

→: OUR BANNER. :←

Vol. IX.

MAY 15, 1882.

No. 5.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP.

BY THE REV. JAMES KENNEDY, NEW YORK

Taking into account that both in this country and elsewhere, in many branches of the Presbyterian Church hitherto regarded as most conservative in matters of order and worship, the lawfulness and propriety of employing instrumental music in the praise we offer has of late been so warmly discussed as in some quarters to be designated "the burning question," it may not be uninteresting or unprofitable to take a calm, sober and temperate view of the matter in dispute, and determine for ourselves the line of the church's duty.

And, of course, in this, as in every other disputed question, there is a positive and a negative side. Those in favor of instruments in worship assume the positive, while their opponents range themselves on the negative. On the former, therefore, the instrumentalists, rests the burden of proof to establish their position and prove their point, namely, that there is a divine warrant for the use of instruments in the worship of God; in which, if they fail, and if the arguments which they advance can be shown to be unreliable and fallacious, then the negative is established without farther argument. If this logical fact were kept more in view in conducting the argument it would narrow the controversy considerably, and not only tend to clearer thinking on the subject, but render unnecessary a great deal of the loose, prolix and often irrelevant writing, with which we have, for years, been afflicted. Ranging ourselves as we do with those on the negative side of this question, we submit that the five following considerations sufficiently meet and set aside all that we have ever seen advanced by way of establishing the positive.

1. It has not been, and cannot be, proved that the use of instru-

mental music in the worship of God, in our day, is warranted by anything in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

In discussing this question the time was when great stress was laid on the argument from the Old Testament. We have been told how, by the express direction of the Spirit, harps, psalteries, and other instruments were employed in temple worship, how the psalms and prophets are full of references to such a mode of offering praise, and how invitations and even commands are given to use such helps to devotion. And, as it is alleged, the divine sanction to such a mode of worship being nowhere in the New Testament withdrawn, or the law repealed, or instrumental helps forbidden, it follows that it is still our privilege, if not our duty, thus to offer our praise. And many a satirical sneer has oftentimes been directed at those who cannot accept these conclusions, because of the apparent inconsistency betwixt their conduct in rejecting the use of instruments and the commands to use them in the psalms which they employ, or as it has been ludicrously put, "that they should consider it to be a grievous sin to do the very thing which the psalms they sing bid them do." It is but fair, however, to say that few of the more intelligent advocates of instruments in praise have ever taken this ground in the argument, while many who once stood on it have abandoned it as utterly untenable. As, however, it is still a favorite argument with many, and as many simple, Bible-loving Christians, who "tremble at his word," may be in danger of being deceived thereby, it may not be out of place to expose its futility. This we do by the short and simple assertion that *the law, once sanctioning instrumental music in the worship of God, instead of being still in force, has been entirely repealed at the introduction of the New Testament dispensation.*

There is nothing on which, to many minds there seems to be greater obscurity than the principle on which we are to regard anything in the Old Testament dispensation to be repealed or otherwise. Some insist that the repeal must be specific and express, others say that if not re-enacted it may be regarded as repealed, others that if neither re-enacted nor sanctioned by approved example it is no longer in force. To all these, in our mind, there are serious objections, and we think a simpler and surer way than any of these may be found of laying down the rule. Although we are not aware that any one has taken this ground, yet we hold that the only true, real and universal rule of judging is this: *That all the laws and institutions of the Old Testament economy are repealed and abolished except the MORAL NATURAL.* AS every one knows there are two forms of moral law and of consequent moral obligation. These are the *moral natural* and the *moral positive*. The former is founded on the *nature* of God, hence it is of perpetual and universal obligation on all moral beings, God himself included. The latter is founded on the *will* of God, and is morally binding for the purposes and for the time or which it was appointed. And to the latter, the moral positive, be-

