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JUNE 3, 1878.

W. H. MONK, Esq., IN THE CHAIR.

*THE PRESENT CULTIVATION OF SACRED MUSIC IN
ENGLAND.*

By CHARLES MACKESON, Esq., F.S.S.

It is one of the great advantages of a body established upon such a basis as that upon which the Musical Association was set on foot, that it affords an opportunity for all those who have anything to contribute to the great art work in which we are so deeply interested to cast their mite into the common treasury of plans and practices, and even if they cannot hope to add largely to the learning or the science of the Association, they can still give of their best with the conviction that it will at least meet with a kind and appreciative hearing. It is with this feeling that I have undertaken to say a few words this afternoon upon the Present Cultivation of Sacred Music in England, and I shall, with your permission, ask you to look at it from three points of sight—first, at Sacred Music in the Home; secondly, at Sacred Music in the Concert Room; thirdly, at Sacred Music in Religious Worship. Beginning with the unit in our complex system of social organisation—the home and the family—I believe that the first feeling of many persons in looking at the present cultivation of Sacred Music amongst us will be that which is summed up in an old prophet's words, 'We are not better than our fathers.' And yet this lachrymose view of things is, I venture to think, a mistake. We hear a good deal of the music made in the homes of our Elizabethan ancestors; we conjure up to our minds pictures of families provided by Dame Nature with a ready-made quartet of vocalists, or, perhaps, if our common mother had been wondrous kind, with a double quartet; but you and I, ladies and gentlemen, must be content to accept these records of what was done in the good old times as a part of the things read of in books, and perhaps dreamt of in dreams, but of which, by the very nature of things, we can only form an approximate opinion. When, then, we are told that the home music

of England was better three centuries ago than it is now, I would suggest that truth is a higher virtue than humility, and as no phonograph has been handed down to present us with a specimen of our fore-fathers' performances, I would make bold to claim for ourselves a capacity for household music-making, especially on the sacred side of the art, which our ancestors never possessed. And when we turn to the music which is cultivated amongst us as we stand round the piano or the harmonium on a Sunday evening in our English homes we have little cause to be ashamed of its character. That comprehensive book of hymns and tunes effectively described as *Hymns, Ancient and Modern*, which owes its musical excellence so largely to the editorial labours of two of the most honoured members of this Association, is found on many a piano, and has become one of the favourite songbooks of our households; and as we pass up a street in the busy but silent town, or in the country village where the Sunday's quiet presents a less marked contrast to the prevailing stillness of the week, it is no uncommon thing to hear the four-part harmony rising and falling, and although in some cases the critic might wish that the music were of a higher order, the fact remains that the old psalm-tune, with its massive, albeit simple harmony, and the modern hymn-tune with its delicate part-song effects, have been brought within the range of family practice. That more than this might be accomplished with the resources at our command is perfectly true, and another member of this Association, Mr. W. H. Cummings, has conceived what seems to me to be an exceedingly happy idea in his Sunday Part-songs, which take a middle ground between the hymn-tune and the anthem, and are calculated to be both popular and useful. We need, in fact, a fresh supply of music adapted for this particular purpose; and works of the type of old Samuel Webbe's motets and antiphons, and of his simple masses, written when he held the keyboard at the Sardinian Chapel, Lincoln's Inn Fields, would be a pleasant addition to our too small store. If such music were available, there would be more singing than there now is in the home circle, and the weariness with which the weekly rest-day is, rightly or wrongly, regarded in so many homes would be very largely removed. Will composers act on the hint which is given after some search for music of the character I have described?

But while, as I have said, the home is the unit in our social system, it finds musically its amplification in the concert room or the choral society's practice room, just as in civil and ecclesiastical matters the family is swallowed up in the parish. And in this larger area the present cultivation of sacred music seems to me to present matter both for congratulation and for regret. The picture, in fact, has its lights and shadows, and while we have much of which we may justly boast, we have also good cause for regret, if not for reproach. In London, at least, we cannot argue for an instant that sacred music is cultivated as it should

