

SACRED MUSIC.

Its Importance Set Forth by Rev Dr. Talmage.

It Soothes the Troubled Soul, Arouses the Inert to Action and Inspires the Workers—Congregational Singing Should be Encouraged.

In his latest sermon the popular Washington divine pointed out some of the blessings that are produced by congregational singing, and urged all Christians to indulge in it. His text was II. Chronicles, 5: 13: "It came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord."

The temple was done. It was the very chorus of all magnificence and pomp. Splendor crowned against splendor. It was the diamond necklace of the earth. From the huge pillars crowned with leaves and flowers and rows of pomegranate wrought out in burnished metal, down even to the tongs and snuffers made out of pure gold, everything was as complete as the God-directed architect could make it. It seemed as if a vision from Heaven had alighted on the mountains. The day for dedication came. Tradition says there were in and around about the temple on that day 200,000 silver trumpets, 40,000 harps, 40,000 timbrels, and 200,000 singers; so that all modern demonstrations at Dusseldorf or Boston seem nothing compared with that. As this great sound surged up amid the precious stones of the temple, it must have seemed like the River of Life dashing against the amethyst of the wall of Heaven. The sound arose, and God, as if to show that he was well pleased with the music which His children make in all ages, dropped in to the midst of the temple a cloud of glory so overpowering that the officiating priests were obliged to stop in the midst of the service.

There was much discussion as to where music was born. I think that at the beginning, "when the morning stars sang together 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 birthplace of song. The stars that glitter at night are only so many keys of celestial pearl on which God's fingers play the music of the spheres. 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 the beach, the ocean far out sounding its everlasting sound, the bobolink on the edge of the forest, the quail whistling up from the grass, are the music. While visiting Blackwell's island I heard coming from the 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 demented 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 that we stand so near devastating storm and frightful whirlwind, we cannot hear that which makes to God's ear and the ears of the spirits above us a music as complete as it is tremendous.

I propose to speak about sacred music, first showing you its importance, and then stating some of the obstacles to its advancement.

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, 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 the instruments of music. He asks for the cymbal and the harp and the trumpet. And I suppose that in the last days of the church the harp, the lute, the trumpet and all the instruments of music that have given their chief aid to the theater and bacchanal 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 voice. Praise Him with strident instruments and with organs.

I draw another argument for the importance of this exercise from the impressiveness of the exercise. You know something of what secular music has achieved. You know it has made its impression upon governments, upon laws, upon literature, upon whole generations. One inspiring national air is worth 30,000 men as a standing army. There comes a time in the battle when one bugle is worth a thousand muskets. In the earlier part of our civil war the government proposed to economize in bands of music, and many of them were sent home; but the general in the army sent word to Washington: "You are making a very great mistake. We are falling back and falling back. We have not enough music." I have to tell you that no nation or church can afford to severely economize in music.

Why should we rob the programmes of worldly gaiety when we have so many appropriate songs and tunes composed in our own day, as well as that magnificent inheritance of church psalmody which has come down fragrant with the devotions of other generations—tunes no more worn out than when our great-grandfathers climbed up on them from the church pew to glory? Dear old souls, how they used to sing! And in 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. Born

as we have been amid this great wealth of church music, augmented by the compositions of artists in our day, we ought not to be tempted out of the sphere of Christian harmony, and try to seek unconsecrated sounds. It is absurd for a millionaire to steal.

Many of you are illustrations of what a sacred song can do. Through it you were brought into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. You stood out against the warning and the argument of the pulpit, but when, in the sweet words of Charles Wesley or John Newton or Toplady, the love of Jesus was sung to your soul, then you surrendered, as an armed castle that could not be taken by a host, lifts its window to listen to a harp's trill.

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 minister began to sing a familiar hymn that was composed by David Dickenson, beginning with the words:

Oh, mother dear, Jerusalem, When shall I come to 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 soldier; and the very foundation of his heart was upturned, and then and there he yielded himself to Christ. Oh, it has an irresistible power! Luther's sermons have been forgotten, but his Judgment 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 you would take these songs of salvation as messages from Heaven; for just as certain as the birds brought 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 mouth and take it, O hungry Elijah!

I have also noticed the power of sacred song to soothe perturbation. You may have come in here with a great many worriments and anxieties, yet perhaps in the singing of the first hymn you lost them all. 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 melancholy. The windows were all closed. He sat in the darkness. Nothing could bring him forth until Franel came and discoursed music for 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 worriments try this heavenly charm upon them. Do not sit down on the bank of the hymn, but plunge in, that the devil of care may be brought out of you.

