

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE VI.

## MUSIC AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

BY EDWARD S. STERLE, OBERLIN, OHIO.

WHAT interest music will have for Christian education must naturally depend upon the capacity of music for Christian uses. The question thus suggested involves two, namely, what in general the powers of music are, and what in special Christian uses are. The discussion of these questions—which in their treatment, however, need not be widely parted—will occupy the present article, while a second will carry the result which may be reached to its practical applications.

Upon the worth of music the average practical citizen places no very high estimate. As an amusement he concedes it that degree of value which he is accustomed to assign to amusements in general, with variations relative to his individual taste. He does not deny it a certain use, especially when coupled with words, in moving people's feelings in evangelistic and temperance efforts and in working up military and political enthusiasm. And as a Christian worshipper he finds it for some reason indispensable in public religious services.

But the lover of the art makes his estimate in a very different spirit. His expressions are touched with a glow which shows that music has a value for him quite regardless of ordinary standards of utility. It gives him a satisfaction which he would scorn to attribute to an amusement. And while he gladly acknowledges himself moved by its power, he does not conceive that its best effects are found in the

stimulus it affords to the fiery charge or other instant action. He esteems it rather as an inwardly enlarging, elevating, and refining force, which, while exercising the mind with a pure enjoyment, leaves it rested and better attuned to the heavenly harmony whose notes are so hard to catch amidst the jangle of the world. With the worshipper he is most nearly at one; for, however insufficient his philosophy, the worshipper feels that music in some way helps him into a becoming frame of mind, and here comes nearest to freeing himself from the bonds of commonly reputed utility. And to the good Puritan singing:—

My willing soul would stay,  
In such a frame as this,  
And sit and sing herself away,  
To everlasting bliss—

the friend of art might likely enough put the query what "use" there is in the extremely unpractical state of mind indicated by the verse.

The former and, as we must regard it, less adequate of these estimates—though the latter on its part might easily pass into one-sidedness and extravagance—arises from a defective view of utility and from a failure to appreciate the part which it is possible for music to play in the human economy. As regards utility, all that is useful which meets any wholesome demand of the human constitution. The fact that certain of our wants are instant and self-enforcing, while others may be deferred without destroying our physical life, does not show that the latter are not equally normal and equally essential to life at its best estate.

But, after all, the real ground of indifference to the claims of music is the failure to appreciate what the art can do, particularly the failure to have deeply felt its charm in one's own experience. This short-coming results sometimes from a defect of the organism, more often from a deficiency of musical cultivation, which may consist with a very high degree of refinement in other directions, or with a thorough grossness and sordidness of character. The most effective

way to advance the interests of music is to make its power felt by actual contact. Music is its own best advocate; give it the field and it will find and claim its own. It were well, however, that our appreciation of the art should take a more intelligent shape than a mere personal feeling in its favor; else there would be color for the suspicion that music is at best a private satisfaction to those who may happen to love it, with no significance beyond. Then, too, attention is the first objective point in the effort to promote any interest; and to this may be added that the theme itself is inherently interesting.<sup>1</sup>

Music, then, belongs to the sphere of the fine arts, and the fine arts fall within the scope of æsthetics, and æsthetics concerns itself with the beautiful, the sublime, and the objects of other kindred sentiments. For the present purpose beauty may generally be referred to as if it covered the whole range of the æsthetic judgment. It is plain that the capabilities of music are determined, first, by the general conditions of the æsthetic nature, then by the more special conditions of the fine arts, and, finally, by its own private laws. A complete analysis of the æsthetic faculty and its object cannot be undertaken merely as incidental to a practical end; a concise account of the subject may be offered, however, as exhibiting the practical relations of music to the human mind.

It is first to be observed that the beauty of things does not consist in their awakening certain feelings in us. The apprehension of beauty normally occasions pleasure, but the beauty is not on account of the pleasure. An object is enjoyed as beautiful, not beautiful as enjoyed. In this respect the beautiful stands in sharp contrast with the good, using good here in the sense of a means to happiness. Anything is good in so far as it ministers to satisfaction; its goodness lies in its very relation to the sensibility. Now the

<sup>1</sup> The writer wishes to acknowledge special obligations, for suggestion and information, to Hermann Lotze's *Grundzüge der Ästhetik*, to Mr. Haweis' *Music and Morals*, and to Mr. Mathews' *How to Understand Music*,

beautiful may be a good, since, as already said, it normally produces satisfaction; but it is not as good that it becomes beautiful; rather, being beautiful it becomes a good to us, since it is the law of our nature to take pleasure in the beautiful.

But, second, beauty is an ideal quality of things, not, properly speaking, a real. That is to say, you may pull to pieces, and submit to the closest scrutiny, a confessedly beautiful object, and you will not by that method detect the slightest trace of beauty. If skilled in æsthetics, you may find in that manner the conditions upon which the beauty of the object depends; but the beauty itself is quite otherwise apprehended. In this respect beauty resembles rightness or obligatoriness, which is no real quality of things either physical or spiritual. Nor can either of these properly be brought under the category of "relations;" they are rather ideal qualities of things—not on that account, however, any the less valid and significant.

Third, the æsthetic judgment does not affirm beauty, as it were blindly, of each of a great number of individual objects. On the contrary, beauty is predicated according to a principle, in view of the fulfilment of certain universal conditions. The general evidence of this lies in the fact that in all the variety and seeming contrariety of beautiful objects, beauty is still to us only one thing, whose essence men, though often disappointed, still feel impelled to seek.