be. We have, it is true, the great Sacred Harmonic Society with its monster band and choir, and we have growing out of it those grand festivals at Sydenham in honour of the noblest master of popular sacred choral writing, George Frederic Handel; but these efforts, great as they are, and novel as are their results, contribute more to the gratification of the performers and the listeners, and to the replenishment of the exchequer, than to the enlargement of the horizon as far as the cultivation of sacred music is concerned, and the production of a new oratorio by the Society is a rare event. There is, however, a movement in the valley, the dry bones are showing signs of life, and in the concerts of the recently formed choir named after the great cantor of Leipzig, whose music appeals perhaps more to the connoisseur than the multitude, we have a proof that the cultivation of sacred music in the highest and truest sense of the words is once more being taken in hand amongst us by those who have the heads as well as the hearts to carry their work to perfection. That noble masterpiece, the Mass in B minor, which was the means of bringing into life the Society which has since become, and we may hope long will remain, one of the musical institutions of the metropolis, may be said almost without exception to give the choralists who attack its difficulties more room for the exercise of honest labour than is afforded by the music of any other master, and it is no slight honour to the executive of the choir that such success has been reached in its performance. It is to efforts of this character that we must look for the improvement which it can scarcely be denied is needed in the cultivation of sacred music in the concert room, for efforts made, not for the sake of pecuniary gain, nor to do honour to a great living composer, nor to fall in with the idiosyncrasies of an eminent conductor, but simply and solely with the highest aim of which the artist is capable—to present a work of true art in the worthiest possible way. But while the Bach Society has so far fulfilled its mission well and nobly in disinterring the music of the mighty dead; while it has induced persons of the highest social position and culture to give up many hours to severe drill, with a result which will doubtless prove as beneficial to their general physique as to their musical education, we owe a duty to the living; and it is a stigma upon our national institutions that music, and especially sacred music, even if it be of the highest excellence, may often pass into neglect without enjoying the opportunity even of a short-lived existence. New sacred works, as composers know only too well, are but rarely heard in London, and in quarters where a secure financial position might fairly induce a little enterprise it is too seldom met with, and even when it is found it is too often illdirected. Thus you will remember that the two latest works of one who stands first among living English composers as the writer of the oratorio, and who has by his genius infused new life into that musical form which Sydney Smith said he would never listen to except under sentence of a British jury, were

heard for the first time, not in London but in the provinces, and were called into existence, not at the request of the oldest choral society in the metropolis, but by the energy of the promoters of our northern musical festivals; and as this apathy, to give it no harder name, exists in regard to the works of those who bear the palm among their brethren, of those who are first among the foremost, it is little matter for surprise that the works of lesser hands should entirely fail to secure recognition in our midst. One result of this neglect is fatal. Not only does sacred music in the London concert room become a mere matter of routine, and the society which chiefly performs it a sort of enlarged phonograph, repeating time after time the same oratorios, with the same soloists, and too often the same stereotyped mannerisms and defects, but the failure to encourage new workers in the field reacts upon the composers, and they naturally turn their energies into directions where they are not only more remunerative, but where at the same time they can acquire a certain sort of fame, even if it be not the highest to which they could aspire. It is to this latter cause that we must attribute the apparent barrenness of our composers. With men of the high ability, even if not absolute genius, of Professor Macfarren, Mr. Arthur Sullivan, Sir Julius Benedict, Mr. J. F. Barnett, and several other writers of considerable promise, it would be as idle as it would be manifestly unjust to assert that the creative faculty has no place in the present generation; and therefore it must be held to be painfully true that it is rather to the fact that composition is unremunerative, than to any inability to compose, that the existing dearth of new sacred music is to be attributed. A great singer can, as long as voice and health last, reckon upon a competent income, and in some few cases, upon an immense salary, while the time of a teacher of high repute may literally be said to be made up of golden hours; but when we come to the composer's prospects, the picture is at once shaded. The metropolitan societies, from which much might be expected, do not as a rule afford encouragement to composers by undertaking to purchase their works; and thus, if they elect to write, instead of devoting their energies to playing or teaching, they must look to the ordinary market of the publisher's shop as the means of disposing of their wares. The failure of this resource is only too apparent. The music-seller naturally and legitimately looks to that which will bring in a speedy profit as the most satisfactory form of investment; and as the public demands in the main works of a comparatively low class, the composer, when he obtains a remunerative engagement, is at once requested to turn his attention almost exclusively to the supply of music which experience proves will find a ready sale. To this cause must be attributed the flood of what are termed royalty songs, the merit of which, whether as regards words or music, it is oftentimes extremely difficult to discover, and which depend for their circulation upon the popularity won for them by

an artist who has a direct pecuniary interest in singing them, and hence in pushing their sale; and it is to this cause also that the scanty supply of sacred works fitted for concert room performance must be ascribed. What we need, then, in order to promote such a cultivation of sacred music in the concert room as would be thoroughly satisfactory, is not merely the establishment of societies devoted, like the Bach choir, or Mr. Henry Leslie's choir, to the performance of music of the highest class, but also some stimulus to the composers of our day to work in a field which, as far as bonâ-fide English writers are concerned, has had far too little labour expended upon it.

