

existence of a collection of rhythmical songs which were composed "from the beginning."

In the 15th verse, from its connexion with the preceding, it is supposed by some that the apostle speaks of himself as possessing the same gift and using it for the edification of the Church. "What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the Spirit and I will sing with the understanding also." "Hence we gather, says Alford, that the two departments in which the gift of tongues was exercised were prayer and praise. On the day of Pentecost it was confined to the latter of these." The passage plainly shows that singing was from the beginning a part of Christian worship.

In the epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians, written about the same time, during Paul's imprisonment at Rome, we have almost in the same words, exhortations in regard to the service of song, which indeed form positive and permanent laws on the subject—connecting it with the influence of the Spirit—as to be engaged in with delight as an expression of gladness of heart—as a great means for the edification of others, and as a manifestation of heartfelt devotion to God. Eph. v. 18, 19. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

In contrast with the excitement of intoxication they were to seek to be "filled with the spirit," not merely to enjoy it abundantly, as a vessel filled to overflowing. In contrast with the temporary and degrading exhibition produced by wine, this would fill them with genuine elevation of Spirit, fullness of joy and permanent peace. In the excitement of drunkenness the tongue is loosed and often finds expression in polluted language, and not unfrequently in Bacchanalian songs, which are often Satan's chosen instrument for corrupting others. But filled with the spirit, their joy would find expression in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, by which they would

promote each others spiritual good, ("speaking to yourselves,"—"teaching and admonishing one another" Col. iii. 11.) From the expression "speaking to yourselves," and from the words "in the heart to God," in the next clause, some have supposed that it is only silent singing in the heart is required, and have therefore denied that singing God's praise with the voice is to be observed in New Testament times. Even as the words stand, this interpretation will commend itself to few. Silent singing would scarcely come up to the teaching and admonishing of the parallel passage. But all the best critics agree that the word translated "to yourselves," should be translated here as it is in Col. iii. 16, "one another." It is the same word that is used in Eph. iv. 32, where no person would propose to render "forgiving yourselves" for "forgiving one another." Some supposes that it refers to *responsive* singing or chanting. We know several of the psalms were composed to be sung in this manner, and that very early in the Christian Church the practice existed, but it seems, as Alford remarks, too much to find it in this passage.

The distinction between the titles, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, has been differently explained. Hodge says, "the early usage of the words appear to have been as loose as that of the corresponding English terms. A psalm was a hymn and a hymn a song, still there was a distinction between them as there is still." The word psalm, says Dr. Eadie, is according to its derivation a sacred song chanted to the accompaniment of instrumental music. This specified idea was lost in course of time, and the word retained only the general sense of a sacred poetical composition and corresponds to the Hebrew *mizmor*." It is generally agreed that "hymns" denoted *praise songs* answering to the Hebrew *tehilim*, a title applied to such psalms as the 145th, in which the praise of God is the main subject. The song or ode, says Alford, is the general name for all Lyrical poetry, and applies especially to such effusions as persons use in a state of drunkenness. The Christian's ode is to be spiritual, inspired by that fullness of the spirit which is in him."