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Further “notes” on the Organ Suggested by Papers of Sir F.A. G. Ouseley and Mr. Audsley

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MAY 5, 1890.

MAJOR G. A. CRAWFORD

IN THE CHAIR.

FURTHER "NOTES" ON THE ORGAN.

*SUGGESTED BY PAPERS OF SIR F. A. G. OUSELEY
AND MR. AUDSLEY.*

BY SOMERS CLARKE, F.S.A.

IN venturing to read this paper, I have not undertaken the work with the view of giving instruction, but rather of eliciting information from those who are better able than myself to teach.

I hope also that it will not be thought I am going over old ground; I hope to avoid this, although I am aware that two papers have already been read here, and which deal with the organ, one by Mr. G. A. Audsley, the other by Sir F. A. G. Ouseley.*

The subject—namely, the treatment of the organ with regard to its position, the provision to be made for it, the position of the keyboard, &c., is so large that the papers above referred to are by no means exhaustive. They have indeed suggested many questions, some of which may, perhaps, find an answer to-day.

The historical side of the case, that upon which Sir F. A. G. Ouseley first enters, is very interesting. The paper read by Mr. Hopkins, and published in the Transactions of the Archæological Institute, goes very fully into the subject and, I think, with much more sound views than those expressed by Sir F. A. G. Ouseley.

For the present, however, I do not want to introduce history or archæology into the field, but to consider the subject as we find it before us to-day.

There has been a sufficient change in our ritual, knowledge of music, construction of organs, and mechanical resources

* "On the Position of Organs in Churches." Sir F. A. G. Ouseley, Bart. Proceedings, Musical Association, 1885-86.

"Matters, chiefly Architectural, relating to the Accommodation of Organs." By George Ashdown Audsley. Proceedings, Musical Association, 1888-89.

to place the whole question upon a very different footing from that on which it stood, even thirty years ago, and we have to deal with things as they are.

With regard to the position of the organ in a church (and I propose to deal with church organs only), it does not seem reasonable to cite, as is commonly done, the arrangements at churches such as Milan, Seville, Cologne, Strasburg, and others, many of them buildings larger than our biggest cathedrals or abbeys, and then to draw any deduction from these to apply to our ordinary parish churches. We might almost say that in England we deal with inches, where these spacious structures deal with feet, so great is the difference in scale between the buildings.

This difference may be found even in our parish churches. Let us compare for a moment two great cities, London and Paris. London has in it only two large churches, St. Paul's and the Abbey. In Paris most of the older parish churches are more spacious than, although not actually as long as, Lichfield, one of our smallest cathedrals, whilst the Pantheon, St. Eustache, St. Sulpice, and others are on a very much larger scale. Most of our city churches, whether in London or elsewhere, are quite toys when compared with those across the water, and our modern efforts at church building are, in comparison, equally small. We keep to the old traditions in this. We think St. Alban's, Holborn, or St. Augustine's, Kilburn, large modern churches. They are, literally, not half the size of an average modern French church. Under these circumstances, we must be careful in our judgment, and compare like with like, not assuming that what is acoustically successful in one place will equally succeed in another.

It is, too, the exception to find a foreign church which is not stone vaulted. Stone vaulting is not, and never was, common in our land.

Some of our noblest churches of the first magnitude are only vaulted in part; it is rare indeed to find a vaulted parish church. A stone-vaulted roof has a wonderful effect on organ tone, adding that mystery and resonance without which the true grandeur and magnificence of the instrument is half lost. We can note this for ourselves by observing the quality of sound in a vaulted church like St. Peter's, Vauxhall, which is but a small building, with the quality of tone in an ordinary open-roofed church of about the same dimensions.

Mr. Audsley, in his interesting paper, gave us a glowing description of a wondrous cathedral which must have a choir bigger than that at York; and which was exactly what a mediæval architect, had he had our conditions of a small capitular body and large congregation, would never have built.

My purpose is to leave the realms of fancy and come to those of fact.

The first question we come upon is that of the position of the organ in the church. There is a good deal of debate about this. Sir F. A. G. Ouseley says truly that there are many interests to consult. He enumerates those of the clergy, the singers, the organist, the architect, and, lastly, the organ builder; but he leaves out the people—why should they be forgotten? and it strikes me—but I may be wrong in this—he leaves out what I must call the ritual point of view; and, when he speaks of the organ's position in parish churches, he is constantly running for his comparisons to cathedrals. I find, too, that in the discussion which followed the reading of Sir F. A. G. Ouseley's very interesting paper, St. Paul's, St. Peter's at Rome, and such trifles are more freely mentioned than modest parish churches such as we grow in this little island. I find, too, that after Mr. Audsley's paper was read, our ideas were large—we talked about cathedrals and such big things more than about those buildings with which we have every day to deal.

Let me invite you to "climb down" and consider ordinary parish churches, living no doubt in hope that folk will agree as time goes on to build them larger, which they are even yet beginning to do.

What is the church built for? This I will try to answer, hoping that others may agree with me.

It is built as a place in which divine worship is to be celebrated, and worship it must be remembered is not the same as prayer. A magnificent musical service, in a magnificent place, is the highest exemplification we can give of divine worship; and not only the clergy, but the people are interested in it, and assist in some way or other.

Who settles what this worship is to be? There have certainly been disputes of late on the interpretation that may be given to the rubrics, but the basis common to all parties in the church is the Prayer Book.