Turning from the concert room to the third section of our subject—the cultivation of music in religious worship—I may say that I have purposely adopted this somewhat ambiguous but convenient generic term in preference to employing the phrase 'Church music,' because in this place we know neither sect nor party, whether in the Church or in the State. And here at the outset we are met by one feature which is calculated to give no slight satisfaction and encouragement, for in the true home of the highest form of worship music—the Anglican cathedral—we have signs, which cannot be mistaken, of the exercise of serious thought among our composers as well as of the devotion of the most earnest effort on the part of pre-centors, organists, and choirs to secure a noble result in the rendering of the services. The cathedral, now no longer open to the sneer of the cynic who compared it to a shellfish inhabited only in its claws, is once more the home of high artistic effort, and we can in the mother church of this great city boast of a celebration of the chief Christian service which is not only thoroughly English in its spirit and its design, but which is also as near perfection in its rendering as we could well imagine. Those who think of what is now and what hath been may well marvel at the result, and without suggesting any comparisons, which would in this case be not only invidious but unjust, when we contrast the resources of the past with those of the present, it is not too much to say that the service is at last worthy of the building. At Westminster again, at the old collegiate church, there is evidence of a steady movement upward and onward, and it must be a matter for congratulation that when our brethren from the country visit us they are no longer able to assert that they can excel our London choirs. In these noble buildings the orchestra has once more found its fitting home, and such services as those which have been celebrated during the past month under the direction of Dr. Stainer and Dr. Bridge, are ample evidence that, where labour has been needed it has been supplied, and—can I say less? I could not say more—*Finis coronat opus*. When the cathedrals are thus leading the way—and in the provinces there is the same gratifying progress to record—we have a right to ask that there shall be at least a corresponding movement in our parish churches; and in this respect it becomes

difficult to understand the remarkably small progress which has been made of late years in a quarter where we might have expected to find the most marked advance—I refer to worship-music as far as its congregational development is concerned. In saying this I am of course perfectly aware of the fact that so-called choral services are becoming more and more prevalent every day, that books of hymn-tunes and chants with harmonies more or less correct are being continually issued from the press; but, all these signs to the contrary notwithstanding, it is open to demonstration that the beautiful is, as far as music is concerned, comparatively unknown in nine-tenths of our ordinary church services, and that cacophony prevails. Choirs we have in abundance, it is true. Young men and maidens on the one hand—according to the prescription of Dr. Hullah and other defenders of the lady choristers, whose only resting-place will shortly be found amongst Protestants, as they have been excluded by Archbishop Manning from the Roman Church—are still located in our galleries, while small boys with the pale faces and treble voices beloved by Mr. Helmore and other authorities, are on the other hand to be seen within the chancel; but the evil remains untouched, and not unfrequently the superiority of the performance either behind or before the congregation, as the case may be, only serves to show up in more striking contrast the ugliness of the people's song, which remains almost the same as in times past. Thus, although the assertion of Mr. St. John Tyrwhitt, in his admirable lectures on 'Christian Art and Symbolism,' that our life is a struggle against ugliness, still holds good, unfortunately in the very place where men might naturally expect to find some aid and help in the warfare, they are too generally met with a dead level of what, if it is not absolutely hideous and offensive, is at any rate far removed from the attractive or the artistic.

Whether this state of things is a necessary evil which must be endured and cannot be remedied is a matter well worthy of consideration, for as the number of those who believe in the holiness of ugliness is sensibly diminishing every day, and art education is increasing, it cannot be denied that the continued existence of the present style of what is politely termed congregational singing must tend needlessly to distract and distress those 'who have ears to hear,' if it does not altogether repel them from entering the doors of a church. Even eloquence in the pulpit, fine stained glass in the windows, and the perfection of architectural details in the building itself, cannot atone for the direct attacks made upon the tympanum, which result in the creation of a mental condition very unlikely to conduce to devotion or reverence.