longed all the typical, ceremonial and ritual institutions of the old economy. Now as all the ends and purposes contemplated in these found their accomplishment in Christ and his work, "who is the end of the law," so their continuance also terminated in and with him. Hence the only element in the old economy, now perpetuated in the laws and institutions of the Old Testament, is the *moral natural*. Of this we have many interesting examples. For example, the law of the Sabbath. This belonged to both forms of moral law. The obligation to consecrate to God one-seventh part of our time belonged to the moral natural, but the special day of the week to be so consecrated belonged to the moral positive. Hence the obligation to keep Sabbath is universal and perpetual, whilst as to the particular day, being dependent on the will of God, a change has been made therein. The sacraments or seals of the covenant also, like the Sabbath, belong to both forms of moral law. In their ends and signification they are moral natural, but in the symbols, mode and time of administration they are moral positive; therefore in the one aspect they are continued from the Old Testament but changed in form in the New. In the same way many of the judicial laws given by Moses are still binding and perpetual in their precept though not in their penalty, because the precept was moral natural and the penalty moral positive. Again, the recognising the children of believers as belonging to the church, by administering to them a seal of the covenant, we retain from the Old Testament on the ground of being moral natural, being implied both in the precept and promise of the fifth commandment. So it may be said of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, vowing, covenanting, &c. They all belong to the moral natural and flow directly from our relation to God. In fact the distinction everywhere prevails, and we think it would be impossible to point to one single thing in the laws and institutions of the former dispensation, except the moral natural, now perpetuated by way of moral obligation.

Now to apply this principle to the matter in dispute. If instrumental music in worship come down to us from the Old Testament dispensation through an unrepealed law, it must belong to the moral natural, and therefore be universally and perpetually binding. This, however, will carry consequences for which we may not be prepared. To praise God with instruments will not then be a matter of liberty or choice, but of moral, unchangeable obligation, and to neglect it is to sin against God. Consequently Christ and the Apostles and the early Christians were all transgressors, and not only all who have *refused*, but all who have *neglected* this element of praise are all morally culpable and liable to the punishment due to disobedience. And then when we consider that other things, as shouting, clapping hands, dancing, walking in procession, putting on sackcloth, and rending the garments, are all enjoined in the Old Testament, with and no specific repeal in the New, they also must be still obligatory. Then what transgressors Christ

and his Apostles and we all have been! But that instrumental music in worship, any more than the other things specified, was not moral natural a moment's reflection will suffice to make clear.

Instrumental musical performances are spoken of in the Old Testament in four aspects, namely, *inspirational, sanative, festive and ritual*. Of the first we have examples in 1 Sam. x. 5-13, and 2 Kings iii. 15. Of the second in David's playing before Saul. Of the third in the statements of Laban, Gen. xxxi. 27 and Ex. xv. And the fourth, the ritual, we have in the temple service from the days of David. Now that the true character of the instrumental service in the temple was ritual, ceremonial and typical, is plain from two facts: First. In its performance it was strictly Levitical, that is confined to the Levites, as much as the priesthood was Aaronic, or confined to the family of Aaron. And that was the reason why instruments of music, while in the temple, were never found in the synagogue, because the persons conducting the service in the synagogue were not necessarily Levites, but might belong to any tribe or family, and therefore the use of instruments there would have been as much out of place as it was in place among the typical things of the temple. This also explains why the captives did not use their harps in Babylon but "hung them on the willows." And, secondly, another fact clearly shows the ritual and typical character of this service in the temple, namely, that many of the instruments used were not for music at all, or intended either for tune or accompaniment, and throughout the Scriptures are used in a figurative sense. Such instruments as trumpets, cymbals, and timbrels were not for music but for noise. This is apparent when we consider that neither the Israelites, nor indeed any other ancient nation, had any knowledge of *harmony* in music. Their highest performances reached no higher than *melody*, being simply unisonal, only varied by the antiphonal, or singing in response. Therefore many of the instruments employed in the temple could not possibly be intended for music, or any example to us in the worship of God. That they did serve a twofold purpose, one of these being purely typical and figurative, will be afterwards shown, but at present we only wish to establish the fact that in the temple the instrumental service could neither, as exclusively Levitical in its performance and non-musical in many of its parts, be anything but ritual and ceremonial in its nature and ends.

