

members, hopes for, all is here expressed in burning words that deepen and intensify the feelings which they body forth. Therefore it is that, in these divine lyrics, the thousand-voiced heart of the Church has, in all lands and ages, found expressive utterance; and that for thousands of years, they have been wafting the sigh and the prayer from myriads of hearts. Wonderful are the depth and range of these sacred anthems which touch every cord of the heart. They rise jubilant on the wings of adoration and praise; they sink down until they sound the lowest depths of penitence and sorrow: they soar in lark-like bursts of gladness; they breathe the groans of the wounded spirit, over which have gone all God's waves and billows. Now they fall soft as the dew, tender as the whispers of love; and again they roll along in words of thunder, suited to the voices of a great multitude, and peal forth terrible as the Almightiness of God. To abandon these glorious Psalms were to give up our richest spiritual inheritance—to cut off one of the most valuable sources from which the divine life is sustained. There is no fear of such a catastrophe, so long as spiritual life is throbbing in the Church. Those who dread such a result from the use of hymns, cannot surely have estimated aright the divine power of the Book of Psalms. Let Psalm and Hymn continue to intermingle, until the Church shall take up "the Song of Moses and the Lamb"—a prolongation of both—in the temple of God above.

The introduction of the Christian dispensation was marked by an outburst of sacred song. Mary, the mother of Jesus, sang the first Christian hymn. With a heart full of human love, and enraptured with religious hope, the happy rejoicing mother raised her "magnificat," saying, "my soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." The voices of Zacharias and the aged Simeon joined in the morning songs of redemption—the one rejoicing in "the day spring from on high," the other departing in peace when he had gazed upon him who was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles

and the glory of his people Israel." In the fourth Chapter of Acts, 24th verse, we have a record of one other New Testament hymn. Jesus had ascended triumphant: the promised Comforter had come: the Church of Christ had taken visible form, in Jerusalem. The fury of persecution speedily burst forth and the apostles were put in the dungeon. On their release, they met with the little company of believers, and then "with one accord"—in choral melody—"they lifted up their voice to God" in a triumphant hymn. It was the Church's first hymn, and was born of her first persecution. We have no further record of holy song, until, in the visions of the Apocalypse, the veil is withdrawn, and we obtain, for a moment, some glimpses of the upper sanctuary. There we behold the sea of glass, the white-robed worshippers, the angels round about the throne, the mighty multitude whose voice is as the sound of many waters; and the burden of their song is, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, now living and reigning for ever and ever. It is the ever new song of Redemption; the song that Moses and David sang—that the early Church sang—that the angels and spirits of just men made perfect re-echo in loftier strains, along heaven's high arches—a song that is eternal and inexhaustible as Christ, its theme.

But when the Church was planted, and was growing up, a living temple of God in the world, did the good news of redemption, as it flew from heart to heart, strike out no choral bursts of praise, in the infant Churches? As the cross advanced triumphantly, gladdening the world, and scattering the fogs of paganism, was it welcomed with no songs of rejoicing? Did no rills of holy melody gush forth? In I. Corinthians, 14th Chapter, 26th verse, a light is thrown on this point. There we find that a provision was made, among other spiritual endowments, for the new Psalmody of the Christian Church—a striking testimony to the importance of praise. Whilst some members of the Church, under the teaching and influence of the Spirit, edified their brethren with