It also arouses to action. Do you not know that a singing church is always a triumphant church? If a 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 presiding needs to have a very strong constitution if he does not get the chills. He needs not only the grace of God but nerves like whalebone. It is amazing how some people with voice 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, where we have a hundred souls brought into the kingdom of Christ there would be a thousand. How was it in olden time? Cajetan said: "Luther conquered us by his songs."

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 Satan. 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 concert, by the gratification of pure taste and the production of harmless amusement and the improvement of talent, have become very forces in the advancement of our civilization. Music has as much right to laugh in Surrey Gardens as it has to pray at St. Paul's. In the kingdom of nature we have the glad fitting of the wind as well as the long-wailing psalm in so, every observer has noticed that his 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 error. 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 the purposes of sin.

Another obstacle has been an inordinate fear of criticism. The vast majority of people singing in church never want anybody else to hear them 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 be drowned out. God asks you to do as well as you can, and then if you get the wrong pitch or keep wrong time he will forgive any deficiency of the ear and imperfection of the voices. Angels will not laugh if you should lose your place in the music scale or come in at the close a bar behind. There are three schools of singing, I am told—the German school, 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 contrite, broken heart, though it may not be able to stand human criticism, makes better music to God's ear than the best artistic performance when the heart is wanting. God calls on the beasts, on the cattle, on the dragons, to praise Him, and we ought not to behold the cattle and the dragons.

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: "O, what an easy time we shall have. The minister will do the preaching, and 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 persisted in singing, and so the choir appointed a committee to go and ask the elder if he would not stop. You know that in many churches the choir are expected to do the singing, and the great mass of the people are expected to be silent, and if you utter your voice you are interfering.

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 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 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 5,000 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 "Saints' 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 throne. "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 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 his 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.

Music ought to rush from the audience like the water from a rock—clear, bright, sparkling. If all the other part of the church service is dull, do not have the music dull. With so many thrilling things to sing about, away with all drawing and stupidity! There is nothing makes me so nervous as to sit in a pulpit and look off on an audience with their eyes three-fourths closed and their lips almost shut, mumbling the praises of God. During my recent absence I preached to a large audience, and all the music they made together did not equal one skylark. People do not sleep at a coronation. Do not let us sleep when we come to a Saviour's crowning. In order to a proper discharge of this duty let us stand up, save as age or weakness or fatigue excuses us. Seated in an easy pew we cannot do this duty half so well as when, upright, we throw our whole body into it. Let our song be like an acclamation of victory. You have a right to sing. Do not surrender your prerogative.

We want to rouse all our families upon this subject. We want each family of our congregation to be a singing school. Childish petulance, obduracy, and intractability would be soothed if we had more singing in the household, and then our little ones would be prepared for the great congregation on 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, wide 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 would that our singing to-day might be like the Saturday night rehearsal for the Sabbath morning in the skies, and we might begin now, by the strength and the help of God to discharge a duty which none of us has fully performed. And now that more appropriate thing can I do than to give out the Doxology of the heavens: "Unto Him who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory forever!"

SPIDERS IN BATTLE.

THEY CONDUCT THEMSELVES WITH ALMOST HUMAN INTELLIGENCE.

A Fight to the Finish Between a Black Tiger Spider and a Pair From the Gray Hill Tribe—The Hunt by Rounds—All "Put to Sleep," Though the Black Won.

In the quiet laboratory of a Ninth street chemist the other day there was enacted a little tragedy which afforded a demonstrated lesson in the etiquette of dueling as it is conducted among the spiders. Few realize the intelligence these inconspicuous little creatures often display, and in fact few people besides scientists go to the trouble of spending an hour or so watching them.

The doctor espied a spider in the corner of the laboratory window sill. He procured a wide mouthed jar, and with a stick endeavored to push the spider into it. The insect turned savagely on it and darted quickly up the stick toward his hand. Stick and spider were dropped immediately on to the sill, from which in another instant the creature was scooped into the jar.

He lay sullen and bunched up at the bottom. His body was fully three-quarters of an inch long, the thorax mottled black and green, the abdomen purplish and marked with well defined stripes of black and yellow; the legs not very long, but stout, hairy and ending in unusually strong, double claws, while the head was armed with a pair of shining black mandibles that looked like small steel pinchers. One of the neighbors said afterward that it was a "tiger spider," and there was no question as to the aptness of the name. His behavior was so ugly and fierce that he made a good subject for testing the pugacity of spiders with their kind.

The doctor was familiar with his own home, and having made the capture he went up into his own garret, where the walls and corners were profusely decorated with "will you walk into my parlor" contrivances. He singled out a typical web and proceeded. The mouth of the web was opened out over quite a considerable area and ran back as a narrow tube, the whole being like the most delicately woven gray white silk. Throwing a tempting bait into the web in the shape of a fly, the doctor had no difficulty in sweeping two gray spiders into another jar.