But it has been often asked, If the instrumental service in the temple were purely typical, what did it typify? If only figurative, of what was it a figure? Well, we think the place and meaning of such instrumental performances in the temple, during the latter part of the old dispensation, are not hard to determine. They were not Mosaic but came in on this wise: During the unsettled state of Israel in the wilderness, and often during the period of the Judges, to the Levites was assigned the onerous task of carrying the tabernacle and its furni-

ture from place to place, whenever they were to be removed. But when God chose Mount Zion as his residence these were to be moved no more, and then *in place of the service from which they were thus relieved*, other services were imposed, and among them leading the temple service of praise with voice and instruments. (1 Chron. xxiii. 24-32.) And it is to be observed that this change was not brought in by a priest or inspired prophet but by an inspired theocratic king, who had got new revelations about the descent of the Messiah, of whose kingdom a typical likeness was to be realized in David's conquests and in the splendor of Solomon's reign. The instrumental service, therefore, belonged to the Davidic era, and, both in its introduction and use, shadowed forth most important truths, and also served some practical purposes peculiar to that period—

First, in the manner of its introduction it shadowed forth a manifestation of Christ in relation to his kingdom in the world, not made hitherto by any type. It is observable in the Old Testament that from Adam to Malachi there was an advancing clearness and fulness of typical and prophetic representations and manifestations of what Christ and his kingdom would be. Now Hosea says, "By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt and by a prophet was he preserved," and like this figure was Christ raised up, the prophet-Saviour of his Church. And Moses the prophet consecrated by divine direction a priesthood which was a shadow of Christ, the everlasting priest. But in David, the inspired theocratic king, we have a new typical element, representing Christ in an office and work which the Mosaic system failed to exhibit, namely, Christ's Kingly Headship in the Church, authoritatively appointing and ordering all her institutions. Thus the Davidic period showed an advance on all previous periods, as to the prophet and priest was added the king, and the Messiah was now typically seen, in David's ordering the service of the sanctuary, as "a priest upon his throne."

But besides this, two practical ends during the Davidic period were served by this new King-appointed service. It would be, as a Scottish writer has well observed, an excellent means of announcing to the vast masses of people, now thronging the courts of the Lord's house, and which were often in the days of David and Solomon so great that no human voice could reach them all, the times of sacrifice, incense and prayer, and thus contribute much to order and comfort in waiting on God's ordinances. But its most important end was typical. In the braying of trumpets and noise of other non musical instruments the proclamation of the gospel and the announcements of approaching providential dispensations were clearly intended to be set forth. As the trumpets were blown over the sacrifices, at the commencement of the Jubilee year, the new moons and festive seasons, and to summon the people to religious exercises (Joel. ii. 15) or alarm the inhabitants of the land of approaching dangers, so the prophets use it figuratively

for the preaching of the gospel, or calling attention to the true sacrifice for sin, for proclaiming the acceptable "year of the Lord," and for warning the inhabitants of the world of the woes to be inflicted on rebellious nations. And if thus the non-musical part of the instruments, used in the temple, was undoubtedly typical must not the musical have been typical too? Most undoubtedly they were. As the one set forth the public proclamations and announcements, which "go forth out of Zion," and by which God reaches the limits of the human family, so the other represented Gods being offered, and his receiving through Christ and a redeemed church, the whole tribute of universal praise and worship, that is due to Him for all the benefits he has conferred, and all the works he has performed. This temple service thus alone finds its meaning and fulfilment in the mission and work of Christ and of the church universal, and consequently it is absurd to claim that it was any model of Congregational worship, or that in this service the Old Testament gives any countenance to the use of instruments of music in our praise.

2. As instrumental music in our worship is not warranted by anything in the Old Testament, neither is it by anything in the New.