Fourth, the conditions of beauty are twofold, lying, namely, in an idea, and in its embodiment or expression. This distinction is fundamental, and its observance essential. For if, as may easily happen, the inquirer should fix his attention unduly on the outwardness of the beautiful, he might arrive at various rules of the arts, and at some comprehensive but incidental characters of the beautiful, yet could not attain to its ultimate bond of unity. On the other hand, one would fail to vindicate even the correct idea, should he not observe that beauty is conditioned, not only upon the idea, but upon its manifestation.

Fifth, the idea embodied in a beautiful object is necessarily an *ideal*. The ideal is, in the first place, the perfect, or at least that which approximates toward perfection. But perfection, absolutely taken, is meaningless ; perfection is always relative, namely, to an end or purpose. That is perfect which fully and precisely occupies its place, fulfils its vocation, meets its end. Thus the essence of the ideal is teleology. Hence the beautiful is the fit, the appropriate, the becoming, or at least the representation of them.

Teleology may be perfect or imperfect ; yet in so far as it is imperfect, it falls short of being fully teleological. Thus perfection and teleology are not independent characters of the ideal, but the former is involved in the latter. And here we find one, though not the main, reason why the beautiful does not coincide with the useful. A thing may be actually useful, yet so imperfectly teleological as to fall short of the ideal. When the means passes into the end immediately and wholly, without friction and waste, then the utility takes on an ideal character.

Sixth, all end is ultimately the good in the sense of happiness or well-being. Thus the ideal does not pertain to the mere mechanism of means, but to the means only in relation with real and vital interests. Accordingly, beauty does not arise from any mathematical or otherwise merely formal condition, like "unity in multiplicity," albeit that character may often be incidentally present.

Seventh, the idealizing faculty proceeds in two principal methods. First, it busies itself with creating the world as we would enjoy having it. Things are constituted on the basis of the presently agreeable—not necessarily from a low point of view. Things go right, here and now. Wickedness is soon punished or soon repented of. Pains and difficulties are reduced to vexations, unlucky plights fit to laugh at afterward, griefs which no more than give tone to joy, struggles which exhaust only the exuberance of energy. This is the comedial form of the ideal. Here belong day-dreaming and castle-building, hence exhales the fairy world, and here is

framed the popular conception of heaven. This is the sphere of the lighter works in drama and fiction, and of the corresponding creations in the other arts.

The second method of idealizing is the tragedical. Instead of excluding or softening any evil of the real world, it accepts all, and frames a world in which, indeed, the good is no less the end, but is attained only through conflict and pain. It is a mistake to suppose that the essence of tragedy is a bad outcome. There is an evil issue, but it is not the grand issue. From the standpoint of the lower sphere things are going badly. Justice dies from the earth, and the powers of evil work their will. But in genuine tragedy we are allowed to catch through storm and darkness the gleam of an Eternal Righteousness ruling serene and radiant above the earthly process. Or, perchance the world and the flesh have gained the better of the spirit, and are just dragging their victim into the pit, when lo! the spirit, empowered by the self-sacrificing devotion of some pure soul, eludes the demon's grasp, and ascends purged and redeemed to its native sphere. Tragedy from the nature of the case partakes somewhat of the character of an inquiry, an attempt to solve the problem of evil; not so much either an attempt to solve it, but rather to substantiate to the perplexed soul its faith that goodness is at the bottom of things. Tragedy will evidently not be so pleasing to the unreflecting as comedy; but for serious minds it possesses a deeper interest and yields a fuller satisfaction than the other. This is not meant to imply, however, what is certainly not true, that the comedial element in art has no interest for wise people.

Our analysis thus far has exhibited the fact that the beautiful, far from being merely a pleasure of sense, is founded upon thought, and often of a highly serious character. We are led to consider, eighth, the relation of the beautiful to the right. That the two often coincide no one will care to deny; but it may easily be supposed that this is accidental; that fine art appropriates moral matter to its use indifferently, just because it is an element in the world and

human life, and these must furnish the material of art; and that beauty may be employed to add a charm alike to virtue and vice. These statements do not express the truth. The relation between the right and the beautiful is intimate, definite, and friendly, and the positions already taken prepare us to understand it. The two ideas, it is fully conceded, are entirely distinct, and neither of them is the ground of the other. Nothing is right merely as beautiful, or beautiful merely as right. But the æsthetic judgment as we have seen, refers to ends, and so also obviously does the moral. And there is but one ultimate end, the same for both, namely, the good, or happiness. But the two refer to the end in quite different ways. I am morally obligated to will the good in general, and, so far as in me lies, to act toward its realization. The æsthetic judgment, on the contrary, affirms no duty, and except indirectly has no relation to the will. It is not practical, but contemplative. Nevertheless, what the moral judgment says I ought to fall in with, and in my part perform, the æsthetic judgment disposes me to take delight in. My objective duty consists in realizing the good according to my best view of it; my æsthetic pleasure arises, so far as the idea is concerned, from the contemplation of the good realizing. The æsthetic faculty becomes thus a powerful coadjutor of the ethical; for it creates an interest in precisely those courses of action which we ought to pursue. All that which we call enthusiasm is the product of the ideal view of things. So also shame, as far as it relates to morally wrong conduct, appears to be founded, not on the sense of guilt, but of the æsthetic impropriety involved in the sin.