It must, of course, be understood that I do not for one moment wish to enter upon the ground of religious controversy, High Church, Low Church, &c. This is neither the time nor the place; but I imagine that any musician would consider that within the four corners of the Prayer Book (and that is the book of directions with which we have to deal in our churches), a musical high celebration gives the largest field for rendering magnificent worship.

In arranging a church the ability to render magnificent worship should not therefore be impeded.

There was a time when organs and singers had migrated to the west end. When the body and often the galleries of the church were full of square pews, it really did not matter

where the singers were situated, they were sure to have some one looking at them in their pride of place, as people faced all ways. We can recall the gallery, with its brown front made as it seemed of gingerbread, and covered with shiny treacle, a pallid clock-face in the middle, and over it a nice cosy red curtain to hide the organist, being a modest man. The select company of singers, not equally modest, did not require red curtains. The organ rose behind, flanked by tiers of charity children. Magnificent worship was not got in this way.

We seem to have agreed, notwithstanding many divisions of opinion on religious matters, that this was not nice; and on looking back it was found that it states in the prayer book: "And the chancels shall remain as they have done in times past." I cannot go into the whole question now, it is one of history; but I think you will find that in the "times past" the chancel was the place where the music was rendered, and if not intended for the purposes for which we once more use it it is difficult to understand why this part of the church was planned as it was.

The more the subject is considered the more clear does it seem to me that historical continuity fixes us to the chancel.

But let us now conceive ourselves to be members of the congregation. If we are to admit the propriety of ornate worship, why is not the eye as well as the ear to be studied? The very fact that we now aim—as did our forefathers—at building a dignified type of church, and also at decorating it very considerably, shows that the old prejudices are dying out, and that people do not now think well to have splendid drawing-rooms but bare churches. And, happily, ornament in a church is no longer considered a party badge.

I contend that—at least to me as a member of the congregation with, as I hope, artistic instincts—a fairly large chancel, the choristers in it, and the music they perform therein, are all more dignified and impressive because the whole scene is before me, and there is complete unity in it. Break this up and you lose a great deal.

I must not dwell longer on this side of the question, time will not permit; but I have said enough to show why, as I contend, the chancel is the right place for the choristers, and will, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, continue to be used as such.

If the choristers are in the chancel the organ must be near them. Sir F. A. G. Ouseley says, speaking of organs in the west gallery (p. 83): "and indeed it *must* be there if the singers sit in the west gallery." He evidently thought that the two must be together, and his statement applies as well to the chancel as it does to the west gallery.

We all know that the organ must have plenty of space

about it, height above it, and must not in itself be crowded; but there are other points on which the opinion of experts would be of great value.

One of these is the position of the keyboard with regard to the organ and the choir. Custom, ruled to a great extent by expense, makes it usual to place the organ on one side of the chancel and the organist close to the organ. The organist cannot hear his choir very clearly. The half of the choir nearest to him sings away from him, the other half that sings towards him has the first-mentioned half intervening. He is generally so near the organ that he cannot clearly hear how much or little noise he is making (and my experience is that to be on the safe side he generally makes too much); and lastly, having the organ and voices so close at hand, he knows but little what the congregation is about.

As far as the choir is concerned the rules of ample space, height, and width are as essential for the welfare of voices as of the organ.

What then would be the conditions of an ideal position for the organist?

1. That he should hear his choir well.
2. That he should hear the organ well.
3. That he should be able to see the choir well and also see the clergy who may be serving at the altar.
4. That he may hear the congregation at least fairly well.
5. That he shall have a tolerable sight of the nave of the church and thus be able to keep his eye on processions or other functions taking place therein.
6. We might add, that he should be able to use the organ in connection with a side chapel.

Where all these combinations are to be found I do not know. In a parish church of good size they would be difficult of accomplishment. They are not often approached in a church of the first magnitude.

I will now name certain churches where various positions of the organ, the organist, and the choir lead in a direction away from what I may call the old stock-pattern of the organ—in a hole on one side of the chancel, and the organist in more or less of a hole in the organ.

I shall, in these instances, go outside the limit of parish churches, because, if the latter be sufficiently large, the big churches may teach us something.

The opinion of organists upon the relative merits of the instances I am about to mention will be of the greatest value, and particularly will they be instructive to architects, for they have to do their best in giving accommodation to the interested parties, not only without sacrificing the effect of

the building as a church, but being, as a rule, hampered with want of funds.

St. Paul's Cathedral. This church has acoustic qualities which make it quite different from any other building in this country; but the position of the organ, hanging in halves above the choir stalls, is such as would not be out of place in lofty churches of less magnitude than the Cathedral. Indeed, were there shallow recesses in which parts of the organ could be placed, the scheme would be quite practicable.

In St. Paul's the alteration and re-arrangement of the choir is, from the most comprehensive point of view, a failure, because the result has been to turn the building, never intended to be so used, into a monstrous and overgrown parish church with nave and chancel.

The organist sits on the north side, in the north half of the organ, and about eighteen or twenty feet above the choir. I say, advisedly, *in* the organ, for he is boxed in to an extraordinary degree, and, I think, a plumb-line dropped from the great diapasons overhead would almost fall behind him.

From his place he hears the voices most perfectly. I should suppose that nothing could be better in this respect. He can hear the swell and choir organs which are on the south side of the church very well, but the great organ is most imperfectly heard. The diapasons, very much overwinded, as I venture to think, puff and whistle to the exclusion of all other sounds. The result is that, unwittingly, the voices are often completely drowned when the great organ is used, partly from the reason above given, but in part because there are not enough stops of a moderate power on the great manual, which is forced up to fill the whole Cathedral, and has not wherewith to support the voices in *forte* passages.

