

POWER OF SACRED SONG.

[Continued from First Page.]

fight. Then there are those who would like in the church to have the organ played in a dull, listless, droning way, while there are others who would have it wrenched into a strident, branching out in jets and spangles of sound, rolling and toiling in marvelous convulsions, as when, in pyrotechnic display, after you think a piece is exhausted, it breaks out in wheels, rockets, blue lights and serpentine demonstrations.

Some would have the organ played in almost inaudible sweetness, and others would have it in full staccato passages that make the audience jump, with great eyes, and hair on end, as though by a vision of the Witch of Endor. And he who tries to please all will fall in everything. Nevertheless, you are to admit the fact that this contest which is going on, not in hundreds, but in thousands of the churches of the United States to-day, is a mighty hindrance to the advancement of this art. In this way scores of churches are entirely crippled as to all influence, and the music is a damage rather than a praise.

Another obstacle in the advancement of this art has been the erroneous notion that this part of the service could be conducted by delegation. Churches have said: "Oh, what an easy time we shall have. The minister will do the preaching, the choir will do the singing and we will have nothing to do." And you know as well as I that there are a great multitude of churches all through this land, where the people are not expected to sing, the whole work is done by delegation of four or six or ten persons and the audience are silent.

In such a church in Syracuse an old elder presided in singing, and so the church appointed a committee to go and ask the squire if he would not stop. You know that in a great multitude of churches the choir are expected to do all the singing, and the great mass of the people are expected to be silent, and if you utter your voice you are interfering. There they stand, the four, with opera glass dangling at their side, singing "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," with the same spirit that the night before, on the stage, they took their part in the "Grand Duchess" or "Don Giovanni."

ALL SHOULD SING WHO CAN.

My Christian friends, have we a right to delegate to others the discharge of this duty which God demands of us? Suppose that four wood thrushes should propose to do all the singing some bright day when the woods are ringing with bird voices. It is decided that four wood thrushes shall do all the singing of the forest. Let all the other voices keep silent. How beautifully the four warble! It is really fine music. But how long will you keep the forest still? Why, Christ would come into that forest and look up as he looked through the olives, and he would wave his hand and say, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord," and, keeping time with the stroke of innumerable wings, there would be five thousand bird voices leaping into the harmony.

Suppose this delegation of musical performers were tried in heaven; suppose that four choice spirits should try to do the singing of the upper temple. Hush, now, thrones and dominions and principalities. David! be still, though you were "the sweet singer of Israel." Paul! keep quiet, though you have come to that crown of rejoicing. Richard Baxter! keep still, though this is the "Saint's everlasting Rest." Four spirits now, do all the singing. But how long would heaven be quiet? How long? "Hallelujah!" would cry some glorified Methodist from under the altar. "Praise the Lord!" would sing the martyrs from among the thrones. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory!" a great multitude of redeemed spirits would cry.

Myriads of voices coming into the harmony, and the one hundred and forty and four thousand breaking forth into one acclamation. Stop that loud singing! Stop! Oh, no, they cannot hear me. You might as well try to drown the thunder of the sky, or beat back the roar of the sea, for every soul in heaven has resolved to do its own singing. Alas! that we should have tried on earth that which they cannot do in heaven, and instead of joining all our voices in the praise of the most high God, delegating perhaps to unconsecrated men and women this most solemn and most delightful service. Now, in this church, we have resolved upon the plan of conducting the music by organ and choir. We do it for two reasons—one is that by throwing the whole responsibility upon the mass of the people, making the great multitude the choir, we might rouse more heartiness. The congregation coming on the Sabbath day feel that they cannot delegate this part of the great service to anyone else, and so they themselves assume it. We have had a glorious congregational singing here. People have come many miles to hear it. They are not sure about the preaching, but they can always depend on the singing. We have heard the sound coming up like "the voice of many waters," but it will be done at a better rate after awhile, when we shall realize the height, and the depth, and the immensity of this privilege.