Ninth, certain supplementary statements need to be subjoined to the above. First, the writer is quite aware that many will refuse to grant the proposition that happiness is the ultimate good; and this is no place to defend it. But, while it is necessary that the writer should proceed on his own lines, he is still in hopes that dissenting readers, making their own reservations, will be able to sympathize with the general effect of the discussion, and so he may still retain

their company. But, second, without dissenting from the above definition of the good, one may still make it an objection to the position taken that much of the beautiful has no obvious moral significance, and, further, that it is sometimes low or even positively vicious in its tendency. But, as regards the first, there are also many satisfactions which by themselves considered are entirely innocent, yet become evil when they stand in the way of a greater good. The pursuit of these satisfactions may be said to be morally indifferent, since its right or wrong is determined by its relations in each particular case. But naturally the ideal, which is based on enjoyments of this sort, will have no special moral significance. It is innocent, yet it does not exhibit the conflict of evil and good. Of this nature are many comedial ideals. But as regards the low and vicious beautiful—if that combination of terms is endurable,—when the general good is subordinated to a merely relative good, this is wrong; but so at the same time is it un-teleological and un-ideal. To give one's self up to the so-called "lower pleasures" is immoral, and so it is unbeautiful; for he who does so does not meet his true end, does not fulfil his part in the grand scheme of the world. When, as is common, people conceive their whole environment as properly revolving around their personal interest, we call them selfish, and selfishness is wrong. But at the same time this procedure is æsthetically preposterous. It is like setting a glass diamond with gold and precious stones, or placing a fat spider in the central foreground of a magnificent landscape. If it indeed be true that the æsthetic conflicts with the moral, then the æsthetic must give way; but really the æsthetic corrects its own morals. Those who hold but a low conception of the world and of the sphere of man will of course idealize accordingly, and their ideals, well clad, will afford a certain counterfeit of beauty, whose falsity, however, is exposed in the light of the true beauty.

The sympathy of the ethical and the æsthetic spheres is strikingly exhibited in the frequent use of æsthetic considerations for moral purposes. The preacher constantly presents

right action, not merely as right, but as noble, pure, manly, and true, all of which terms so used are æsthetic; while wrong action in the same spirit is called hateful, shameful, and mean. When Paul says, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report"—"honorable," "pure," and "lovely" have clearly an æsthetic sense, as have in some measure perhaps all the remaining epithets. The terms "high" and "low" as applied to character and conduct are strictly æsthetic. Moral action as such is right or wrong, and in varying degrees; it becomes high or low only when measured by the ideal scale. Nor can this use of terms be explained as a mere accommodation. Not only are they, as in accordance with the above positions, literally true, but they actually bear to the mind that peculiar radiance, or, on the other side, that peculiar offence, which belongs to the æsthetic point of view. In fact, the æsthetic treatment of things moral springs from the necessary relation of the two spheres, and is constantly taking place without observance. And it is interesting to note how in such a writer as Ruskin the two almost coalesce, probably to their mutual advantage.

Tenth, the service of the æsthetic faculty to the religious nature, though obvious, is probably greater than is commonly recognized. In so far as the æsthetic judgment co-operates with the moral, it is also relevant to true religion. Further, we have already seen how the spirit of tragedy grasps into the great religious question of the fundamental goodness of things. Again, it is manifest that the idealizing faculty has been widely active in shaping men's conceptions of the Divine, both among polytheists, whose deities are often idealizing personifications of special powers and characters, and among Christians, whose God is the sum of all perfections, and whose Saviour embodies the ideal of certain divine qualities, and also of human character, and thus commands the enthusiasm of the race. These are merely glances into a large and important domain, which must for the rest be

passed by, except as later touched in relation with the fine arts.

But we must turn our attention now from the nature of the ideal to that of its embodiment. It is requisite to the material of beauty, first, that it make a vivid address to the senses or imagination; the ideal must not be reasoned out, but projected objectively and pictorially. It is necessary, second, that it possess the power of awakening some degree of *sympathetic emotion*; by which is meant, not the pleasure which follows the apprehension of beauty, and not the various affections and passions which spring up in our practical contact with the real world, but rather those moods of the sensibility which arise in contemplation and reflection, as it were the echo of the satisfactions and griefs, the loves and antipathies, of real experience, the sympathetic vibration of the chords of the heart with a weal and woe in which it is not now participant. Such, in different ways, are the gladness of springtime and the melancholy of autumn, the sombre feeling awakened by the ninetieth Psalm and the more cheerful effect of the ninety-first, the whole train of emotions that accompany the reading of a tale, and the moods produced by music. The intellectual and the emotional element are always both present, though their relative prominence varies greatly.

The range within which these conditions may be fulfilled is extremely wide. In fact, there is nothing which is capable of manifesting an idea which may not conceivably be of service in embodying an ideal. Thus the whole manifold of the world and of human experience, and all that the creative imagination can base upon it, make up a fund upon which the ideal may draw for its own purposes. But there is also a special material of the beautiful which has no small significance. This belongs immediately to the sphere of the senses, and consists of the first elements of the physical world and their sensible qualities. Thus various geometrical forms are instinctively felt to be in themselves expressive; and the various colors have an inherent sympathetic quality which

fits them for an æsthetic medium on the emotional side ; and similar things are true, as we shall find, in the domain of sound. Out of this material may be constructed a beautiful object which is not only not useful itself, but has no explicit reference to any specific utility. Here is the place of what is sometimes called "free" beauty, which might also be termed symbolic. For though it manifests no specific teleology, yet, if it really attains to beauty, it becomes the symbolic expression of teleology ; for instance, through a nice adjustment of parts *as if* to an end, and similarly through a happy combination of colors. Contrasted with free beauty is "adherent" beauty, whose characteristic is that it derives its idea from some actually teleological object, in which, or in the representation of which, it resides. The distinction here drawn is substantially that of Kant, and is genuine and important, though it requires much circumspection to carry it safely out. All purely ideal figures, such as are used in decoration, are examples of free beauty. The beauty of flowers probably belongs here, because, while even their form and coloring, may, scientifically considered, play a part in the economy of the plant, yet our apprehension of their beauty takes no note of the fact. A large portion of the beauty of music must also be referred here. An obvious example of adherent beauty is furnished by architecture, where the relation to a practical purpose is manifest. The beauty of animals must on the whole be considered adherent, yet in the case of sea shells and corals, it is nearly or quite free, like that of flowers. In the case of representative works of art, such as paintings and statuary, the question relates to the object represented. The beauty of a statue is adherent, because the beauty of the man it represents is such. The reminder will be in place here that not even the beauty of useful objects is grounded upon the consideration of their actual utility ; the decisive question is what they express, and the useful may, or may not, reveal the ideal utility. Thus a finely finished tool is more beautiful than a plain one, because more significant to the imagination ; and a golden