Supposing a similar arrangement of divided and suspended organs were placed in a lofty church, some fifty or sixty feet high, the organ being fifteen or eighteen feet from the ground; would it be best to put the organist in the gallery with the organ, or to place the console somewhere below? Organs so placed would, in an ordinary church, serve the nave as well as they would the choir.

I ought, perhaps, to remind my hearers that, in the sort of waltz which the choir fittings have taken round the eastern limb of the Cathedral during the last twenty-five or thirty years, there was once a time when the organ was in the middle arch on the north side of the choir, and the organist was placed below. This arrangement of the keyboard was found to be unsatisfactory. The keyboard was put up in the gallery with the organ. The instrument, smaller than at present, was all on the north side, and was probably better heard by the player than it now is.

We will now take flight to Westminster Abbey, where the acoustic difficulties of the building are not great, and where the organ stands well in the middle of its work. The organ has the same number of stops as at St. Paul's. The building contains less than half the cubic capacity. From this we may readily understand what a tax is laid on the Cathedral organ, and why it is likely to fail in some respects.

The Abbey organ is divided, part on the north, part on the south, whilst the choir organ and keyboard are on the screen in the middle and at the west-end of the choir. The pedal organ is more incorporated with the organ thus divided than at St. Paul's, where it is all on one side, an arrangement which would, I believe, be very unsatisfactory were it not for the peculiar acoustic qualities of that building. The organist can hear his organ admirably. He can see both up and down the church most perfectly, but the choir is not so pleasantly audible to him as at St. Paul's, nor is the choir organ so immediately near the voices. I fancy, however, that in no building will the keyboard be found better placed, taking all things together, than at Westminster Abbey.

The question immediately arises, what profit can be gained from considering Dr. Bridge's advantages, and how can they be applied in ordinary cases?

We will now take the tram and visit St. Agnes', Kennington. I think that in that church we may get nearest, on a moderate scale, to the Westminster Abbey scheme; not that it has yet been done.

We find ourselves in a good-sized parish church, some forty-five feet high, high aisles, no chancel arch or break in the levels between east and west.

A shallow transept of the full height of the church projects north and south immediately at the entrance to the chancel. At this point the church is crossed by a high screen, with a loft on it. A small organ stands just in the north transept on the loft, and having plenty of space about it, tells with good effect. It is, indeed, far more effective than most organs three times its size put into the regulation rat-hole. I have not been into the church for a few years, and some of the objections I am about to raise may have been met, but I do not see how it can have been done.

The greatest objection I observed was that the organist could not see the choir, although it was easy to get a fair view over the church. Although, perhaps, no higher up than the organist at Westminster Abbey, the shortness of the parish church chancel as against the Abbey choir placed the singers almost under the keyboard at St. Agnes'. The choir could neither be well seen nor heard. The limits of size of a parish church must always present this difficulty, and the conclusion seems forced upon one that although we may,

with excellent effect, get the organ divided and overhead, an arrangement much facilitated by a screen and loft, we cannot put the keyboard there.

If the choir be enforced by a band, the loft may suggest itself as a good place; but the objection again presents itself that it is difficult for a conductor below to be seen by the band above, unless he stands so far east as not to be well placed with regard to his choir.

Supposing, therefore, that the organ be above and the player below, would it be considered best to place him just behind one or other row of stalls, or somewhere east of the stalls with a long action? In that case he would have the voices and organ between himself and the congregation, but he could accompany the service at the altar well, and could use the organ for the side chapel.

We have in London another instance, besides those at St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, of a divided organ—viz., All Saints', Margaret Street. The sub-divisions are in this case placed in the aisles of a short chancel. The openings and surrounding spaces are not large. The organist sits in the north, facing south, and can see his choir and get a fair view of the church in all directions.

Could the position of the keyboard be improved upon?

It is an accident that in this case the church is small.

In another London church, St. Matthew's, Great Peter Street, Westminster, rather lofty and spacious for an average London church, the chancel has an aisle on the north side only. In this the organ stands. The keyboard is placed against the south wall of the chancel, just east of the stalls, the action under the floor. The chancel not having been originally planned for this arrangement, the organ console forms an ugly packing-case construction; but this could be avoided were such a position for the keyboard provided for in the original designing of the chancel. The organist is east of his choir and of the organ, but has none of the choir between him and the organ.

I do not think that, as yet, an organ has been placed in any of our modern churches behind the reredos and altar. In the old preaching-house church of fifty years or more ago the organ occasionally climbed into a gallery in some such position. I think it was to be found there in Marylebone Church. It was, in fact, the old west gallery arrangement.

There is no architectural or ritual reason why the organ should not be placed at the east end of the church, standing on the floor, and screened off by the reredos, and in part incorporated with it. So long as the organ was not the principal object its position would be right enough. But where should the keyboard be?

There is one great objection to the organist sitting in the back row of the choir stalls.

In the first place, the space he must occupy makes an ugly and unsymmetrical gap in the row of choirmen, and prevents the numbers being balanced or equal on each side of the chancel.

If his seat be kept back, the organ being in the aisle so that the choirmen can pass along between his seat and the book boards, the gap is still there occupied by one man sitting and facing one way whilst the others are standing and facing the other.

