

may be regarded as the exuberant fragrance of a plant, diffusing itself sunward, prayer may be conceived of as the absorption of the sunbeam necessary to its life and growth. Both praise and prayer are exercises of the Christian graces. Both imply communion with God. But prayer is representative of the sacrifice on the altar waiting for the descent of the holy fire that is to consume it; while praise is the hot glow of that sacrifice already on fire, and radiating heavenward.

But while we have been at some pains in this way to bring before the mind a true idea of the spirituality of praise as it should be offered to God, it may not be out of place to give a more concise definition of it.

*Definition.*—The praise of Christian worship is the holy joy, love, gratitude, adoration, etc., of a sanctified heart appropriately expressed to God; that is, expressed by those powers of voice, etc., which God has given man for the purpose of expression.

True praise may be expressed through the medium of speech or song, or in the heart, without either; but as our lips are part of our physical nature given us for expression, it is quite suitable that we should use the voice as an expression, not as a part of praise. And when we praise God in concert with others, it is absolutely necessary that we should make this use of the lips in order to promote concert of thought and feeling with our fellow-worshippers. In praise also, the lips must be used in song, as song affords the only method in which a number of voices can be kept in concert; and besides, song suitably expresses the praise of the heart. A concert of voices in mere prosaic speech means a repetition of Babel, and that as a medium of praise in the church, is impossible.

It follows from these things that concert of voices in prayer without confusion is impracticable, and the prayers of the people have to be led by the voice of the minister alone. If prayers could always be sung, then all the congregation might pray aloud; but this would require a new song, expressive of the particular wants of every occasion, to be composed by the minister every week; and besides being set to music, copies would have to be printed and distributed in the pews every Sabbath, a work that neither minister nor people would be capable of accomplishing, however willing. But we must remember here besides, that the natural language of prayer is not song but prosaic speech. Prayer is the earnest, impatient outcry of a needy soul. It is abrupt and anxious in its language, and while appropriately expressed in prosaic speech, it has usually little or no harmony with the slow, measured cadences of song; while praise, on the contrary, is the satisfied, leisurely outflow of the soul, and finds its natural expression in the soft, solemn, or long-drawn sonorous utterance of song. The mental state of prayer is best expressed by speech; the mental state of praise is best expressed by song.

We would not wish it to be inferred from these arguments that we countenance, in any way, the same silence on the part of the worshipper during praise as in prayer. We can all praise God aloud in concert through song, the natural language of praise, but we cannot all pray aloud to God in concert through speech, the natural language of prayer, without absolute confusion.

There should always be concert in the gatherings of the Lord's people; and this concert is always best promoted by outward expression when it is possible; when it is not possible without confusion, as in the case of prayer, it is secured by the voice of the minister alone. It is always natural to give outward expression to the thoughts and feelings, and God has provided in His Church full scope to all that is instinctive and natural to our hearts, so far as is consistent with decency and order.

With these preliminary explanations as to the nature of praise, we may now examine still more particularly how sound or vocal expression stands related to it.

There are just three relations in which melody, song, or sound can be con-