

Prayer and praise are the two main parts of all worship; and it might, perhaps, surprise one who had not considered it, to discover how large a portion of our daily and Sunday services consists of praise. Let me remark, in passing, that possibly, in our private devotions, the element of praise is too little regarded, too little in use. I see no reason why, in this matter, our private and our public prayers should be framed upon a different model. As, in public, we praise and thank God for public mercies, so, in private, surely we have private and personal mercies for which to honour and adore His Holy name. Is it not selfish to be always praying—that is, asking God for something—*only*, and not, at the same time, *praising* Him for blessings already received?

But, to speak more particularly of *public* worship. Are your praises, then, as well as your prayers, *understanding* praises,—*spiritual* praises? Do you try to understand all those portions of Divine Worship which consist of *praise*? Do you study, for example, the Psalms, trying to understand both their direct meaning, and their Christian application? The *Tè Deum* and other canticles; the doxologies and metrical hymns; is the force of all these appreciated by you? If not, how can you be said to praise God, or to sing His praises, with *understanding*? And here, again, remember, it must be not only a reasonable but a *spiritual* service. You must praise God spiritually, as well as pray to Him spiritually. Is it so with you? Do you lean upon the Spirit's help in praise? Do you, in reciting the Psalms of David, seek to make them your own—to make them speak your own wants—your own penitence—your own longings for Divine grace—your own desire for holiness? Do you, in the hymns, throw yourself heartily into them as an act of worship? or, do you simply look upon them as a pleasant break in the monotony of prayer, not as an essential and most spiritual part of the sacred service? Do you, in short, *sing* with the *spirit*, and sing with the understanding also?

These remarks apply, of course, to every member of a congregation. But in what remains I desire to speak chiefly to those who have a principal share in the public service in most churches—the members of the choir.

1. Remember, that your work in the church is not to make a display of your musical attainments, but to sing the praises of the Almighty. God forbid that I should depreciate musical attainments. A taste and love for music are His gift; and you are not only permitted, but bound, to improve the talent entrusted to you by all the means in your power. Remember, however, after all, that it is at the best only a means towards the end, even the setting forth of God's praises in the great congregation. You are to sing, not to *own*, but to God. Your thoughts should be, not about your fellow-creatures, how, by your sweet singing, you may please *them*, but how, by an intelligent, spiritual service, you may make it acceptable unto *Him*.

2. Let there be always *outward reverence of manner*. It is sad to see, as we sometimes do, the members of a choir forgetting themselves, or, rather, forgetting where they are, and what they are about, when their own especial part of the service is over. It is