If the keyboard is incorporated with the book-board and he faces into the chancel he still makes a gap, and the pedals, &c., form a thorough block in the passage. In fact, this arrangement is simply abominable. In either case the organist must surely be too near the choirmen.

It is not satisfactory, as a rule, to place the organist under any part of the organ. When this is done, he is not only under, but often more or less in it.

How far the objection may hold good in such an instance as the following I cannot say.

There is a church of very considerable size—one of the largest English parish churches. The roof, continuous all through, is fifty feet and more from the floor. The whole building is seventy feet wide internally, the aisles being each of them eighteen feet wide and thirty feet high. It is proposed to divide the organ, putting part on an open screen behind the stalls on either side, and the choir organ on the chancel screen. It is proposed to place the keyboard on the floor behind one or other row of stalls, and consequently under one division of the organ. Considering the openness of the position I doubt whether the position will be disadvantageous, more particularly as it is proposed that the choir organ shall be that which its name implies it should be—an organ capable of accompanying the full choir and not a mere half dozen pretty stops useless in *forte* passages.

As I am not pretending to instruct, but rather to seek information for the benefit of myself and others, I shall now venture to take a little journey inside the organ, and I do this especially with regard to the remark that has just been made as to the inadequacy, as it seems to me, of choir organs. The organ of St. Paul's Cathedral, as I have before hinted, seems a conspicuous example of this fault. The choir organ is by no means sufficient to support the full choir.

But at St. Paul's, and in many other cases, the stops on the great manual are voiced with regard to the whole church. As an accompaniment they drown everything; the swell does not in any way make up for this. To those close to the organ the swell may make a very tolerable accompaniment,

as it can be heard even when tight closed; but go half-way down an ordinary church, when the congregation is singing, and the closed swell is hardly audible, nothing but a muddled buzzing is heard, whilst the tranquil clear sounds of the choir organ would be sufficiently audible and yet not loud.

When the swell with reeds is closed—and for some mysterious reason the swell seems always in use—the flattened buzzing is most disagreeable.

The larger the church the less disagreeable is the effect. In the largest buildings it is not in the least disagreeable. Unfortunately, we have one large church to a hundred or two of ordinary size.

The laying out of the interior of the organ with respect to the position assigned to the various sub-divisions, and the effect the sound of these sub-divisions will have on the auditor seems much neglected. I frequently observe that in the case of an organ of considerable size, built in one block and placed on one side of the chancel, the pedal department is all in one place, which may be considerably removed from one of the manual departments with which it has to work. One hears all the pedal notes coming distinctly from one place, whilst the tones they are supposed to support come from another. Sitting in the aisle of a church, this breaking up of the sources of sound is often most unpleasant. The organist is, probably, not at all conscious of the state of things. The organ-builder is the man in fault, and he can generally shelter himself behind the statement that the architect has neglected to give him either space or openings sufficient. But, given plenty of space in all directions, I cannot but think that each department of the organ should, as far as possible, have its pedal-stops placed near the manual-stops. At any rate, those of delicate tone should be so placed.

The opinion of those who have gained experience would be of great value in another point I am about to raise:

Is it not important to the organist that the sound-boards should be kept well above his head, or, failing this, that he should be shielded in some way from the direct impact of the sound of the full organ?

In the case of an organ raised in a gallery above the stalls of an ordinary church there is not likely to be height enough in the building to admit of some seven or eight feet of space between the floor of the organ gallery and the sound-boards. In order to get height above the instrument there will be a great temptation to lower the pipe feet, and if the player be up in the gallery his position will be intolerable. I observe that even at Westminster Abbey Dr. Bridge has constructed a primitive sort of screen to shield himself from the *forte* of the swell. At St. Barnabas, Oxford, a low building, with very

depressed aisle-roof, the organ has been lifted off the floor to the level of the spring of the nave arches, and a sort of box projecting from the wall of the width of the aisle has been constructed. The organist sits in this den with the organ, which nearly fills it up, and I have heard a rumour that the brains of one man have already given way under the trial. I think it certainly is the most ugly and dreadful place in which I ever saw an organ put, and must simply be torture for the player.

Another point for consideration :

The organ, in these days of mechanical skill, is becoming more and more complete. We shall probably attain to greater development in the imitation of instruments used in the orchestra, whilst the absolute command of an instrument of almost unlimited size is made easier and easier.

Under these circumstances is it not expedient that we should begin to classify the instruments, and frankly accept that there may, or, as I contend, there positively should, be a distinct difference between the effect aimed at in an organ for a church or for a concert-room ? At present there seems to be a mere vulgar desire to have the biggest thing possible, and to outdo the next neighbour. King's College Chapel, a building enclosing a very great space, must needs have a bellowing double tuba. One can just tolerate such a thing at York Minster, beside which King's Chapel is but a moderate sized edifice. But close by stands Trinity College Chapel. No sooner has the King's organ been enlarged than Trinity must follow suit, and the organ, already much too big, throws out a hideous crop of thirty-two foot pipes, for which there is no room, and they deface and encumber a building which does not contain, I suppose, half the cubic contents of King's. So we go on, if only people are silly enough to find the money.

Would it not be better to admit that a great number of very pretty and of imitative stops, thoroughly suited as they are to an orchestral organ, are not needed where the music is of a grave and dignified character ; and that mere noise is not music at all ? In the building of churches the architect is expected, and very rightly, to leave out light adornments. A certain gravity, simplicity, and as much of grandeur as he can command are looked for. Why in the scheming of organs should not the same feeling be studied ? The most noble diapasons and everything else of the best, but nothing that can be tortured by unskilled hands into vulgar display.

