

## Our Contributors.

### THE CHOIR.

T. TURNBULL, I

(Concluded).

About the close of this century an island in the diocese of Nismes became known as Psalmody Island, because of a monastery on it founded by Corbilla, a Syrian monk.

He belonged to an order established at Antioch in Syria, at an earlier date, whose social work was to preserve in their monasteries a perpetual psalmody. One Alexander established under the auspices of Gennadius, patriarch of Constantinople, a similar order, called the Sleepless, because the praises of God had to be sung perpetually—day and night, the singers succeeding each other without interruption. Great care was exercised that no one fell asleep during these services. Sometimes they plaited straw to keep from it and a man was often engaged to walk about the choir with a lantern, who, when one was discovered napping, thrust it into his face to awaken him.

Already the word "choir" had lost its original signification, and was also applied to the place where the canons, or singers, and the priests sang and performed the ceremonies of religion. This part of the sacred edifice was at first separated from the altar, elevated in the form of a theatre, and enclosed on all sides with a balustrade. On either side a pulpit was placed in which the epistle and Gospel were sung or chanted.

The style of music and praise just described continued to the time of Gregory the Great (540-604) with little alteration. This distinguished prelate was a great musician. He revised and added other modes and scales to the Ambrosian method, thereby laying the foundation for the science of music in use at the present day. He introduced the responsive chant, and established a school for church music, which was in existence at Rome as late as the ninth century.

Besides, this active pope collected the musical fragments of such ancient hymns and psalms as the first fathers of the church had approved of and had recommended to the primitive Christians. These he methodized, and arranged, in what seemed to him to be the best order, and the result of his labours was soon adopted by the chief part of the western Church and continued for a long time at Rome. He was thus a compiler rather than a composer of ecclesiastical music, for chants and hymn tunes had been established in the Church long before his day.

Choirs had already been considered an important adjunct of public praise.

The *cantores* were singers enrolled in the canon, or catalogue of the clergy, to whom the office of singing in the church was restricted. The duty of these cantores seems to have been to regulate and encourage the ancient psalmody and hymnology of the church. It was found by experience that the vast masses of the people were either quite ignorant of music, or quite untrained in it, and were not fit to perform the service of praise without some to instruct and guide them. As a necessary consequence this order of men were set apart for the singer's office.

Over the cantores, or choir, a monitor, *prænuuntiator*, archicantor, or precentor, was placed. The psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs were divided up so that the antiphonal style of praise could be rendered. The precentor generally chanted or sang the first half of the verse, and the choir and people joined in and sang the rest. These precentors formed a class by themselves in large congregations, as many as twenty-six were attached to the church of Constantinople during the sixth century.

In the western Church only one was employed in a congregation with an assistant or substitute if required, who had charge of the musical portion of the service and conducted it himself. He gave out the psalm that was to be sung from the desk or pulpit and used a baton to beat time like a modern leader of an orchestra or chorus.

Having found that choirs were a recognized part of the post apostolic age,—if not the apostolic itself—it may be necessary to trace the history of musical instruments in the service of praise.

Psalmody was composed for their use and was always understood to require them, but this was not the case with hymns nor spiritual songs.

They were simply to be sung.

The early Christians were constantly impoverished by persecution, and were often obliged to hold their assemblies in secret and in darkness, so that they could not think of a magnificent service of praise.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that there were no instruments used in their public worship. In the Jewish mind the disuse of these would naturally lead to the prohibition of them, since that portion of the Christian Church looked upon the ritual of the Mosaic economy as superannuated.

Again, the instruments then in use were associated with the licentious and indecent customs of a dissolute society, and the knowledge of this would naturally lead the church to reject them.

It is said that many of the early writers condemned musical instruments.

Towards the close of the second century Clemens Alexandrinus, a presbyter of Alexandria, admitted that the harp or lyric might be used without blame in the private devotional exercises of the Christians, but disapproved of its use altogether in public worship. He explains why they looked with

disfavour upon instruments in worship. Commenting upon Psalm c1, he says: "Where we are commanded to praise God on the psalter, that is, on the tongue, because the tongue is the psalter of the Lord; and to praise him on the harp, by which we must understand the mouth; and to praise him on loud sounding cymbals, by which the tongue is to be understood, which sounds or speaks through the knocking or coition of the lips."