miniature of a useful article, say of the square and compasses, is more beautiful than the article itself. It would seem now, that the question, why, in view of the principle adopted, the beautiful is not identical with the useful, is fairly answered. First, as earlier said, the actually useful is often but imperfectly teleological. Second, the actually useful is not necessarily in any high degree expressive according to æsthetic laws. An idealized copy of an object may reveal its idea better than it can itself; and even a symbol may have more æsthetic significance than a real object.

For further examination we must classify beautiful objects as those belonging to nature and those produced by art. It is obvious from the examples adduced above that the distinction between free and adherent beauty holds in both these departments. Of the beauty of nature but little can here be said. Relatively to our apprehension the beauty of the world is highly defective. Faith, indeed, insists that the world as a whole is perfectly beautiful, just as it insists that it is the product of a perfect goodness. But we are obliged to confess ourselves unable to comprehend the world as a whole. Science affords us glimpses of a universal system; history of a far-reaching divine purpose in the earthly order; and inner experience, of a birth of spiritual blessedness out of pain; and yet our best apprehensions are but fragmentary, and the beauty in whose universality we confide, is to us realized only here and there, or in the general survey only obscurely. And in the detail of the world, much which to us seems homely would doubtless seem otherwise if we could only grasp its full significance; while that which now seems to us beautiful would sometimes in the larger view appear less attractive. Of the natural beauty which can be apprehended by us that which belongs to the spirit is highest. This, to be sure, does not directly touch the imagination, like a physical property; yet the spiritual is brought within the grasp of the imagination through certain natural laws of symbolism—not to say how closely the spiritual nature is invested by the emotional. Next to the beauty of the spirit is that of the living organ-

ism, whose superiority consists not in the fineness of its mechanism, but precisely in the fact that it is lifted by its subordination to a living principle above the plane of mechanism. The inorganic, however interesting its laws, is not so highly teleological as the animate. It has no proper ends in itself, and in order to serve real ends it must be subjugated, as in our machines; even the finest of which are but an awkward means of performance, compared with the animate organism. Nevertheless, much might be said in its favor, in view of its orderly products, and especially of the grand unity and harmony of the solar and stellar systems, suggesting a "music of the spheres," and of the free beauty of the starry heavens. The beauties of the inorganic realm are quite largely without suggestion of specific ends, and therefore free, as for instance in case of crystals. With these scanty observations, we must leave the field of natural beauty for that of the beauty purposely created by man—that is, the domain of the fine arts.

We have seen how man, in the exercise of his idealizing faculty, creates a world after his own fancy, or strives to realize the deeper meanings of the actual one. Now in so far as he undertakes to embody his ideals according to æsthetic laws so as to enjoy their contemplation and communicate them to others, he becomes an artist; and his production is, in motive at least, a work of fine art. The fine arts are distinguished from other art in their controlling purpose to embody the ideal.

The particular material employed by an art gives it its specific character. In poetry, including artistic fiction, the material consists chiefly of real or possible experience, action, and character of human beings. In the lyric poem only a fragment of life, though a pregnant one, is exhibited. In the epic, the drama, and the novel, in their several ways, there is an orderly complication of circumstances and experiences, developing up to a culmination. The beauty of these works is heightened by tropical expression and elegant composition, sometimes by rhythm and rhyme; but all these

are properly accessories, though in some lyrics they seem to constitute nearly the whole material. Sculpture avails itself of the expressiveness which belongs to form; not for the most part, however, form in the abstract, as yielding free beauty, but organic form, form in relation with life and with rational being. Painting employs the resources of form under laws of perspective, and also those of color. From the more tractable nature of its material, it can treat a vastly wider range of subjects than sculpture, while through the sympathetic power of color it more richly expresses the things of the heart. It has its highest uses in embodying ideals of natural scenery, and still more those of the inward human life so far as it manifests itself through the body, as in historic groups and faces typical of some phase of character or experience. Architecture applies the significance of form and color and mass to the expression of those ideals which are naturally associated with buildings—accordingly, therefore, social and religious ones, the religious being in fact also social. The expressive resources of music will be noted hereafter.

It was found above that the æsthetic ideal has a distinct sympathy with morals and religion; we are now ready for the question whether in general the æsthetic embodiment of true ideals has any Christian uses. First, then, let it not be imagined that the fine arts have any important direct use in imparting information. All the resources of the fine arts would, for that purpose, be inferior to the deaf and dumb alphabet. Second, as a means of enjoyment the fine arts unquestionably deserve a high place. This is true of them, not only in that lower form which we call amusement, but also in serious and more intellectual delights, which afford a deeper, if less demonstrative, satisfaction. The pleasurable-ness of the arts would constitute for them a solid value, even if they had no other. Third, the fine arts may be employed to a certain extent in direct incitement to some proposed course of action, and in the production of a frame of mind suitable to a given occasion. Outside of the sphere of

music we may cite, as examples, the "tendency" novel, the poem intended to excite interest in a given cause, the church edifice considered as inspiring a devotional spirit, and didactic pictures like those of Hogarth. To excite in the mind a devotional or other elevated mood is akin to the best use of art; yet it can hardly be denied that the manifest subordination of an art to an immediate practical end detracts in greater or less measure from its worth as art.