I believe that there are few of us who would not be offended by a highly dramatic reading of the lessons, with gesticulations, changes of voice, &c. Indeed, such a rendering would not be a reading but a dramatic recitation.

To me the attempt at a dramatic accompaniment to the

Psalms, which we so often hear, is equally offensive. There are, of course, skilled hands that can do these things; but how many more over large organs have we than men who can use them well?

I venture to believe that it would be better for the organ in an average church to have in it but little more than those stops which are really necessary to give a good and sufficient accompaniment. I also believe that all the noblest organ music could be properly rendered on such instruments, and if the hurdy-gurdy modern French pieces could not be played thereon, should we lose anything? To pander to the love for the "pretty" the swell is often made large at the expense of the pedal.

I feel that although I may have exhausted a patient audience, I have by no means exhausted the subject.

The questions I have tried to raise will, if answered, be of use to architects, and just at this time it will be helpful that these and many other kindred matters should be fully considered as being on the lines laid down for the deliberations of a committee of members selected by the College of Organists and the Institute of Architects.

I ought, perhaps, to state that this paper was nearly completed before this committee was formed, and going in part over the same ground was, in the nature of things, unavoidable.

DISCUSSION.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Ladies and gentlemen, we have had a thoroughly practical paper, which has thrown out a great number of suggestions. There is one gentleman present who, I believe, has furnished to some extent the theme of that paper, and I will call on him to commence the discussion.

MR. AUDSLEY.—You pay me a very great compliment, Mr. Chairman, but my remarks will be very brief. I must in the first place bear testimony to the ability and knowledge displayed in my friend Mr. Somers Clarke's paper, and I cannot help regretting that it is so short. He has touched on matters in such a skilful way that I cannot help wishing he had developed his paper more in detail. From what he has said it is evident he could have supplied from his own personal knowledge a paper of a much longer character. I agree most thoroughly with Mr. Somers Clarke on one subject, and that is the usual overblowing of organ pipes. His remarks specially alluded to the diapasons of St. Paul's organ, and if they had reference to them only, one would not feel so much regret, but they apply equally to a very large

number of important organs constructed under the present system of organ building. The blowing of organs with higher and higher pressures of wind, whereby they are rapidly approaching the tones of steam whistles, is very much to be condemned. It is impossible to have a church organ with that dignified, grand, and rolling tone, which is such a fine accompaniment to the human voice, if one overblows the pipes; one will produce a false character of tone, which is extremely offensive, and which will not blend with the human voice. With regard to placing the claviers in the choir stalls, I do not quite see the impossibility of managing the arrangement desired in a more simple manner than has hitherto been done; but that involves architectural questions, which would be quite undesirable to bring forward now. I think we must look in the future to have the position of the claviers somewhere on the ground floor, as near as possible to the choir stalls. The exact position of course will be dictated by special circumstances; but I think myself, from long observation, that it is decidedly beneficial for the organist to have a very clear idea of the effect he is producing to the ears of other people in the building. He is not playing the organ for his own hearing, nor exactly for the hearing of the choir, beyond accompanying and leading it, so his position should be one from where he can form a fair idea of what the congregation are listening to. That is an important consideration with regard to the position of the organist. He plays for the glory of God, and for the benefit of the congregation; and I think the benefit of the congregation is the question we have to consider at the present moment; therefore he ought to be placed in a position where he may be able to form a correct idea whether he is drowning the voices or not, which organists very often do. The treatment of the Swell Organ is a matter which we might profitably discuss at some length, especially the imperfect manner in which Swell Organs are at present constructed—that is to say, with the desire to get the effect of the swell when closed to be so absolutely an annihilation of sound that it is no longer a musical instrument at all. In that condition it is more like the buzzing of a bee in a bottle than the musical tones of an organ. I think if swells were more accurately constructed we should not have that sudden burst one hears when the swell is opened and then closed. The effect should be similar to that of an orchestra when playing *piano* or *pianissimo*—it should be soft, but every quality of the tones should be present. If the swell is constructed scientifically so that it shall not absolutely kill the sound when closed, a great evil will be cured which obtains in most modern organs, or, at all events, it will be very materially diminished. To construct swell boxes three inches

thick with two inches of wood, and the other inch stuffed with sawdust or felt, is one of the most absurd modes of proceeding one can imagine. A swell box of an inch and a half thick, properly constructed of solid wood, will give all the *crescendo* required, and will not kill the sound when it is closed. There is no question that the present system of swell-box construction is destructive to the legitimate effect of the Swell Organ. With regard to the stops of the Pedal Organ, there is no question Mr. Somers Clarke is right if we recognise the fact that the Pedal Organ is the legitimate bass for the manuals departments, and not an altogether independent department. The chief office of the pedal stops is to carry down the chief stops of the manuals and to supply the bass thereto. It is desirable, when practicable, that those basses should be as near the corresponding manual stops as possible; but there are great difficulties, of course, in stowing basses of sixteen feet length and of corresponding scale just where they ought to be. The difficulty can only be overcome when there is practically unlimited room, but where you have ample space they should be placed by the side of those stops with which they are most frequently used. It is very desirable that there should be no apparent break when one stop begins and the other ends. With regard to the different kinds of organs, it is remarkable that Mr. Clarke should have made so many remarks in his paper which have been written by myself at some length elsewhere. There are three different kinds of organs which have entirely different starting points and entirely different terminations. The Church Organ, the Concert Organ, and the Chamber Organ should each be planned on special lines as they have distinct and special offices to fulfil. The Church Organ should be built from its own standpoint. It should not be an orchestral organ; it should not be made an organ for display, but should be made an organ to accompany the service in a dignified and refined manner. The departure from this rule has been the destruction of organs innumerable. Fancy stops and ear-ticklers, as I have called them, should not be put into a Church Organ; at all events, until that organ presents to the full the necessary qualities for a Church Organ. But in numerous Church Organs recently built you will find that the diapasons, and all the grand foundation work of the organ, have been seriously reduced to find room for such fancy stops. The Concert Organ must, of course, have all the groundwork of the organ proper, but beyond this there is unlimited scope for developing all the modern appliances; you can place in it all the imitative stops which can be pressed into the service by the ingenuity of organ builders and voicers. Again, in a Chamber Organ you do not want to listen to the grandeur