In the necessity for a continuance of the unpleasant condition of affairs to which I have alluded I do not believe, and, as it seems to me, the remedy is within reach. That a voice of ordinary quality and an ear for music sufficiently acute to prevent its possessor from singing too flat or too sharp—the latter fault

being just as painful if not as common as the former—are endowments shared by the majority of educated people, is an acknowledged fact, and the solution of the difficulty is therefore supplied in the words of the old adage, that ‘where there’s a will there’s a way.’ If people in general could be induced to give the smallest amount of consideration to ‘music in church,’ if they would devote but a brief time during the week to its practice, and make up their minds to sing quietly and audibly during the public services, the result would soon be apparent, and men who at present adopt the *laissez faire* attitude during the musical parts of public worship would wake up to the fact that they are at least worthy of notice. That it is possible to induce an ordinary middle-class congregation to take sufficient interest in the music to enable them to join in it with decent effect, and even to sing in harmony, may be proved by a visit to Union Chapel, Islington, where Nonconformity has done what Churchmen have either never attempted, or at least have failed to accomplish; and if this can be done in Islington, it can scarcely be deemed impossible elsewhere under more favourable auspices.

When the trial has been made fully and fairly without success, I shall be ready to admit that the cacophonic mumble which at present so largely prevails under episcopal sanction and clerical approval is really the only form of musical service to be obtained, but until then I must decline to believe it. At the present moment, as it seems to me, the music of the Church regarded congregationally has been grossly neglected, while reform in all other respects has been carried out—sometimes to an extreme which is little better than the original evil. People have been preached into more frequent attendance at church, they have been induced to relax their purse-strings for the removal of galleries, the opening out of ancient roofs—one was recently relieved of forty tons of plaster, laid on by successive generations of churchwardens—and for other needful and needless work involved in what is popularly known as church restoration and church decoration; but while the fabrics have thus been beautified, and even hothouses have been robbed of their choicest blossoms to ornament the sanctuaries, a most important part of the whole matter has been neglected. On all other points not only intelligence, but artistic taste has been bestowed, but the song of the people, which must be brought out if the service is to be anything more than the parson and clerk duet of the old puritan days, or the vicarious worship of priest and choir of modern Roman ecclesiasticism, has been allowed to remain uncultivated. That this is no imaginary grievance, but a serious hindrance to the progress of art and religion, might easily be proved by a reference to the impression produced even on mere auditors by the harmonious singing of a great multitude, and the consequent loss where such a ‘volkslied’ is absent. The description of the magnificent effects of the psalmody at Paul’s Cross in the Elizabethan era are familiar to all who have examined the

subject; and in our own day no one can fail to have been struck by the indescribable thrill which is caused by listening to the singing of one of the grand choirs of a thousand or more of voices, collected at the annual festivals of the diocesan choral unions in our great cathedrals. On these latter occasions the voices, it is true, are drawn from choirs, not from congregations, and are to a certain extent 'picked,' but then it must not be forgotten that the choirs in turn are made up of members of the ordinary church-going population, and thus that what training has accomplished in the one case can, it may fairly be argued, be attained in the other.

Of course, in proposing any schemes for improvement with regard to the cultivation of this great part of our musical art, it is best to be practical, and therefore I would offer one suggestion—which has, in fact, already been made by Dr. Hullah—that we should utilise the parish and its machinery, that musical education should be introduced into our schools, not as it is now, merely as a matter of singing by ear, but as a matter of singing by note. A great man amongst us—or at any rate one who has made for himself a certain reputation, Sir Henry Cole—is, I believe, occupying his retirement from the Civil Service in travelling in different parts of the country with the simple view of stirring people up to do this work. Where he can, he engages a brass band, as he did some years ago, if I recollect aright, in a church at Brompton, and he gathers together a congregation by announcing that there will be an accompaniment of brass instruments in addition to the organ. By this means he stimulates curiosity, and then proceeds to work on the interest he has excited. But whether we follow Sir Henry or not, I am convinced that Dr. Hullah is in the right when he says that the only way of making England really musical is to make music obligatory as music in the primary schools of the country. He has, I have every reason to believe, suggested this to the Committee of Council on Education in a memorandum which has not yet found its way into the blue book, because I imagine the Council do not see their way to carry out his views, nor can they show cause why they should fail to do so; and therefore they have probably used a wise discretion in keeping the public in the dark as to their inspector's scheme. I do hope and, from recent meetings which I have attended, where educationalists have been very much to the fore, I believe the day is coming when England will demand that in her schools which are assisted by grants from Imperial sources, music shall be taught to some purpose. At present, it may not be known to all the members of the Association, but it is a fact, that a very large annual outlay is made out of the education vote for what is called the teaching of music, and yet, as Dr. Hullah would tell you, the music in all our national schools is, unless the master chooses of his mere free will to make it otherwise, really and truly nothing more than the singing of a number of