But, fourth, the grand use of art is to awaken and cherish in the mind pure and noble sentiments. Sentiments spring immediately out of ideals, and belong therefore to the æsthetic sphere. Sentiment is, in that sphere, the correlate of conviction and principle in the specifically moral sphere, and the two mutually react. We have already seen how æsthetic considerations enter into moral persuasion; but right principle in turn tends to produce right sentiment. Moral sentiment is not less æsthetic than any other; its peculiarity is that it relates to distinctively moral questions. Sentiment without principle is weak, but so, in a certain way, is principle weak without sentiment. Principle cannot make itself fully effective without sentiment; it needs enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is kindled only in view of ideals. Every thoroughly formed character has a stock of abiding sentiments, which form very largely the basis of its outward conduct. True, one's life, being led by appetite or interest, may fall below the plane of his sentiment; but the schism is likely to be healed presently, either by the elevation of the life or the degradation of the sentiments.

But, the importance of correct sentiment being granted, the question still remains whether after all the fine arts are available as a means of producing it. A claim in their favor will be met with objection from various points of view. First, it will be apprehended that the artistic expression of the ideal tends to end in *mere sentiment*. The pleasurable contemplation even of a right ideal, it may plausibly be urged, has little or no good influence upon the practical habit, but only induces an artificial life of the imagination which de-

stroys the relish for wholesome action. At the same time it makes one too fine for this rude world, critical and unsympathetic, scornful rather than loving, unable to appreciate genuine values. This objection indicates some incidental dangers, not the main tendency of fine art. Doubtless one may dwell too much in the ideal world, doubtless a shock is sometimes felt when he descends into the real. Generally, however, a season of æsthetic enjoyment extends a softening and brightening influence over the period of action following, which does not detract from its efficiency. The spirit of finical discontent springs from a superficial æsthetic culture which ends upon the embodiment without penetrating to the inner sense. In all cases, too, we must beware of charging upon art what only belongs to its depravation. That the contemplation of the beautiful detaches the mind in a certain way from the real world is nothing to its discredit; we need to be detached from the world. Religious contemplation does something similar. No man is fit to live in the world unless he is sometimes out of it. It is by transporting us that fine art confers its benefits. For the moment it emancipates the mind from its prejudices, annuls the force of habit, calms the agitation of passion, and charges the spirit, even though unwilling, with noble sentiments. That moment will live on, for it has done something to form the mind. Even the unwilling soul will be haunted by the reminiscence of a time when it was almost pure, or kind, or religious in spite of itself, and be inclined to be what it felt. And even those works of art which have the least moral significance, if they are true, help us to get into our right relations with some aspect of the world, while serving often at the same time the purposes of an amusement.

An objection closely allied to the foregoing refers to the action of certain arts upon the feelings. It is alleged that these arts work disastrously in that they call the emotional nature into vigorous exercise, yet the energy thus generated is not applied to practical service. Rev. F. W. Robertson in one of his letters brings this accusation against the

novel, Dr. Josiah Strong in a religious journal<sup>2</sup> has urged recently the same against the theatre, and others have spoken likewise concerning music. But this objection, irrespective of the art to which it may be applied, is mistaken in principle. The primary thing in fine art is the ideal, and around this the feeling gathers. The feeling brings the ideal home, and fixes it as the goal of a sentiment. It is not true that this feeling is wasted; it is expended in a natural process of character formation; and, when the practical occasion comes, the mind will be more responsive to the demand upon its sympathy than if it had not beforehand been so exercised. The habitual disregard of the promptings of sympathy doubtless tends to destroy the feeling; but in the case in hand there is no call to action, therefore no abuse of the moral nature in not acting; and the disposition to act which was awakened by the fictitious situation tends to become a permanent bent. In practical life one hears of a thousand instances of suffering in respect to which he is no way called to act. But he need not close his ears for fear of wasting his emotional energies; his feeling, or at least his practical impulse, will be stronger rather than weaker for the present exercise in compassion. Much of the excitation of the pulpit does not relate to immediate specific action, but contributes its force to the grand fund of sentiment which so largely moulds the conduct. As against music, the objection is scarcely even plausible. The real danger of the novel and the theatre, so far as concerns us here, lies in the presentation of false or trivial ideals, and the excitement of feeling in a wrong direction or with insignificant occasion, which are undoubtedly unwholesome, but in equal degree unartistic.

A third objection will relate to those forms of art in which the thought is not expressed in words or easily translatable signs, in great measure, therefore, to architecture, sculpture, painting, and music. The fine meanings which enthusiastic critics discover in the great works of these departments seem

<sup>2</sup> *The Congregationalist*, Oct. 20, 1887.

to many minds fanciful, and of an influence too slight to enter into the calculations of sensible people. They concede a certain educational virtue to poetry and fiction, and to music accompanied by words, perhaps to some easily interpreted examples of painting and sculpture, but 'beyond this range all seems to them vague and unreal. On a question of this kind there is no argument that can carry the sceptical by storm. It is a matter of cultivated feeling and developed consciousness, and of broad and fine appreciation of the phenomena that mark the spiritual history of the race. A competent reflection cannot ignore the fact, that logical forms are not the only media of human expression and impression; that words are not essential to the embodiment of ideals, and, when used in that office, serve another end than the mere conveyance of information; that artistic expression whether with or without words has a real meaning for the human mind, and, however subtle, a real efficacy in the formation of character. It is impossible to draw the line of moral significance at the point where words disappear. The buildings, the statuary, the paintings, and the music of a people embody its ideals just as truly as does its poetry. These all express the life of the people, and in turn react upon it.

