

this power of expression is small indeed. Certainly the power of general mental expression, if that is looked to alone, as it should be, is not only not assisted but materially hindered by the use of any instrument. For if we use an instrument to swell or augment the volume of sound in praise, then that drowns the articulation of the singers, a thing of greater importance than itself; if we use it either equal to, or less in volume than the human voice, then it augments the sound only to the extent of one good singer, and besides at the same time, from its want of articulation, only mays or renders less distinct the articulation of such as declare God's praise with the superbly expressive powers with which God has furnished them.

If it is mere noise that is wanted, possibly something more suitable than even an organ might be tried; we would suggest a trumpet or even a ram's horn, and allow the blower to make the sound as uncertain as he pleased. But it is not mere noise that is wanted, neither is it mere melody, but pure expressive power of the praiseful feelings of the heart, love to God, joy, gratitude, etc., and this expressive power in the highest excellence abides alone in the songful, God-made voice, which expression the organ, from want of articulation, really hinders more than it helps.

To our mind, the service which an organ is conceived to render in praise is precisely parallel to that of an instrument which might be invented to assist in prayer, viz.: to swell the minister's tones, give sounding emphasis where he gives it, make loud sonorous "Ohs!" where he makes them, and groan as it best can where he groans. It would give sensuous effect to the service certainly, but alas for the expression.

At this stage of our remarks, however, it is proper to observe that, though instrumental music, as compared with vocal, is well nigh useless as a means of general mental expression; yet, as noticed in the first part of our analysis, there is one power which it possesses to a like degree with vocal music, namely, the power of making melody; and in this respect both vocal and instrumental music are alike capable of either stimulating or expressing the æsthetic sense appropriate to it. But the sense of melody, or of beauty of sound, is only one feeling of the mind, and it is purely an æsthetic one, analyzable into no other affection of the mind, and has little or nothing to do with the holy joy, love, admiration, and other pious emotions of a sanctified heart, which constitute praise. Therefore, what stimulates or expresses merely the sense of melody, may by no means excite or express a single emotion of praise. The mere melodious power of voice or instrument, therefore, has nothing to do with praise. It is neither praise itself, nor has it power either to express or stimulate it. Whenever, therefore, we introduce the mere melody-making power, as a something essential in praise, we introduce what is wholly extraneous to it. Mere melody of song is of no more use in praise than mere melody of speech in prayer. Were this not the case the best prayers and the best praise would come not from the greatest piety, but from the best musical talent.

But let us now look more particularly at the essential elements of praise in worship. What is praise?

Praise is the making of melody in the heart. It has its fountain in the human soul. It consists of thoughts and feelings. It is the holy joy, love, gratitude, adoration, etc., of a sanctified heart moving upward to God under the stimulation of God's Word and Spirit; the fragrance of a pious soul under the warming glow of God-sunshine returning heavenward to the sun himself.

The materials of praise are not made up of sounds at all. They are composed of devout thoughts and feelings. Prayer is felt need or desire expressed to God; praise is felt fulness and gratitude expressed to God. The former implies vacuity in the creature and inflow from the Creator; the latter implies offering and outflow from the creature returning to the Creator. While praise