which belongs to the Church Organ or the vast resources of the Concert Organ. You want to listen to an instrument suitable for the place it occupies and the work it has to do, and which would be out of place elsewhere. In any shape, I hold that the organ is far too noble and far too dignified an instrument to be lowered in any way by the introduction of anything which is, strictly speaking, outside its legitimate aim and end.

Mr. WESCHÉ.—While agreeing in many things with Mr. Clarke, on some points I must join issue with him. In the matter of dramatic accompaniment, for instance, half the effect of the accompaniment is the meaning of it. If you write music to a Psalm or hymn, you endeavour to put as much as you can before your hearers of the meaning of the words. So also in playing an accompaniment. If the player has any power or feeling he will try to bring home to his hearers the power of the hymn or Psalm. As regards the size of organs, you should have an organ as big as possible for the size of the church, and not a bit bigger. The matter of placing the organist is a very important one, as it is essential that he should hear the choir. Everything else should give way to that. The precise position depends on the church, as every church I am acquainted with has different acoustic properties. I think one of the best places I know is St. Andrew's, Wells Street, where they have placed the organ up in the gallery about eight feet above the choir stalls. In another church which has rather a narrow chancel the organist is placed in a similar position, but he cannot hear the side of the choir that is under him. So that you cannot make any hard and fast rule. I should think a console somewhere in the middle of the choir, so that he could hear and not be impeded in any way, would be the best position.

Mr. WEBB.—I think the golden rule in placing an organ in a church is to give plenty of room all round it, and then you will not require an instrument half the size. The organist should not mind where he is placed provided he can hear what he is doing, therefore he should be at some distance from his instrument. My own experience is that if you want to hear how the organ sounds the only way is to get someone else to play it to you, and then you can get an idea of the effect you produce. I quite agree with Mr. Audsley that you should give an organist as good an organ as possible, but the size should be regulated by the church. As a general rule, an organ which would cost about £1 per head would generally be sufficient. The most money should be spent on a good bass, building up the organ from the pedals. As regards the many fancy stops we get now, organ recitals are an established

fact, and have also an influence on musical education. Therefore, you want an organ which can produce certain concert effects. If you have a well-trained organist, a man who is a thorough musician, he will not introduce fifes, cymbals, bells, and that kind of thing in the service. Nothing has done more to develop and raise the musicianly capabilities of organists than the instruments which have been placed at their disposal. They have given recitals, and to give recitals you must have an increased knowledge of music. The consequence is a more universal knowledge. It is quite a different thing to give a recital and to accompany a service, and the result of the recital giving is that our organists are no longer kapellmeisters, but many of them are practical musicians, who have produced works of considerable value and importance. I am, therefore, in favour of organs being not too large for the church, but certainly as large, and with as great a diversity of stops, as can be afforded.

MISS PRESCOTT.—I agree with Mr. Clarke in disapproving of these orchestral imitations in the organ, as they are nothing but bad imitations; they never sound like the real thing. I do not think we want them, even in a Concert Organ—one that is to be played with the orchestra—because the real thing is already in the orchestra, and we want in the organ a purely organ-effect, and not imitations of oboes and flutes, and of the human voice singing through its nose. Of course an organ recital is another thing altogether. I have been told of an organ recital in a church in Switzerland where they imitated every instrument in the orchestra. It was a wonderful performance, but the people came away saying it did not sound a bit like an organ. I do not think organists recognise what the organ tone is like, or how little they know about the sound of the organ when they are playing. I have heard a melody played very nicely on the organ, which, in the distance, sounded like consecutive fifths all through, and certainly the organist did not mean that. There is a church in Bristol which I do not think has quite the same arrangement which Mr. Clarke mentioned—I mean St. Mary Redcliffe. The organ is divided on both sides of the choir, and the player has his back to the choir; but he is a little bit above its level, just behind the pulpit, so that he is hidden from the body of the church. At the same time he can see the choir quite easily. It seemed to me a very convenient arrangement.

