

the profit of man. Compare for example the relative importance which is attached to the psalmody and to the preaching of the word. The singing of Psalms is of the highest advantage indeed to ourselves, but it aims more directly at the honour of God. The preaching of the word is honouring to God, but it aims more directly at the good of man. Now if there is to be any preference of the one over the other, it should surely be for that which aims more directly at the honour of God. Yet the reverse is the almost universal estimate. How many are there, who, if only they hear an instructive or improving or refreshing sermon, when they attend the house of God, are quite contented, and are comparatively indifferent whether the singing have been hearty or heartless,—good, bad, or indifferent. It is well, very well, that such should be anxious for their own spiritual improvement; but it is not well that they should be so indifferent about the honour of God. We have much need then to be reminded of our great duty to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”; and we need not wonder that, while in this Psalm there is reference to the duties of prayer and of the hearing of the word, to both of which we are earnestly summoned, yet the first place should be given to the duty of singing the praise of God, and that we should be invited with peculiar earnestness to join with spirit in this delightful exercise: “O come let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with Psalms”.

In further considering this subject we would desire, first, to call attention to the fact that God has given us the faculty of consciously praising Him, or (as we may be permitted to call it) the faculty of conscious praise; that the possession of this faculty is in fact our highest dignity, and that its exercise is our highest joy.

God has given us the faculty of conscious praise. All things were made for the glory of God. All His works shew forth His praise. Many praise Him silently; yet with surpassing eloquence. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork”—Sun, moon, and stars all utter His praise.

“What though in solemn silence all  
Move round this dark terrestrial ball—  
What, though no real voice, nor sound  
Amidst their radiant orbs be found—

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