If such is the relation of art to life, it follows that art has authoritative claims upon Christianity. The sphere of Christianity is the whole territory of life, throughout which, in order to fulfil its mission, it must exercise a pervasive and dominating influence. It is not that Christianity ought to appropriate all the resources of the world to its own corporate ends, as if subjugating them to a foreign yoke; rather it must diffuse itself as an integral and vital element into the whole circle of human interests, as supplying them with their normal light and warmth. Now the artistic propensity is no excrescence, but a regular and wholesome demand of our constitution; and Christianity must provide it a satisfaction which is artistically adequate as well as Christianly pure and true, or else confess that it is not the religion of the whole man. And at the same time, if it fails to possess this field, men will seek at

less pure fountains the satisfaction of their thirst for ideal creations.

We have thus considered the serviceability of the fine arts in general for Christian use ; we must now turn our attention to the special properties of music. In music the material in which the ideal is embodied consists of sounds, varying in pitch, intensity, and duration, and ordered according to certain definite laws of melody and harmony. The mere observance of these laws, however, does not secure music. Relative to our receptive faculty, the material just specified is endowed with a variegated expressiveness, and it is only when this power is applied to the embodiment of an ideal that a production achieves the standing of music. Thus music has the same fundamental character as the other fine arts ; and it will be observed that this construction differs from that of Mr. Haweis, and others referred to by him, who define music as the "language of the emotions." This is far from saying, however, that the emotions are not concerned in music, and in a most intimate manner. Music more than any other art depends upon emotion as a medium of expression. Like every other art, music also addresses the imagination—for there is an imagination of the ear no less truly than of the eye. But a mere uncolored fabric of regulated sounds, if perhaps of some symbolic worth, would not possess the efficacy of music. Neither, on the other hand, would a bare series of awakened emotions, however well arranged, be equivalent to a musical effect. The imagination must have a body of justly articulated sounds to rest upon. In poetry there is a train of ideas, and, associated with them, a series of emotional states. In music the organized body of sound takes the place of the train of verbally embodied ideas, and forms an objective nucleus around which the emotion gathers. Yet in music the imaginational element is subordinated, and the emotional given the leading part. Poetry, including fiction, approaches it most nearly in this respect ; yet, on the whole, poetry gives a decidedly larger place to the intellectual element. This emotional quality of music evi-

dently adapts it to those classes of subjects into which the inner life largely enters.

A second distinction of music lies in its relation to time. Excepting poetry, no great art but music involves progression. In sculpture and painting, motion can, to a certain extent, be suggested, but its representation is not proper to them. They unquestionably express life, yet not life as an unfolding process, but as it appears at some critical juncture, or in some typical attitude of mind. But in music, from the very nature of its material as involving continuance and succession, the embodiment of progression and event is normal and principal. Combining this character with the one already noted, it becomes obvious that the sphere of music is the æsthetic expression of the inner life. Natural feeling attaches itself to all the phases of an actual experience, and hence, by awakening feeling, music is able to bear us along through the succession of moods in an ideal experience ; and since feeling largely relates to objects other than self, music may in its way refer to these. Yet it is not the office of music to tell a story, or give a description except in a sense quite peculiar to itself ; it cannot narrate or paint ; it follows not the law of things or events, but of emotion, which, though connected with a history, is something other than its counterpart. Moreover, it must not be supposed that in hearing music the experience expressed becomes as our own ; on the contrary, it is objective to us, a thing contemplated ; the emotion in which it is realized is, as already said, sympathetic. Nor must it be thought that the pleasure derived from music lies in the experience of these emotions, which, as matter of fact, are often sad. Our pleasure, so far as it is æsthetic, springs from the contemplation of the ideal, whether sad or otherwise ; which explains the seeming contradiction of enjoying the pathetic in music or poetry, and of a "pleasing melancholy" from any occasion. Both possess movement, and both deal largely in emotion, and have close relations with the inner life. Consequently music is often associated with poetical words. Yet the laws of the two arts are so far dif-

ferent that this union can be effected only by mutual accommodation. For instance, the manifold repetition of words often required in a musical rendering would be intolerable in poetry, as may be seen by repeating the words of the Hallelujah Chorus with all the hallelujahs. So music must in turn concede somewhat, particularly in view of the limitations of the human voice. Nevertheless, the results of the combination are often very noble.

But, notwithstanding the affinity of those two arts, each holds a place that the other cannot fill. Poetry can narrate and depict, while music cannot. Poetry can also appeal strongly to the feelings, and express much that is most inward and sacred. Yet it must be confessed that music has an access to the inner sanctuary of the heart which poetry has not. It is not merely fanciful to say that music expresses feelings which are too deep for words. It reaches down to the very springs of life, where experience hardly knows how to define itself in logical forms. And the very fact that it does not appeal to the ocular imagination adapts it to deal with the life of the spirit. In this aspect, it is as when a man retires from the world to be alone with himself. At the same time, because music reaches thus deep, it is also highly social. For it strikes down to the unity of feeling underlying the diversity and conflict of opinions—and that, even more than does poetry; for many unite in singing the hymn who would scarcely be willing to repeat it. So, too, the artist in singing or performing establishes a fellowship between himself and his audience; and it is doubtful if a concert could be enjoyed by one sole auditor, even apart from the sense of the good wasted; for he would miss the feeling of community with the mass which the music ought to inspire.

With the general insight now attained into the adaptations of music its availability for Christian uses lies almost on the surface. It was noted earlier how largely religion moves in the realm of the ideal. Christianity, as seen, is no exception. If in its purer forms it discards the mythologizing and idolizing tendency, it is not because it has no ideals, but because

its ideality moves in a higher range. That these nobler ideals should find for themselves some medium of artistic expression is, under the laws of our nature, a matter of course. It is on the one hand inevitable, and on the other, indispensable. The occasion for solicitude is lest the embodiment be inadequate. Now, to what medium should Christianity resort for its æsthetic self-expression ?

