

joined to particular music, and intended to be sung from beginning to end, on particular occasions—showing how much better the Hebrews understood the laws of association, and managed matters, than we do. It must be remembered, at the same time, that these arrangements were made by inspired prophets, and owe their existence and perfection to Divine wisdom.

It is quite unnecessary to rehearse the arrangements made by David, "the sweet psalmist of Israel," Solomon, and the reformers Ezra and Nehemiah, for "the service of song." See 1 Chron. vi. 31: xv. 16: xvi. 4. These instruments are called, in the last quoted chapter, the "musical instruments of God." This expression ought to be well weighed by those who hold extreme unscriptural opinions against instrumental aid, as also the fact that, though the Lord slew Uzzah for thoughtlessly touching His ark, He did not smite that large company of players who led His praise with instruments of such number and variety that we now see the like only in oratorios. When one compares the immense advance of the Hebrews in this matter, compared with other ancient nations, it must be ascribed to the inspired guidance of God's prophets. It was directly the work of the Almighty. What a sublime service must the 24th Psalm have made, as they conducted it, when the one company of choristers cried: "Who is this King of glory?" and the other replied: "The Lord strong and mighty!"

The conducting of social praise in the manner indicated, is authorised by exhortations embodied in the Psalms themselves. While it was the idea upon which they were all planned, and which gave them the name of Psalms, it enters into their matter. The opponents of instrumental aid in social worship, in order to be consistent, should *discontinue* the use of such Psalms as the 57th, 68th, 81st, 87th, 92nd, 98th, 108th, 144th, 149th and 150th. We would direct their special attention to the last Psalm, which no opponent of instrumental aid *can* sing, till he abandons his principles. There is only one case in which the Jews felt that they could not comply with the instruction of this inspired Psalm book, and follow the customs of their fathers. This was when they were in Babylon, and hung their harps upon the willows that grew by the banks of the Euphrates. Speechless with grief, they could neither sing nor play in God's praise. In this respect, we have been much worse off than they; for our captivity has been of much longer duration (300 years), and, while our songs are either unsung or ill-sung, the devil has got our harps. Failing to use the aids introduced by inspired prophets, and probably invented owing to the power of religious ideas, piety has been robbed of its heritage by its own mistaken friends, and sinful pleasure has monopolized them, attracting the people of all classes to the temples of folly, and destroying souls.

There is a large body of evidence in the Old Testament, which we must leave to be followed out by such of our readers as may have become interested in this subject, and hasten to consider what light the New Testament affords. It must be premised that it would be unreasonable to expect much in the circumstances. (1.) Because the service of song in the ancient church was *not typical*, and therefore did not pass away with the abolition of the temple service, but remains valid to the end of the world—yea, forms part of the prophetic descriptions of the church in glory. (2.) Because the inspired history of the Christian Church is the short book of Acts, and that relates solely to the planting of a few churches and their subsequent persecution. (3.) Because, at the corresponding period of the ancient church, we find few traces of those arrangements for the praise of God that were subsequently made. And, (4.), because our Lord and the apostles *instituted little*, leaving whatever was moral and of permanent validity under the ancient dispensation to be perpetuated in the new; and leaving, also, the great doctrines of the gospel to adapt themselves to the sympathies and peculiarities of all nations, and form a new humanity—a Church for mankind.

There are, however, some circumstances worth attention, even in the first days of the Christian Church. Our Lord and His disciples, at the Supper, "sang an hymn." All interpreters are agreed that they sang, on this occasion, the whole or part of the *Hallel*, i. e., the Psalms from the 111th to the 118th. So that it was one or more Psalms; and if it had been sung as in ancient times, it would have had a musical accompaniment; and we must not conclude, without evidence to the contrary, that some of the disciples were not qualified to lead the Psalm in this way. After the deliverance of Peter and John, related in Acts iv., the whole company of believers "lifted up their voice to God with one accord,"—in which, if we find no mention of instrumental aid, we find what is of more importance, a description of the way in which the primitive believers praised God well worth the consideration of silent congregations in modern times. That praise formed an indispensable part of the church service of primitive believers, we learn from allusions in the New Testament, and from the testimonies of the ancients. It was their great characteristic. 1 Cor. xiv. 26: "When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm," &c. The apostle Paul enjoins us, in Eph. v. 19, which we translate as Alford does in his well known Greek Testament forming our highest critical and hermeneutical authority: "Speaking to one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and playing in your hearts," &c. He, as well as other interpreters, understands by "psalms," social songs with a musical accompaniment; by "lyrics," sacred songs without it; and by "spiritual