MR. AUDSLEY.—Probably some of my remarks may have provoked the observations of Mr. Webb and Miss Prescott. With regard to orchestral stops I may have expressed myself rather badly. As to the Church Organ I quite agree that so soon as you have the organ properly appointed for everything it has to do as a church instrument, there is

no objection to superadding these fancy stops or orchestral stops; but, unfortunately at the present time, my personal observation leads to this conclusion, that these fancy stops are put in at the sacrifice of the legitimate part of the Church Organ. With regard to the recitals and matters of that kind, I should not wish it to be understood that I should ever think of recommending an organ to be put into an important church that would not be capable of lending itself to the full range of music suitable to be played within the walls of a church. On the orchestral aspect of the question I differ very materially from Miss Prescott. I think a Concert Organ may very legitimately have every imitative stop that the ingenuity of the organ builder or voicers can produce. There is the true province for organ recital. When such an organ is played with the orchestra, no organist, if he understands his business, will think of bringing in the imitative stops. The Concert Organ must have the true foundation of the organ, and then have the imitative stops superadded to it, so that of course you have both resources. The true Concert-room Organ is both an accompanimental and a recital organ; and it must be capable of furnishing legitimate aid to the grand orchestra in the most effective manner. May I ask the name of the place in Switzerland which Miss Prescott referred to?

MISS PRESCOTT.—I think it was Fribourg.

MR. AUDSLEY.—I know Fribourg very well indeed, and I spent two days in the inside of the organ, and did the same at Lucerne along with Herr Haas, the talented organ builder. I know nearly every pipe in the Fribourg and Lucerne instruments, and can assure you they are legitimate organs, although they contain a few imitative stops. Both those organs are of the good old-fashioned German church type, with plenty of diapason character, not quite the English diapason tone; of course they are not imitative organs in any way comparable with that in St. George's Hall, Liverpool, or the Albert Hall, or any of those organs that we consider of the orchestral type.

MR. MAKINS.—As a visitor I should like to say a few words upon an organ, with its position and arrangements, which proved most effective. It was a two-manual organ, having eleven stops in the great organ and eight in the swell, with three on the pedals. It was placed on a stage erected on the south side of a chancel, and occupied a shallow site at about twelve feet above the chancel floor. The back of each manual soundboard was not many inches from the wall. The great, swell, and pedal soundboards were all upon the same level, the two former in a line with each other. Looking from the front the great would be seen on the right hand, and the swell on the left; the pedal was in the

front, and its sixteen-foot open stop, of good scale, and in fine spotted metal, formed the centre front of the case; behind this stood a sixteen-foot Posaune and a Bourdon of sixteen-foot tone. The key-board console stood on the chancel floor, just behind the reader's desk; its key, stop, and composition-pedal movements passed up to the soundboards in a casing fixed against the chancel wall. Outside the chancel was an entrance porch to the church, and over this a good-sized chamber approached by a ladder; this chamber contained the bellows and blowing arrangements. The organ was most effective in the church, very agreeable to the player also—who, hearing his instrument perfectly, yet heard the voices equally well.

MR. WESCHÉ.—The real points raised are, what is the legitimate organ tone and what is the use of reeds? If the organ is used with the orchestra, what is wanted particularly is an instrument with the legitimate organ tone. If a composer writing for the opera wanted to introduce the organ, he would naturally use the diapasons and the mixtures. I believe that organ in Fribourg has any quantity of mixtures.

MR. AUDSLEY.—All German organs have, but they are very loud and screaming. You can only use them with a full organ. I think this is a very great mistake.

THE CHAIRMAN.—Although we have had but a small attendance to-day, there has been a very interesting and rather considerable discussion, and we have arrived at several conclusions, on which I think we all agree. I am not a practical organist, and, therefore, I wish that either the President or Dr. Bridge had been here to-day to take the chair, when no doubt we should have benefited considerably by their practical knowledge. But speaking as an ordinary member of a congregation who takes a considerable interest in church music, I must say that there are several things which have often struck me. One is, that there is too much noise. Another is the unartistic use of the stops. Of course, if we had all first-class, highly educated organists, it would be an entirely different thing; but unfortunately that is not always the case, and we frequently hear a most injudicious use of the stops. In many places I think we have our organs too large for the space. Whether it should be that the space ought to be enlarged for the organ may be another thing, but as it is, the waves of sound have no room to expand and produce the grand, massive effects which one expects from an organ in a church; but you find all the sound coming from some hole where the organ is placed, and the whole effect is spoilt. I would infinitely rather have a smaller instrument than attempt to have one which has no room to show its powers properly. Before anything was said about organ recitals the idea passed through

my mind that a great deal has been done in building organs with a view to organ recitals in these days in churches, but that is a consideration which in a Church Organ for church purposes I cannot think of much importance. I do not see why a Church Organ should be used for anything more than its legitimate purpose, that of accompanying a choir, or performing such music as is necessary for the purposes of the service. I do not see any reason why we should have an organ with fancy stops put into a church merely that it may be used at a recital. The proper place for a recital is, to my mind, a town hall, or some other such place. If you use the organ in church let it be used as far as possible legitimately, but not otherwise. I do not like, as a general rule, organ recitals in churches, and I have heard more music misused at these recitals than I ever heard anywhere else. A friend of mine said to me only the other day—he had just come up from a certain town on the South coast—he was a clergyman, and he added: "I went into such and such a church, and I heard some music being played there that I thought was most improper in a church; they were playing nothing but regular jigs." I quite agreed with him that that is not the sort of music for a Church Organ. My theory is that the proper function of an organ in a church is to support and lend tone colour to the choir, but that beyond that the organist, as a solo instrumentalist, has no business in the church at all. If you want to hear real church music, where do you find it given with greater beauty and grandeur of tone than in the Eastern church, where no organ at all is employed? I certainly understood Miss Prescott to allude to an organ with fancy stops being played along with the orchestra itself, to be used simultaneously, but as far as my experience goes I have generally observed that when an organ is used in such cases those particular stops are silent, and the legitimate organ effect produced.