Christianity is the religion of inwardness. It looks upon the religious life, not merely as performance, but as experience. It looks upon man as naturally allied with God and capable of a sensible spiritual fellowship with him. It addresses the burdened conscience, and invites it to be reconciled with a Father not less grieved than angry. It approaches the soul in every phase of moral and spiritual experience, searching the hidden springs of its life, winging its aspirations and hopes, and turning the light of the upper firmament upon the mysteries which confound it in this lower sphere. Its God is light and love and spirit ; to be worshipped everywhere in spirit and in truth ; toward whom in its hour of trial the soul goes forth in unutterable longings, and in whom in its hour of triumph it rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. By what power of utterance will the ideals of this inward and upward domain find themselves so well served as by music, the most inward and most transcendent of the arts ?

The artistic wants of Christianity are naturally first thought of in connection with its public religious services. And here, for genuinely Christian demands, music, though it does not stand alone, is yet preëminent. Sculpture and painting are, for the uses of a pure worship, only incidentally available. The objects of Christian devotion they can neither represent nor adequately suggest. The statue and the picture are not necessarily unspiritual, but they are insurmountably finite. It is not necessary to deny that at an undeveloped stage of human intelligence they may have their value in defining and realizing the divine presence. It remains true that the craving for the image or picture in worship is a part of an intellectual and spiritual darkness, without the removal of which

the soul can never rise to religious manhood. He who depends upon such helps is a babe, possibly innocent, certainly helpless. The iconoclasm of Protestantism was not a revolt against art, but against a misuse of art; the images destroyed were the emblems of a spiritual bondage. Humanity is the best symbol of the divine; but the carved or painted man is hopelessly locked up in his humanity. The true symbol is the free spirit of man, purified, perfected, and infinitized. This becomes concrete in the living, historic Christ, best apprehended through the written Gospels. As subsidiary to architecture, however, and as means of surrounding worship with fitting associations, these arts are not without legitimate interest to the worshipping church.

It is possible to speak of architecture in a decidedly different tone. It can unquestionably do something in the aid of genuine worship. It must be kept in mind that we are here concerned, not with the convenience and practical necessity of houses of worship, but with their capacity for æsthetic impression. Church architecture in its sublimer forms can produce a feeling of the loftiness and eternity of God, and of his immediate presence, and can invite the soul to find in him an unfailing refuge; and, in its humbler forms, it may at least embody in some wise the spiritual unity and common aspiration of the Christian brotherhood. Abused, it may tend to a localization of the divine presence, which would be false to the divine ideal. Yet, rightly used, it is under limitations. It cannot move with the soul through the cycle of human experience, keeping the heart company in all its conflicts, doubts, and triumphs, and voicing all its longings and enthusiasms. It stands for the abiding and unchangeable; scarcely for the active participation of the Divine Spirit in the life of the individual and the process of the world. From the very nature of its material, moreover, architecture cannot enter into the movement of the service; nor can it be at hand in all places where men need to worship. The help of an appropriate architectural effect may rightly be coveted at every fixed seat of divine service; yet, on the whole, it can-

not be considered the most vital of the worshipper's æsthetic needs.

Turning now to poetry, which of all the arts has closest affinity with music, we shall find that for outright, unqualified poetry the house of God offers little or no demand. So far as called for, it is for the most part subordinated either to the music or to the preaching. This results not from a want of capacity on the part of poetry to deal with religious themes, but from its lack of adaptation to the peculiar exigencies of a religious service. For the devotional part of the service it appeals, in its ordinary forms, too much to the understanding and the pictorial imagination. In devotion thought must distinguish itself just as little as possible from feeling. The prayer must carry the mind, not instruct it; and such is the way in which music serves. In the hymn and anthem and mass, the words are in some degree poetical, but here their main value lies in their relation to the music. They make singing possible, and they interpret the sense of the composition; but essentially the effect is not theirs. In the psalm we have a species of poetry which can be used with some devotional profit without music; yet even so, to be devotional, it must be written and delivered in the spirit of a song. But as compared with the song, it stands at a disadvantage; for it can neither make an equally effective appeal to emotion, nor exercise the same unifying influence upon the congregation. This is not to deny, however, that there is a more reflective side of devotion where the psalm and similar compositions have their place. As regards the preaching side of the service, the address to the understanding is there quite in place; but the independent use of poetry then meets with another difficulty, namely, that he who delivers poetry well must lose his personality in it, becoming either an actor or a mere reader, either of which is, from the standpoint of preaching, intolerable. Unquestionably, however, there is a poetical contingent among the legitimate resources of the pulpit. The preacher, in the nature of the case, must handle ideals; and, with a temperament poetic in

the slightest degree, he will be sure to treat them in a more or less poetic spirit. This is entirely proper, so only that he never lose his personal grip upon the audience. The poetry of preaching, then, as of devotion, is subordinated poetry, not poetry as it develops itself in simple obedience to its own genius. Thus from an artistic point of view the office of poetry in the service becomes a rather inferior, though not an unworthy, one.

Returning at length to music, we find it the most vital among the artistic elements of a religious service. It excels in devotional quality, because it has power to vehicle an inward disposition without requiring a sensible effort of the understanding or distracting the attention with vivid pictures, and because it knows how to touch the deepest and finest veins of feeling. It has the additional advantage of a high social capacity. It must not be overlooked, however, that its social quality is of a peculiar kind; it is not that of conscious and purposed interchange, but that in which a group of individualities melt together. In the former case there is a certain competition of personalities, the advances of one mind to another and the welcome or resistance of the other; sometimes in moral attack or defence, sometimes in a rivalry of wits, sometimes in the mutual invitation and compliance of reciprocal affection. The sociality of music most resembles the last, yet is something distinctly different. In concerted singing, and also in hearing, the company forgets both its antipathies and sympathies, and consents for the time to be one on the basis of a committal to the same current of feeling. While it is granted that this form of communion would not be adequate to all the purposes of religious fellowship, even in the sphere of devotion, yet a large employment of it is essential to the best success of united worship. The spoken prayer supplies to devotion a suitable body of distinct ideas. But devotion has also a feeling side, and is not complete without that perfect blending of fraternal hearts in reverence, praise, and aspiration, of which music is the natural artistic medium.

