better music to God's ear than the most artistic performance when the heart is wanting. I know it is easier to preach on this than it is to practice, but I sing for two reasons—first, because I like it, and next, because I want to encourage those who very little faculty in that direction, yet I am resolved to sing. God has commanded it, and I dare not be silent. He calls on the beasts, on the cattle, on the dragons, to praise him, and we ought not to be behind the cattle and the dragons.

TIMIDITY AND CAPTIONNESS.

Another obstacle that has been in the way of the advancement of this holy art has been the fact that there has been so much angry discussion on the subject of music. There are those who would have this exercise conducted by musical instruments. In the same church there are those who do not like musical instruments, and so it is organ and no organ, and there is a fight. In another church it is a question whether the music shall be conducted by a precentor, or by a drilled choir. Some want a drilled choir and some want a precentor, and there is a

(Continued on Fourth Page.)

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