songs by ear. If, on the other hand, the grant were made dependent on instruction either in the tonic sol-fa system or the old notation—and the Government, I think, in these matters is very wise to be even-handed with regard to both systems, aiming only at results—if such instruction were made the condition of a good substantial grant which would be appreciated by masters and mistresses, we should arrive at a very different state of things. Such a reform, if carried out earnestly and heartily, would be a contribution towards the cultivation of sacred music as far as the poor are concerned, and when we have worked through the lower stratum of society there need be very little fear but that we shall soon reach the upper. And as regards the higher ranks of society, we have signs that musical cultivation of this sort is not being neglected: we have our two music schools and three or four little subsidiary institutions all working in the right direction, and although they are not exclusively cultivating sacred music, they are, of course, preparing the basis on which it can be cultivated.

There is one other suggestion which I think may be made as regards the cultivation of sacred music, and it is for the use of churches not simply for the purpose of worship but for the useful purpose of musical practice. There seems to be in England a sort of conception that a church is too sacred to be used for anything else than preaching and praying at prescribed times. Why churches should only be so used is a mystery which it is difficult to fathom. I heard the other day of a case in which the Bishop of Manchester had given permission to a Diocesan Inspector of Schools to use one of the large churches in Manchester virtually as a lecture room. He was, of course, only using it for a lecture on kindred and sacred subjects, but if a church may be used as a lecture room it is difficult to see why it should not be used as a practice room for sacred music, and with due reverence, order, and decency, such a use might very much conduce to the cultivation of the art of which we are speaking. If people were assembled at certain intervals with a definite programme, with music books arranged for practice, and if some qualified person were to stand forward and beat time—and there is no reason why a man should not beat time with his hand as well as preach with his mouth—we might arrive far nearer than we are at present to the end we desire. Some such effort has been made, and the sanction of Westminster Abbey as a great musical centre has been placed upon it, in what are called services of song. Now these little services of song, although they are very humble in their way, are nothing more nor less than an imitation of the old form of oratorio which we are told was sung in St. Philip Neri's Oratory at Rome. They consist of narratives and Scripture stories interspersed with well-known hymns. Some one reads the narrative, the choir is there to sing the hymns, the book of music is in the hands of everyone able to join, and the result may easily be imagined. I am told that in Nonconformist

places of worship all over the country such choral services are becoming increasingly common, and only as recently as last Saturday, at Exeter Hall, Mr. Farmer, the professor of music at Harrow School, who has done a great deal for musical education among the upper classes, brought forward what he called an oratorio, in which although he did not quite follow out the idea I have suggested, because instead of using well-known hymns and tunes he simply took the hymns and reset them for his own purpose, yet still the framework was the same and the hymns formed the staple of the work. I do not know whether you noticed in the newspapers that in describing the performance the critics or reporters fell into the not unnatural error of talking of the audience as the congregation. If we could get congregations or audiences, call them which you like, to take up the practice of sacred music in this popular, simple, and elementary way, we should be doing something to forward the study of those great works of the German master whose music has recently been introduced at St. Paul's, at Westminster, and at Soho, and instead of seeing a vast multitude standing silent or half silent, or uttering sounds which are the reverse of pleasant, we should find them by degrees taking up and swelling the great body of song.

I am conscious how very imperfectly I have treated this subject, and my time has not allowed me to refer to many points, such as the growth of a modern school of Church composers, on which I should have liked to touch; but, as I told you when I commenced, it was really only to offer a humble contribution to the treasury of the Musical Association that I came here to-day, and if I have said one or two words which may suggest some weightier thoughts and weightier sentences from the gentlemen around me, I shall be amply rewarded.