He got a deep sided salad bowl and dumped the gray spiders in. They at once began running around the flat bottom, making wild dashes up the sides and tumbling over each other in their excited efforts to escape.

As soon as the tiger spider was shaken out of his pickle jar into the bowl the gray spiders ceased their wild actions and took up a crouching position at one side of the bowl bottom. The tiger spider made no effort to escape, but after one or two rapid reconnoiters of his surroundings squatted just across from and facing the hill tribers.

The first offensive movements came from the gray spiders. These were in the nature of slow advances and retreats along the circumference line of the bowl bottom, with the evident intention of taking the tiger spider on the flank. At each advance, however, the tiger spider sat up, resting on his four posterior and middle feet, while the two anterior legs were stretched out like the arms of a wrestler, and the strong caliper shaped jaws were opened to their fullest extent.

Suddenly one of the spiders made a characteristic but fatal dash. He seemed actually to leap at the big spider. But quick as the hill spider was, the tiger spider was equally so. As the long drab spider darted in, the big black and yellow fellow sprung up and faced him. The next instant they closed, and in a moment three of the hill spider's legs lay on the glass, and the tiger spider, holding his enemy in a bearlike hug, was burying his mandibles in the other's throat.

The killing had not been done, however, without receipt of injury on both sides. One yellow and black leg lay with the three drab ones, and there were two drops of black juice on the purplish abdomen of the tiger spider, which showed where the gray spider had planted his jaws in the rush.

Meanwhile, too, the second gray spider had not been idle, but was circling round and about the struggling pair. Then, seeing his opportunity, he dashed in, only to be faced by the burly fighter, who, to meet the new attack unencumbered, threw the body of the dead combatant from him with a gesture that was almost human.

The clinch did not follow so quickly this time. The gray spider succeeded in getting in and away, clipping off another yellow and black leg as he did so, but in the second rush he was caught, and the tiger spider's jaws were locked in his throat.

So ended the fight. The tiger spider held on to his second prize so long and quietly that I thought him dead also, until I stirred him with my pen, when he staggered furiously against it, opened his jaws and rolled over, a corpse.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

The New Woolens. The winter's woolens are handsome and varied. Iridescent effects, rich heather mixtures and boncle effects are numerous, having, for example, a medium or dark woolen ground variegated by contrasting threads of silk, or the foundation is a blue or deep red, for instance, with a very shaggy raised design of glossy black wool on the surface. These materials will be much worn, with the small addition, perhaps, of a corded silk vest to match the silk intermixture or else the background. Very little decoration is needed for these showy textiles.

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WOMEN DO NOT TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH.

Modest Women Evade Certain Questions When Asked by a Male Physician, but Write Freely to Mrs. Pinkham.

An eminent physician says that "Women are not truthful, they will lie to their physicians." This statement should be qualified; women do tell the truth, but not the whole truth, to a male physician, but this is only in regard to those painful and troublesome disorders peculiar to their sex.

There can be more terrible ordeal to a delicate, sensitive, refined woman than to be obliged to answer certain questions when those questions are asked, even by her family physician. This is especially the case with unmarried women.

This is the reason why thousands and thousands of women are now corresponding with Mrs. Pinkham. To this good woman they can and do give every symptom, so that she really knows more about the true condition of her patients through her correspondence than the physician who personally questions them. Perfect confidence and candor are at once established between Mrs. Pinkham and her patients.

Years ago women had no such recourse. Nowadays a modest woman asks help of a woman who understands women. If you suffer from any form of trouble peculiar to women, write at once to Mrs. Pinkham, Lynn, Mass., and she will advise you free of charge.

And the fact that this great boon which is extended freely to women by Mrs. Pinkham, is appreciated, the thousands of letters which are received by her prove. Many such grateful letters as the following are constantly pouring in:

"I was a sufferer from female weakness for about a year and a half. I have tried doctors and patent medicines, but nothing helped me. I underwent the horrors of local treatment, but received no benefit. My ailment was pronounced ulceration of the womb. I suffered from intense pains in the womb and ovaries, and the backache was dreadful. I had leucorrhœa in its worst form. Finally I grew so weak I had to keep my bed. The pains were so hard as to almost cause spasms. When I could endure the pain no longer I was given morphine. My memory grew short, and I gave up all hope of ever getting well. Thus I dragged along. At last I wrote to Mrs. Pinkham for advice. Her answer came promptly. I read carefully her letter, and concluded to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. After taking two bottles I felt much better; but after using six bottles I was cured. My friends think my cure almost miraculous. Her noble work is surely a blessing to broken-down women."—GRACE B. STANSBURY, Pratt, Kansas.

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