

ning into it at present. In fact, it is quite likely that a majority of worshipping people to-day, would tell us that, on the whole, we Presbyterians have rather erred on the side of having our services too bald and severe, than in having them conducted with too much attention to artistic effect. And still, as we are ever and anon reminded, we have many in our church who object to all instrumental music and to musical *adornment* in any form in our public worship. An extreme case of this kind was met by the writer a summer or two ago in the person of a good old Highlander, living in one of our remote mission fields. He had been visiting a western town in which there are two Presbyterian churches. One of these had an organ, the other had not. Our friend, by mistake, strayed into the former on Sabbath, and did not discover his error till the service commenced. Soon, to his horror, the organ began to play. He did not think it would be proper to leave the building then; but, said he: "I prayed the Lord if ever I might get out of that place alive, to think of that thing playing in the church and on a Sunday!"

Such a case as this would probably represent a position, the very opposite of that represented in the instances adduced by Dr. Robinson. But it is of neither of these extremes that we wish to speak here. The first is so evidently a distortion and misconception of the very idea of public worship, that it only needs to be mentioned to be condemned by every right thinking person; while the other, though it is still supported by men whose character and position certainly entitle their opinions to respect, is gradually losing ground, and in all likelihood will soon die out.

But there is another position, taken by many good, thinking people, to which it is more especially the object of this article to call attention. We

are told by some, that they have no objection to the use of an organ or choir as a means of leading the singing of a congregation; but they ask us what end is served by the anthems of the choir, or by solos from different members of it. They inquire what part these have in the worship of God, or what there is of praise or edification in the voluntaries of the organist. Are not these anthems, solos, voluntaries, etc., intended, or at all events do they not serve, merely to afford pleasure to the congregation, and gratify the taste of those musically inclined? And is not this out of place in a church service? Is it not even rather inconsistent with the Christian idea of Sabbath observance—the observance of a day on which we are to honour the Lord, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words?

This is surely a matter worth considering. Let us see what can be said in answer to these questions, and in favour of introducing these musical performances into our church service. And first of all, we must remember that *praise* is not the only thing that sacred singing is intended to secure. Doubtless, it is one of the things; and as far as the service of praise is concerned, the ideal church music is that in which as many of the congregation as possible join heartily. But, as the inspired Psalms show us, it is right and appropriate that God's promises and warnings should be sung for the comfort and edification of one another. Sermons may be sung as well as preached. The story of the ninety-and-nine told in song, has helped to bring more than one soul to the Saviour. And singing, when intended to serve these ends, is even better done by a choir or by one person than by the whole congregation. And surely in all this there is nothing unbefitting God's day or His most solemn worship.