

also contemplates some place of public worship whose acceptable service is the rendering, with sincerity, outward acts indicative of reverence, gratitude and love.

The Book of Psalms, confessedly the universal prayer and praise book of Christendom, is rendered meaningless without the acknowledgment of this principle, e.g. its closing Psalm: "Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the psaltery and the harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals; praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."

II. It is freely acknowledged that the New Testament records the introduction of a new dispensation, or at least a new realization of truths, which had been but dimly seen through types and ritual, the shadows of things to come. Yet there are plain indications that this double aspect of worship is still to be maintained. We know that the apostles frequented the synagogues: Acts xiii. 14; xviii. 4. In the former passage they entered apparently as worshippers, only on invitation rising to proclaim that Jesus was the Christ: "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." xvi. 13 speaks of a *proseucha*, a place where prayer was wont to be made, whither the disciples went on the Sabbath day when in Philippi. There were eucharistic gatherings, 1 Cor. xi. 33, and exhortations regarding the assembling of ourselves together, Heb. x. 25, which receive confirmation in the well-known lines of Pliny, Governor of Bithynia, to his master, the Emperor Trajan, about A. D. 100. The letter is written asking for special directions regarding those who profess Christianity. In it we find the following: "They," i.e. the Christians, "met on a certain stated day, before

it was light, and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ as to a God, binding themselves by a sacrament (*sacramento*), not for the purpose of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up." The "assemblies" at the house (Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19) and in cities point to the fact that not only "in the closet" and by lives of mercy was God worshipped, but in places of concourse also.

III. These gatherings were celebrated by praise, prayer, Scripture reading and exposition, by "sacraments" and mutual salutations. The necessity of such gatherings must appear without any effort to maintain the same when we consider the simple requirements of life, and their objects may be briefly stated as being the cultivation of a reverent and devout spirit, united praise and prayer, Scripture knowledge and mutual edification. Christ's expressed reverence for "His Father's house" when with the whip of small cords he drove from the temple the traffickers, His promise to hear when two or three agreed to ask concerning the kingdom, the singing of a hymn with His disciples as they rose from the Passover supper, the constantly implied duty of edifying one another, all direct us as to the spirit and the work of our public worship and places of gathering.

IV. Nor are we to forget that though, as a matter of ecclesiastical—or shall we say of assembly order—there is a New Testament distinction as to officers in the Church, in the great Christian order we are all "priests unto God." In which connection arises the duty of each one contributing of his or her talent and opportunity to the service of the whole.

How, in the simple matter of public worship, is this to be attained? How render our services devotional without being tedious? instructive, edifying, and at the same time truly attractive?

At present the service of song is the only part in which, added to a reverential bearing and conscientious attendance, the people generally take an active part. Is the one talent given? it is not thereby to be stored up in a napkin; "wicked and slothful servant" is the verdict the Master records over such an act; and much has been done of late years to render this part of the service effectual, yet in