As a resource of preaching—using the term broadly—it can hardly be denied that music has also a certain vocation, somewhat as poetry has in the field of eloquence. Yet its precise function here may easily be misunderstood. So soon as a song undertakes to advocate a certain opinion, or urge to a certain course of action, it begins to lose the power of music. On the other hand, when it merely realizes through emotion the practical, not the theoretic, significance of a doctrine, or when it merely awakens the group of impulses suitable to a certain course of action, it remains within the musical domain. The preacher as such cannot be a musician as such. The preacher must keep his personality bearing upon his hearers. The musician must lose his personality, except in the sense of establishing an identity of feeling between himself and his audience. Strictly with this understanding, music may fulfil an office in persuasive address. But between this use and the devotional there is no hard-and-fast line. As Mr. Haweis says, “There is a grace of hearing as well as a grace of singing; there is a passive as well as an active side of worship.” To this passive side of worship is intimately related the right use of music in persuasion. The mode of affecting the mind is the same, the theme different. In one case the subject is distinctly worshipful, relating directly to God; in another, the feeling is to refer to the church, or a needy world, or to temptation, or affliction, or personal guilt. The use of a proper musical address is quite in keeping with the spirit of the art, as well as an important instrumentality; and together with the cultivation of the “grace of hearing” it deserves greater attention in the churches. If we were to study the uses of the arts in private devotion, there would be some changes in the result, which it is not necessary here to note.

We must now give our attention briefly to the large and splendid field of religious art outside of the immediate uses of the church. Here, while the theme is still religious, it is not so treated as to meet the special demands of worship. In this department the relative fitness of the several arts appears

in a quite different light. The objections against sculpture and painting largely disappear. Painting especially has the capacity to treat worthily a great number of ideal and historical religious subjects, including a great part of the characteristic scenes in the life of Christ. A statue of Jesus, however, would hardly be tolerable. Viewed as edifying but not devotional works, many originally ecclesiastical pictures are justly cherished by multitudes who would not find them useful in worship. For a distinctively religious architecture apart from the church, there seems to be, except perhaps in monumental works, no very wide sphere. But for poetry, again, the field is both legitimate and rich—witness the great religious epics, and the numerous company of religious lyric and didactic poems. So music in turn finds here a splendid province, most notably, but not exclusively, in the form of sacred oratorio.

In the field of general religious art, as distinguished from that which is special to worship, only painting and poetry can be compared with music. Noble as are the capacities of religious painting, it suffers under limitations which exclude it from the highest service. While unquestionably a certain religious impression may be conveyed through a landscape, yet the religious power of painting must lie mainly in the representation of the human form and face. But the human body, if ever quite adequate to express the soul, is, at any rate, often governed by a power other than that of the spirit, which incapacitates it to reveal the spirit's actual estate. Painting can, if it wishes, depict a mortal agony or a haggard corpse; but it cannot in the same figure exhibit the transport of self-sacrificing love or the triumph of the immortal spirit. Hence Calvary, and perhaps Gethsemane, ought to be reserved for the two arts which least need the flesh as the index of the spirit, namely, poetry and music. And for the finest competency, especially in these most spiritual and tender situations, music must, of the two, still have the precedence. For it is capable of touching the chords least inured to exposure, and yet with a delicacy which could not

injure the most subtle fibre, whereas poetry has not the same immediate inwardness, but must avail itself of symbols bearing distinct marks of the earth. These comparisons, however, must not be taken as depreciative of all arts other than music, even in the religious sphere. Each art corresponds to a special susceptibility and capacity of the human mind, and each has a place which no other can fill. And each also, especially of the last three, has a necessary place among religious arts; and yet "one star differeth from another star in glory."

Barely an allusion can be made to the confirmation which the history of music affords to the above analytic showing of its affinities. Music in any large sense did not exist prior to that great movement of self-discovery which manifested itself in the revival of letters and the Reformation. The people of Europe at length became sensible of their own inward powers and rights, began to rebel against conventionality and authority, to appropriate whatever was congenial in the creations of earlier ages, and to create for themselves out of their own spirits. Religion became subjective, each man questioned his own heart, formalism lost its hold. The more objective arts had reached their first Christian culmination, in the Gothic and other forms of architecture, in the great masters of modern sculpture and painting, in the Renaissance and Elizabethan literatures, before music reached its majority. But the deepening self-consciousness could no longer forego the expression of itself in so spiritual a medium. Originating from the introspective habit of monasticism, the art found its later and fuller development in the inward freedom and activity of Protestant Germany. It is the own precious daughter of a mature, reflective, and liberated Christian intelligence.<sup>3</sup>

It remains to say that the interest of Christianity in music does not end with that music which is specifically religious; just as its interest in science does not end with theology and

<sup>3</sup>For a fuller treatment of this topic, see *Haweis, Music and Morals*, p. 41 ff.

ethics. Christianity, rightly conceived, rejoices in the healthful exercise and prosperous development of the human soul in all its normal susceptibilities and powers. The moral and spiritual functions cannot be isolated from the remainder of our endowments, but their fulfilment is in the midst of, and through, the whole life. Hence Christianity ought to encourage the cultivation of music, as indeed of all the arts, in all its wholesome uses, even if denominated secular.

*[To be concluded.]*