

as intended merely to fill up the time or to give a pleasing variety to the services. As a part of the service of the sanctuary, sacred song has, at least, a two-fold purpose: first, it is a natural and beautiful expression of religious feelings or affections; and, second, it is fitted to awaken or call forth religious affections. It has thus a dual relation: on the one side to God, as the worshippers celebrate His character and works, express their gratitude, confess their sins, or supplicate His blessing; and, on the other side, to man—to those assembled in the sanctuary, as it is fitted to kindle devotional feelings in their hearts, produce deep spiritual impressions upon them, or strengthen and encourage them in the Christian life. Proofs and illustrations of the first-mentioned function need not be given. As to the second, a few words may be allowed (and out of a regard to space limits hints only can be given), as this is an aspect of the subject which has not always been recognized. And yet must not a true conception of the purpose of sacred song include its direct relation to the worshippers themselves? The teachings of many of the Psalms incontrovertibly establish this; and Paul's utterances upon the subject confirm the same view—a view which is likewise amply borne out by experience. •

In its relation to the worshippers, no small importance is to be attached to the fact that it is peculiarly calculated to produce deep spiritual impressions. Truth is sometimes borne home to the heart most powerfully upon the wings of song, which thus becomes one of the great spiritual agencies in moulding life and character. He was a wise and observant man who said, that if he were allowed to make the ballads of a nation he cared not who made the laws.

And how much is sacred song fitted to give strength and encouragement in the toil and battle of the Christian life? Christ sang a hymn with His disciples before He went into Gethsemane—was it to encourage His soul for the agony and conflict there? Paul and Silas, as they lay in prison, comforted their hearts with songs and strengthened themselves for what of trial awaited them. Martin Luther, in those seasons of despondency which came over him in his great work, used to revive his soul in the same way, and cry, "Up, sing a song unto the Lord," and again and again would he sing the xlvith Psalm, which is so full of confidence in God. Many a soul worshipping in God's house has been strengthened and