Justin Martyr in the same century states that no instruments were used in the service of praise.

Epiphanius (310-403) considered the flute a diabolical instrument.

Chrysostom in the fourth century and Theodoret in the fifth declared against all kinds as helps to worship.

At what period of the Church's history organs were first introduced is not positively known, but according to Julianus, a Spanish bishop (450 A.D.) it was in common use in the churches of Spain in his time. One is mentioned as being in a church of nuns in the city of Grado before the year 580 A.D.

The introduction of these instruments in the west has been attributed to Pope Vitalian (658-672) but Lorinus makes it of a much earlier date.

These instruments were exceedingly crude at first. In the time of Julian the apostate, in the fourth century, the increase of the number of pipes in the organ necessitated some artificial method of supplying wind, and the ordinary bellows, made of a bull's hide, was adopted. During the fifth century a water pressure was used to steady the supply of wind, but it gradually fell into disuse in the sixth century, when organs were in common use as aids to secular song.

In the eastern Greek Church the use of instruments has never been tolerated.

When the Saxons embraced Christianity in the sixth century, the Gregorian chants were introduced into Canterbury by a monk named Austin, who was sent from Rome by Pope Gregory for that purpose.

Bede, the historian, states that the Britons had been instructed in the rites and ceremonies of the Gallican Church by Germanus and had heard him sing "Alleluiah" many years before the arrival of Austin from Rome.

It does not appear that the ancient British churches used any music in their services, and from the few remains of some of these, preserved it would seem that no provision had been made for a choir at all. When Archbishop Theodore ascended to the see of Canterbury in 669, music began to flourish among the Saxons. A few years after this, 680, Pope Agatho sent John, the precentor of St. Peter's Church at Rome, to Wearmouth to teach the monks church music. His reputation as a teacher became so great that in a short time the masters of music came to hear him from all the other monasteries in the north and prevailed upon him to open schools for teaching music in other places of the kingdom of Northumberland.

The Gregorian chants then in use in England were never abolished, and traces of them are still to be seen in the Anglican worship of to-day.

At the commencement of the eighth century the use of the organ was appreciated in England and the art of making it became known, but we have no evidences that it was used in the services till a later date. Bede, the historian, who died in 735, describes very minutely the manner in which the psalms and hymns were sung in his day, but is altogether silent about the use of instruments in either churches or convents.

In a celebrated Missal of the tenth century, while giving directions how to perform the several parts of the prescribed service, these words are given to guide the choir in their rendition of the music—"Here the priest begins to sing with the organ." From this we infer that the introduction of the organ into church worship would be some time in the ninth century.

Pepin, father of Charlemagne, saw that the organ was of great service in devotion, and as there were none in either France or Germany in his day, (750), had one sent to him by the Byzantine emperor, which he deposited in the church of St. Cornelius at Compiègne, which was the first introduced into Germany.

Charles the Great in 811, or 812, caused one to be made at Aix-la-Chapelle after the model of the one at Compiègne. During the tenth century organs were used in the most noted churches of both England, Germany, and Italy.

Having traced the history of sacred praise until it became lost in a degenerate church, we pause to winnow the gleanings we have made:—

1. Psalmody must always have the highest place because of its divine origin.

2. Hymnology received the sanction of the apostles, and was in general use among the primitive Christian Church. It has been blessed by the Holy Spirit in all subsequent ages and, therefore, is truly an acceptable form of praise to God.

3. Choirs and choir music have existed in the Christian Church from its formative state, before she became corrupted by the idolatrous innovations and sacrilegious practices of the dark ages, and they were not denounced by the reforming spirit that ruled those who protested against her corruption.

We have the choir, then, as an ancient and divinely favoured institution, and its position, work, and influence, demand our careful attention.

4. However much instruments may aid the human voice in offering acceptable praise to God we have no historical authority for using them beyond the sanction of a worldly-minded and vain-glorious church.