I forgot to state the other reason why we adopted this plan. That is, we do not want any choir quarrels. You know very well that in scores of churches there has been perpetual contention in that direction. The only church fight that ever occurred under my ministry was over a melodeon, in my first settlement. Have you never been in church on the Sabbath day and heard the choir sing, and you said, "That is splendid music!" The next Sabbath, you were in that church, and there was no choir at all. Why! The leader was mad, or his assistants were mad, or they were all mad together. Some of the choirs are made up of our best Christian people. Some of the warmest friends I have ever had have stood up in them, Sabbath after Sabbath, conscientiously and successfully leading the praises of God. But the majority of the choirs throughout the land are not made up of Christian people, and three-fourths of the church

lights originate in the organ loft. I take that back and say nine-tenths. A great many of our churches are dying of chills.

We want to rouse all our families to the duty of sacred song. We want each family of our congregation to be a singing school. Childish petulance, obduracy and intractability would be smoothed if we had more singing in the household, and then our little ones would be prepared for the great congregation on the Sabbath day, their voices uniting with our voices in the praises of the Lord.

After a shower there are scores of streams that come down the mountain side with voices rippling and silvery, pouring into one river and then rolling in united strength to the sea. So I would have all the families in our church send forth the voice of prayer and praise, pouring it into the great tide of public worship that rolls on and on to empty into the great heart of God. Never can we have our church sing as it ought until our families sing as they ought.

There will be a great revolution on this subject in all our churches. God will come down by his spirit and rouse up the old hymns and tunes that have not been more than half awake since the time of our grandfathers. The silent pews in the church will break forth into music, and when the conductor takes his place on the Sabbath day there will be a great host of voices rushing into the harmony. My Christian friends, if we have no taste for this service on earth, what will we do in heaven, where they all sing, and sing forever!

I want to rouse you to a unanimity in Christian song that has never yet been exhibited. Come now! clear your throats and get ready for this duty or you will never hear the end of this. I shall never forget hearing a Frenchman sing the "Marcellaise" on the Champs Elysees, Paris, just before the battle of Sedan in 1870. I never saw such enthusiasm before or since. As he sang that national air, oh! how the Frenchman shouted! Have you ever in any English assemblage heard the band play "God Save the Queen?" If you have, you know something about the enthusiasm of a national air. Now, I tell you that these songs we sing Sabbath after Sabbath are the national airs of Jesus Christ and of the kingdom of heaven, and if you do not learn to sing them here, how do you expect to sing the songs of Moses and the Lamb? I should not be surprised at all if some of the best anthems of heaven were made up of some of the best songs of earth. May God increase our reverence for Christian psalmody, and keep us from disgracing it by our indifference and frivolity. When Cromwell's army went into battle, he stood at the head of them one day, and gave out the long meter doxology to the tune of the "Old Hundredth," and that great host, company by company, regiment by regiment, battalion by battalion, joined in the doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise him, all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

And while they sang they marched, and while they marched they fought, and while they fought they got the victory. Oh, men and women of Jesus Christ, let us go into all our conflicts singing the praises of God, and then instead of falling back, as we often do, from defeat to defeat, we will be marching on from victory to victory. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Proper Bridal Etiquette.

There are many little things about weddings that people inquire about says the Ladies' Home Journal. The bride writes a personal note of thanks for every gift received, whether it be a great one or a little one, and, if she cannot do this before the ceremony, she does it after the bridal trip. In the church the bridegroom's family and friends sit at the right of the altar being on the bridegroom's right hand, while those of the bride are placed on the left at the bride's left. The bridegroom does not pay for anything connected with the wedding unless he should choose to send bouquets to the bridesmaids and, of course, the bride, and presents and boutonniers to his best man and the ushers. A widow removes her first wedding ring at her second marriage, and does not assume it again. The engagement ring is taken from the third finger of the left hand and worn afterward as a guard to the wedding. It is not considered good taste to cut the finger out of the glove for assuming the ring.—Sunday Telescope.

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