MISS PRESCOTT.—What I meant was that they are not required in an organ which is used with the orchestra.

THE CHAIRMAN.—But then you have the recitals to account for, which on a Concert Organ would be legitimate and proper. At the first performance of "Elijah" at Birmingham under Mendelssohn, the organ, as well as I remember, was used. Of course the organ part did not interfere with the scoring for the instruments.

MISS PRESCOTT.—It had the effect of what you call the Church Organ?

THE CHAIRMAN.—Yes, it was brought in to produce those great massive effects which are peculiar to itself. I think now we have had a very useful discussion and elicited many valuable opinions, and, so far as I can see, the consensus of opinion is very marked, that we want our church services

conducted properly, we want an organist to know his business and to be a trained musician, and we also want each particular class of organ used in its legitimate and proper place.

Mr. J. PERCY BAKER.—As regards orchestral stops in a Church Organ, we ought to remember that performances of sacred cantatas and oratorios in church are very common now, and have considerable religious value. It seems a little bit hard on the organist if he is to be debarred from making use of orchestral effects on such occasions, especially if he be acquainted with the full score of the work. Nevertheless, the primary object of the organ is, of course, to accompany public worship, and it must, therefore, in the first place be adapted for that purpose before these orchestral effects can be considered. I think a good many of our organists, especially amateurs, are misled when they go to recitals. They hear these ear-tickling stops, and when the time comes for them to have a new organ, they will insist on choosing stops which produce an overgrown swell and a very small great; instead of directing their attention to securing a good body and an adequate bass for their instrument.

Mr. SOMERS CLARKE.—I shall be very brief in replying, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I must thank Mr. Audsley for what he said, and I am very glad that he has already in print, although not yet published, remarks in the sense of those I have just made. I have been looking forward for a long time to his large book on the organ which is coming out. Dramatic accompaniment and orchestral effects and so on have been spoken of by several speakers. My contention is that the organ cannot yield a true orchestral effect. I go as far as to say that when you attempt to do it it is always more or less a failure, and I very much regret to see that any organist should desire to produce an orchestral effect, because it seems to assist in keeping out the real orchestra from the church; and I can tell you that that has actually happened. Nothing is so beautiful as to hear real stringed instruments, or others. When those are in the church we do not want the organ to be producing imitative orchestral effects, but only the broad, grand tones, which are the legitimate effects the instrument can best produce. When, however, one has to be all over the country, as is my fate very often, I hear a great many performers who are really more of amateurs than educated organists, and these gentlemen will have these pretty stops, and they play most considerable pranks. They are organists in the church, but are hardly professionals, as the greater part of their time is spent in an office, or in some occupation apart from music. The only wonder is that they do as well as they do.

Mr. WESCHÉ.—With regard to dramatic accompaniments,

I did not mean to imitate the orchestra, but to produce certain expressive effects. I understood you to suggest that the correct accompaniment would be passionless playing with the same quantity of tone right throughout.

MR. SOMERS CLARKE.—No. What I contend is, that music on the organ should be of a suitable character; grave, but with such tone and refinement as you may like to give. That will give a sufficient amount of dramatic illustration to the accompaniment.

MR. WESCHÉ.—You would play a penitential Psalm slowly and quietly, but if there were any change in the sentiment you would increase the tone.

THE CHAIRMAN.—I confess I thought you meant a little more than that.

MR. WESCHÉ.—I do not mean using drums or triangles, or anything like that.

MR. SOMERS CLARKE.—When the sea roars then the swell bursts out. It reminds me of an organist who was considerably disappointed with an organ. He said: "I am not satisfied with the result; in fact, I cannot 'grin like a dog and run about the city.'" One knows all this style of silly tricks. With regard to organ recitals, I go so far as to affirm that an organ recital is, as a rule, a thing absolutely not worth listening to, because when it occurs the performer seldom plays grand organ music—music absolutely appropriate to the organ, but versions of something else, and you have a little piece from Wagner's "Tannhäuser," or what not. I fear, too, that with many players such enormous resources as an orchestral organ gives are almost sure to lead them astray. I can understand when a man is writing for the orchestra he feels very seriously what he has to do, and gets up his facts, thinks them out, and refines and polishes them; but, on the other hand, when he has simply the whole orchestra at his fingers' ends, it is a very great temptation to him, and the result often is that a member of the congregation, with a sensitive ear, is practically wearied out with his performance, and almost wishes there was a grinder. One speaker had remarked "that every organ should be as good as possible"; but the whole question turns upon what that might be taken to mean. There was one more statement I was going to make. I dare say it will not be agreed with; but my contention is, that so thoroughly undesirable is it to try and make one instrument imitate another, that I most distinctly object to hearing an orchestral accompaniment to a mass translated into an organ accompaniment. I am very fond of going to St. Paul's Cathedral, where they take every pains to do things extremely well. There is a certain service of Schubert's which is often performed there. There is a sort of imitation of violins, but it is

not in the least like violins, and it is not like an organ. It is not grand ; you feel it is very clever, but that is all you can say. I would sooner hear Merbecke's Te Deum any day with a fine diapason accompaniment, because of its grandeur and simplicity. I can only thank you for your kindness in listening to my paper.

The CHAIRMAN then proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Somers Clarke, which was carried unanimously.