Mr. G. A. OSBORNE proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Mackeson. He felt sure that everyone present had thoroughly enjoyed the paper he had read. The ideas thrown out would be, through the means of different channels, widely disseminated, and he hoped a good harvest might be reaped from the seed now sown. The resolution was seconded and carried unanimously.

Major M'CREA said there was one difficulty which Mr. Mackeson had not touched upon. In order to have good congregational singing the pew system must be thoroughly broken up, if you were to accomplish harmony among the congregation. It must strike anyone with a tolerable knowledge of music, on going into a church, what an immense difficulty there was, unless he had a tenor voice, in joining in the music. Persons like himself who possessed a 'basso-profundo' voice had only the option of trying to sing in a very mild way by leaving out part of the tunes, or else singing two octaves below the proper pitch. If, on the other hand, they heard a stray basso in one corner and a stray alto in another, they would be looked upon by those in the immediate vicinity as a local nuisance.

Mr. C. E. STEPHENS thought there were two main difficulties in the way of carrying out the admirable suggestions of Mr. Mackeson—the one local, the other general. The local difficulty was that in choirs made up of voluntary singers it often happened that they had to deal with persons wholly incompetent; but supporters of churches, contributors to the funds, and so on, expected certain considerations in return, and unfortunately one was a seat in the choir. He remembered such a case in a church where he was organist for some time, where there was a gentleman who fancied he could sing tenor. He had not the least notion of reading music, but he happened to have a gentleman on either side of him who could sing tolerably correctly, and he managed to follow them pretty well. But after a time they fell off and he was left alone, and then he did nothing but sing the melody, and when informed of it simply said, 'I cannot hit that tenor part to-day.' The *general* difficulty was this, that if parties were willing and anxious to assist in the service, and possessed certain voices, they must, in order to make effective use of them, be classified, and could not be allowed to sit indiscriminately, as was now the practice. Major McCrea had spoken of that as a difficulty, because to have a 'tenor' in one pew and an 'alto' in the next one, three or four 'bassos' in another, and a 'treble' in another, was not a classification of voices which would tend to a satisfactory result. Then came the great difficulty, Could they in churches classify singers and turn the whole congregation into a choir? He feared that would be a difficulty, unless they adopted unison singing, which would favour, perhaps, the Gregorian style of service. Confining themselves to what was more general, to the more Anglican form of service, it would be simply impossible to have it sung in unison with anything like effect.

Major M'Crea thought the only way out of the difficulty would be to have some parts of the service sung in unison, which would afford a scope for those who felt disposed to sing; but he did not see how they could get over this difficulty entirely. He himself, and others like him, had sung in choirs for many years, and he supposed was up to a sort of average, but as a member of a congregation he considered himself utterly useless.

Mr. STEPHENS asked if the voices were separated in Dr. Allon's congregation.

Mr. MACKESON: No; the people sit where they like.

The CHAIRMAN said he quite agreed with Mr. Mackeson in the points laid down. For example, as to the great need, not only for the cultivation of Church music, but for the general improvement of the English people in the art, and that it should be made a matter of much more importance in primary schools. But this was by no means a new proposition. Nearly thirty years ago he began to work with Dr. Hullah in the practical exposition of such an experiment, on the system brought into this country by him. It was introduced under the immediate

superintendence of the Committee of Privy Council on Education, and had been before the public ever since. Whether the effort had been properly supported by the Government was another thing. The grant now stood in this way: At the periodical examination of primary schools the inspector had the power of increasing the grant (which partly went into the pocket of the teacher), for all children who were in the music class. Dr. Hullah's contention—and a very proper one—was, that this musical education should be tested, because at present it seemed to fall generally into the useless channel of the children learning a few songs, which they were allowed to sing in the inspector's presence, who very often possessed no knowledge of music. For this should be substituted a *bond-fide* examination into the real musical results. He believed the annual grant to primary schools for music averaged about £96,000, which was a large sum in the aggregate, but it was simply awarded in the various schools, so much to each child who could stand up and sing so many songs: which seemed a very useless way of expending money. He also agreed most thoroughly as to the necessity, if you were to make any great improvement in the performance of sacred music in churches, for the voices to be separated. He had been for twenty years organist of a church in which the voices were separated—that is to say, so far as the separation of the sexes was concerned—and he could bear witness that that separation seemed greatly to promote what was called congregational singing. Some such division, he conceived, was absolutely necessary as the first step, and the second, no doubt, was to bring into operation some such plan as had been adopted at Dr. Allon's chapel. The history of the musical movement in that chapel was this: First of all, Dr. Allon was a musical man—at any rate, he was a very good judge of music—and he had published several collections of sacred music, which were used in his own chapel and also very extensively in America, and to which too much praise could not be given. In this collection he had been assisted by the late Dr. Gauntlett, who was for many years organist of the chapel. Next, the circumstances had been exceptionally happy, in the presence of a large number of persons who could read music, many of them, as it happened, having formed part of the first Upper Singing School taught in Exeter Hall by Dr. Hullah thirty years ago. A great proportion of the congregation were sufficiently well able to read music to feel an interest in providing themselves with the necessary books, and in many cases to join in 'four-part' harmony. Amongst other things, Dr. Allon provided an anthem book for the congregation, a collection of a somewhat simple style, beginning with Farrant's 'Lord, for Thy tender mercies' sake,' and going on to such pieces as a movement from Handel's Coronation Anthems. The same thing had been done, to his own knowledge, by a body of persons who, one would think, were the least likely to have reached such a point, namely, the Scotch Presbyterians. They had published an anthem book and a chant book, in which were

