

THE SERVICE OF SONG IN THE SANCTUARY.

SACRED music, *i.e.* music employed for sacred or religious purposes, is the highest form of music, as sacred poetry is the highest form of poetry. In the one, the musical art obtains its loftiest expression; in the other, the poetic art most nearly reaches its ideal. And when these are combined, as in sacred song, we have something which appeals to us with unusual power, and which easily wins a high place in our regard. Martin Luther uttered a truth to which all hearts assent when he said, "Music is one of God's fairest gifts to man. . . . It is no invention of ours. It is a gift from God. I place music next to theology. I can see why David and all the saints put their divinest thoughts into song."

There are evidences that song was used in Divine worship from the earliest times. From incidental Scripture references, it seems to have formed a part of the stated worship of God even in pre-patriarchal days, and, coming down the stream of sacred history, this part of worship gradually emerges into greater prominence till, in the time of David and Solomon, it was one of the most notable features in the services of the sanctuary. And this sweet stream of sacred song flowed down through the Church to New Testament times when, instead of being checked, it was given a fresh impulse. The Messiah was ushered into the world with song, as angels sang his natal hymn to the astonished shepherds on Bethlehem's plains by night—a song that was yet to waken a sleeping world. It is also a significant fact that Christ, after having instituted the Supper, brought that solemn season to a close by singing a psalm or hymn, the last public act of worship in which He engaged with His disciples before He suffered thus being a song of praise. In the services of the Apostolic Church praise continued to have a well-defined and prominent place, as is clearly shown in the epistles of Paul; and, to leave the continuity unbroken, John, in the Revelation, beheld the Church above worshipping God in a service of song.

And this conspicuous place given by God to sacred song was, doubtless, in order that it might serve a definite and important end. It is a low and erroneous notion of sacred song, and one which would nullify it altogether, as a part of worship, to regard it