

also in reference to music and song as it existed among the Hebrews. Romaine on Psalmody is the only thoroughly practical treatise on the subject which we have seen, and its wide circulation would we doubt not be a benefit to the christian church.—These with one or two tracts published by the Presbyterian Board are about all we have been able to get hold of on the subject.

It would appear that in the present day, circumstances are directing attention to the subject, rendering a full examination of it necessary, the results of which we cannot doubt will be beneficial. On the one hand those churches which have adhered to the simple practice of singing God's praise, which all candid enquirers acknowledge to have been the only mode in the early church, are now agitated by attempts to introduce human inventions, partly we believe in consequence of this neglect of the ordinance, paying so little attention to having it conducted in a becoming manner, and we fear still less to the spiritual objects of the institution. On the other hand, those churches which have exhibited the outward forms of praise in highest perfection are far from being satisfied with this position. So much attention has been directed to what is merely external, that the real nature of the ordinance has often been entirely lost sight of. This has been the case more especially in the United States. The most of the churches there are supplied with instruments of music of tone and power proportioned to their wealth, the finest voices and the most accomplished musicians that money can procure, are obtained, and in the skill and beauty of its musical performances, for so we must call them, the church rivals the concert and the opera. But the result has been, that very commonly the very idea of worship is scarcely recognized. The churches themselves are called Sunday operas, and people go to them to enjoy music vocal and instrumental of the finest quality, and retire from them not meditating on God's words, but with such fancies as a wedding march, or some similar piece of music played by a skilful organist can suggest. One has only closely to observe the state of feeling among

earnest christians there, to see that there is a dissatisfaction with the present state of things and a yearning for something more in accordance with the scriptural idea of praise. The editor of a leading religious newspaper, the organ of one of those bodies, which permits instrumental music in public worship, in publishing some remarks of another writer against the use of such even as aids to singing, says—"His comments seem worthy of attention now that *all serious minds among us are so much exercised upon the matter of praise in the sanctuary.* Is it true that an instrument is only a crutch? Is the resort to these much praised "helps" a mistake and a failure? If so, surely it is true that the people should know it."

We have already discussed the question of instrumental music in a constitutional point of view, showing that in a Presbyterian church, such a change in its worship as established for three hundred years, and which all its office-bearers have sworn to observe, cannot be made except by the voice of the whole church, as represented in the highest ecclesiastical assembly.—This, however, we by no means regard as deciding the question, whether our present system should be maintained or not. That is a question which should be discussed on higher principles, than mere church law. "Prove all things hold fast that which is good." We therefore design discussing the whole subject of praise as a christian ordinance, and in doing so will first examine it historically, as it has existed in the Patriarchal, Jewish and New Testament ages of the church.

Of the service of song in the Patriarchal dispensation we have but little information, principally we believe because we have scarcely any distinct account of the institutions of that epoch. We know that there was annual sacrifice and prayer, and there are statements from which we may justly infer the observance of a Sabbath, and social or family worship. But during these ages we have nothing either historical or preceptive on the subject of singing in worship. At this however we need not feel surprised as the religious services of