included not only the Psalter, but every possible passage throughout the Bible which could be put into anything like musical metre, all marked for chanting. This was sung without the assistance of an organ; but in Dr. Allon's chapel they had a very fine instrument. A great distinction was to be made between ordinary congregational music and that finished 'four-part' music which they all liked to *hear*; but, with regard to this, the introduction of such an experiment as the performance of Bach's 'Passion' music so frequently as we now had it in our cathedrals had been very suggestive to congregations. He had been present at the performance of the 'Passion' music at St. Paul's this year, after being absent two or three years, and was very much struck with the quantity of congregational sound which arose when the chorales were sung. It seemed to be now understood that the chorale formed the people's part of the service. With regard to the proposed division of voices, the real difficulty lay in what was called the 'pew system,' and here one came upon a feature of Church life which was almost peculiar to this country—family life carried into church—the members of a family all liking to worship side by side. On the other hand, his experience of the church he had referred to seemed to show that where the separation of the sexes was carried out, great collateral advantages had arisen, as, for example, in the greater facilities it gave to the young ladies of a family to go to church when they knew that they should be immediately surrounded by their own sex only; and he thought there was something of a similar feeling on the men's side too. With regard to musical composition for the Church, Mr. Mackeson had said nothing. It had often struck him that we were now enjoying the fruit of very much greater industry on the part of Church composers, for the number of works produced within the last ten years must be enormous, and for the most part in a masculine and worthy Church style. There was, of course, running collaterally with the demand, now so common, for what was called 'hearty' congregational singing, a desire for music which should be of a massive, solid, and not too complicated a character; and they saw in the efforts made to provide music of that sort how difficult it was to *write* simple music. Take as an instance the anthem by Farrant, just now mentioned—where was there another like it? You might set half-a-dozen church musicians to write such a one, and they would all say it was a difficult thing to do. So also it was difficult to write a psalm tune; there was a temptation on the one hand to make a prettiness which was only tolerable with a quartet choir, or on the other side, to simplify until you came to a style which had been sometimes called that of the 'last century' in cathedral and church music, in which, certainly, simplicity and not scientific composition was the salient and the weak point.

Mr. MACKESON said the chairman had dealt with almost every point which he had left untouched, having especially spoken of

Dr. Allon's chapel, and answered the question that had been asked. But he must, with all due deference, express some doubt whether congregational singing in church where the sexes were mixed was such an impossibility. He heard something like it the previous morning at St. George's-in-the-East—a large classic church with an immense area. The people were all sitting together; he was in the gallery, and a body of harmony rose up in a very agreeable way, although fathers, sisters, mothers and brothers were all sitting together. Of course their pews were of the average height of the present day. He should be very sorry to give up the problem simply because ecclesiastical taste did not lead people to separate the sexes. As regarded Dr. Allon's chapel, all the chairman had said was exactly in accordance with his experience there; they had been exceptionally fortunate, but he maintained that there were numbers of churches in London which were just as exceptionally fortunate where nothing whatever was done, and he instanced Dr. Allon's as a place where anyone could go and see for himself what might be done. He contended that if it was done in one place it might easily be done elsewhere. Lastly, his omission to mention the Church composers of the present day arose simply from want of time.