

song and the sound of instruments. (Sam. v. 14; Is. xxiv. 8; Ps. cxxxvii. 2-4.) That these were also associated with their sacred festivals is evident from such passages as the following,—“Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord.” (Isa. xxx. 29.) “I hate, I despise your feast days:—neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy voice.” (Amos v. 21-23.)

From these scenes of sacred joy the Psalmic poetry of the later ages was developed, and the connexion appears in the fact of so many of the Psalms adopting language referring to the modes of expressing joy among the Hebrews. “The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the minstrels playing with timbrels. “Take a Psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the Psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed on our solemn feast day.” “Let them praise his name in the dance, let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.” “Praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the Psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance. Praise him with stringed instruments and organs (or pipes.) Praise him upon the loud cymbals.”—(Psalm lxviii. 25; lxxxi. 3; cxliv. 3; cl. 3-5.)

Any one examining these and similar Psalms will see that the great idea which they express is that of festal joy, and this is done by referring to the modes in common use among the Hebrews. Some have objected to the introduction of the dance in these passages, and to our ideas it seems incongruous in consequence of dancing now being entirely divorced from religion, and associated with godless pleasure. But with the Hebrews it was not so. To them it was but the natural expression of joy. “Thou hast turned my mourning to dancing.” (See Jer. xxxi. 4-12, already quoted.) We have seen that it was usual on their occasions of national rejoicing.—

Undoubtedly it was commonly used at the Jewish festivals. (See Jud. xxi. 19-21.) And of the same kind was David's dancing at the bringing up the ark to Jerusalem.—The best interpreters agree that “dance” is the proper rendering in these Psalms.—Alexander on the 150th Psalm says, “The timbrel is here accompanied with its inseparable adjunct *dancing*, which might seem misplaced in a list of instruments, and those employed in sacred music, but for the peculiar usages and notions of the ancient Hebrews, with respect to this external sign of joy.”

We did not intend at this stage of our enquiry advertng to any controverted topic. But having referred to these Psalms, we must say a word as to their use in New Testament times. It has been said that unless we have organs in our churches, we cannot express the force of these Psalms, and even some have gone the length of saying, that we should in that case not allow them to be used in the sanctuary. We presume to think that there is considerable assumption in such assertions. Till the seventh century there was no such thing as an instrument of music in christian churches, and the church containing such intellects as Augustine and such hearts as Ambrose used these Psalms as expressive of their devotion. Yet it seems they could not properly express these Psalms and should not have used them in worship till popery in the dark ages invented a machine which will now justify their use in christian worship. If the objection be worth an answer, we may say that if the parties are determined to take such words literally, then let them do so and what follows.—They must have not only the organ, but all kinds of instruments, wind, stringed and pulsatile, (for this is the idea in Psalm 150.) and besides they must have the dance.—Will they tell us that we cannot use Psalm lxviii. in our sanctuary unless according to verse 25 we have in our churches processions of young girls “with timbrels and dance?” But further these psalms are expressive of festal joy. We might show that the modern organ is not expressive of festal joy. It has no association of the