What the apostles and their disciples might have done if their worldly circumstances had been different we cannot tell, but that which must date from the seventh or eighth centuries is clearly a modern introduction compared with the hymns, spiritual songs, choirs, and choir music.

The views of Calvin on this subject are as strong perhaps as anyone would desire:

"When believers frequent their sacred assemblies musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law."

Riclard Baxter, on the other hand, enumerates five reasons why instruments may be used:

"1. God set up church music with instruments long after Moses' ceremonial law, by David, Solomon, etc.

"2. It is not an instituted ceremony merely but a natural help to the mind's alacrity—and it is a duty and not a sin to use the helps of nature and lawful art, as it is lawful to use the comfortable helps of spectacles in reading the Bible.

"3. Jesus Christ joined with the Jews that used it, and never spake a word against it.

"4. No Scripture forbiddeth it, therefore it is not unlawful.

"5. Nothing can be said against it, [that I know of, but what is said against tunes and melody of voice. For whereas they say that it is a human invention, so are our tunes (and metre and versions). Yea it is not a human invention, as the last Psalm and many others show, which call us to praise the Lord with instruments of music."

We close with the fitting words of Morison:—

"Never let it be forgotten that no sounds of the most exquisite harmony whether proceeding from human voices, or from harp of sweetest sound, can be acceptable with Jehovah, if the music of a redeemed heart does not give tone and emphasis to the song of praise."

### THE REV. DR. MACLAREN AND THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER OF REVELATIONS.

"This is the only place where the Scriptures even seem to speak of the resurrections separated from each other by a lengthened period, and here alone is there reference to a reign of Christ with His saints, limited to a thousand years." One-half of the above quotation is correct, and the other is, to say the least, very doubtful. It is quite true that Rev. xx. is the only part of the Word where the length of the time elapsing between the resurrection of believers and that of unbelievers is given. No other part of the Word tells us that a thousand years shall intervene between those two coming events. Nor is that in the least to be wondered at. One statement of the duration is enough. On statement has been sufficient on other matters. In one sense the Lord foretold how long His people should be in bondage in Egypt. That was enough. There was no need for repeating the figures. Daniel said that so many weeks would elapse between the decree to rebuild and restore the temple and the coming of the Messiah. And one statement of the time was enough. It gave currency to the hope of His coming at that time far and wide. Before passing from this point let me call attention to a fact that should have been stated and was not. The thousand years are mentioned several times in the chapter. That fact goes far to guard us against any mistake as arising out of words or numerals. The words quoted seem to imply that this is the only spot in the Word where separate resurrections are spoken of at all. Then if the quotation does not bear that construction, the doctrine is found everywhere throughout the pamphlet. So that it cannot be unfair to meet this point just here. Separate resurrection for believers is found in many places in the Word. The separate resurrection of our Lord was foretold in the Old Testament Scriptures. The separate resurrection of believers is as clearly put forward in the New. Any writer who can argue down the doctrine of a "first resurrection" now could, if he had lived in the days of the prophets, have made as plausible a plea against the rising of the Lord. Is this hope of a second resurrection then to be found in other parts of the book than Rev. xx? It is.

Now for the proof. Our Lord said to a certain benevolent person (Luke xiv. 14): "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Then He said to the Sadducees (Luke xx. 35, 36): "But they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world (age) and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; for neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." These words proclaim the separate resurrection of believers as distinctly as Hosea iii. 2, which reads thus: "After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight," proclaims the separate rising of our Lord. The phrase, "The resurrection" carried with it a definite meaning in the days of our Lord. Words and phrases do come to have conventional meaning. In an able article last summer the *Globe* showed that the word "temperance" had such meaning, and that people were not at liberty to lose sight of that at will. The phrase "the resurrection" had that meaning. It meant a general simultaneous rising of all the dead. In that sense Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and all understood it. In that sense the Sadducees used it in Luke xx. They said: "Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?" "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," said Martha (John xi. 24). In 2 Timothy ii. 18, we read: "Who concerning the truth have