

from the practices of the Romish church. This representation is the result of ignorance or prejudice, or both combined. A very slight acquaintance with the writings of these Reformers, would have shown that their sole rule was the word of God—that their aim was to build up the church according to its principles, and that in regard to every practice, whether for retaining or rejecting, as well as in regard to every doctrine, whether to be held or condemned, the appeal was to its authority alone. In this respect there was a marked distinction between them and the Lutherans. All the Reformed or Presbyterian confessions agree in proclaiming the Scriptures to be the absolute law, the sole rule both of faith and the Christian life, while the Augsburg confession is silent on the subject. Hence the Lutherans have always upheld the Apocrypha, quoting it with deference, and selecting from it texts for their sermons, and have assigned an authority to the church in matters both of doctrine and worship, which Presbyterians entirely repudiated.

In proceeding to organize the new communities, the two parties proceeded on opposite views of the Word of God. "The principle of Lutheranism," says D'Aubigne, "was to preserve in the church all that was not condemned by the word of God, while that of the Reform was to abolish in the church all that is not prescribed by the word of God." This is a most important distinction. The view of the Lutheran is that on which the church of Rome defends all her additions to christian worship. Her plea is that they are not forbidden in the Scripture. It involves the serious errors of denying the sole authority of Christ in his church, and giving to men the right to appoint the modes of his worship, and thus opens the door for the introduction into God's service of any amount of human inventions, denounced in Scripture as will-worship.

Acting on the opposite, and what we regard as the sound principle, that we are only authorized to introduce into the worship of God what he himself has pre-

scribed, the churches of Zwingli and Calvin made a clean sweep of many practices which the Lutherans retained, among others of the use of instrumental music in the public worship of God. It is admitted by intelligent advocates of the practice, that it had no existence in the apostolic church, that it was totally unknown for at least 600 years, and was not generally introduced for some centuries after, when the whole services of the church were reduced to the lowest ritualism, and even then only by the church of Rome, while the Greek church and the other communions separate from her retained in praise the primitive New Testament mode of worship.

A practice which thus in its very origin proclaimed its unscriptural character was not likely to receive much favor from thorough Reformers. Still their appeal was to the word of God, and it was on a close examination of its teachings that they based their conviction of its inconsistency with the simplicity of New Testament worship. They indeed found that it had been part of the temple service during a dispensation of carnal ordinances,—a dispensation characterized by what was outwardly magnificent and splendid, designed during the nouage of the church, to impress the senses of a carnal people. But they found that that dispensation with all its solemn ceremonial and sensuous services had given way to a new dispensation, whose rites were simple and spiritual. What is moral is indeed the same under all dispensations, but the forms of worship are prescribed by God for each period of the church. Looking therefore, to the New Testament for information regarding the mode of worship under it, they found that while it declared the abolition of Old Testament rites, it neither prescribed instrumental music nor authorized its retention, but moreover, in the fact that with the abolition of Old Testament worship, it commanded that our sacrifices of praise should now be the fruit of the lips of God's people, and singing and make melody unto him in our hearts, in reality forbade a return to what it called