Notwithstanding that the New Testament is so utterly silent in respect to instrumental music, even in the temple, as to render it doubtful whether it still formed part of the public service there, and though it is certain that it had no place in the synagogue, yet still arguments have been adduced even from the New Testament, for its use in our worship. First, it has been argued that it is *not forbidden* in the New Testament, and that fact taken in connection with the other fact, that it cannot be morally wrong in itself, since it was practiced in the former economy, is enough to warrant its use. Accordingly it is said it should be left to congregations to employ it or not as they may feel inclined, and that no church court has the right to interfere with their liberty in a mere circumstantial or matter of indifference. It is claimed that it thus comes in under the 6 Sect. Chap. I Confession of Faith, "that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word." But if the use of instruments in our praise be only a matter of indifference, a mere circumstantial, why make it a "burning question," so as to disturb the peace of the church, to grieve the minds of many of her best members, and even to threaten, in some cases, disruption both in congregations and in churches. And if any church court should foresee such consequences as likely to arise from such a claim of liberty, even in small, non-essential things, has she not full power to enjoin her members not to walk uncharitably.

But is instrumental music, according to its advocates, intended to be a mere circumstantial in worship? Certainly not. Ask them, why

press so persistently for the use of an instrument in religious services, and they reply. Oh it not only improves the music, but it elevates our feelings toward God, excites devotional emotions, and helps us to a higher and loftier frame in our worship. Now as worship is just what brings us into fellowship with God, if the instrument produce such effects, the use of it becomes not a circumstance about, but a living spiritual element in our worship; and it serves just the same purpose as water in baptism, or bread and wine in the Lord's supper, namely, to enable us more clearly to apprehend God and get nearer to him in spiritual exercises. But if such be the nature and effects of instrumental music in our worship, it is *a means of grace*, that needs a divine appointment. God has not left any of his ordinances voluntary in the sense that we may either attend them or not as we please, nor has he empowered us to appoint for ourselves a means of grace irrespective of its being a divine institution. Therefore the plea of "not forbidden," and of Christian liberty, is at variance with correct, Scriptural, Presbyterian views of the relation of Christ's Headship to all lawful ordinances and means of grace.

But again the New Testament has been pressed into the service of instrumentalists in another direction. It is asserted that a word for praise, there employed, is often one that implies the use of an instrument. Two passages notably (Ephes. v. 19; Jam. v. 13,) are quoted as supporting this view, but one explanation will do for both. In the former it is said "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. The term "psalm" here, it is alleged corresponds to the Hebrew word for a song, accompanied by an instrument, and "making melody," literally "psalming," means beating on an instrument as the harp, and therefore the passage is in favor of using instruments in worship. Three considerations, however, make it plain that no such idea is intended. First, the "psalming" is to be "in the heart," or as a late minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland beautifully expressed it, "singing and beating the chords in your heart to the Lord." Then, again, the same verb is used of Christ proclaiming God's salvation to the Gentiles (Rom. xv. 9) "I will confess thee among the Gentiles and will psalm to thy name." In the same way Paul declares Cor. xiv. 1) 15) "I will psalm with the spirit, and I will psalm with the understanding also," and in neither case is the idea of an instrument admissible. But, farther, would it not be reasonable to seek for the Apostle's meaning of the word in his own practice, and in that of others referred to in the New Testament? Did our Lord and the disciples psalm on an instrument when they sang the paschal hymn? Did ever Paul or James praise by striking a lyre? We know Paul and Silas sang praise to God with their feet in the stocks, and their hands bound so that to use an instrument was impossible. Surely, however, if the Apostles intended, in the passages [referred to. that we should understand the

command in the sense of using instruments of music in our praise, they would on some occasion have exemplified the command. On all these grounds therefore, we think this attempt at argument is simply absurd, and men must feel hard pressed indeed, and almost desperate, when they betake themselves to such a line of defense.

But still farther, the New Testament is supposed to furnish indubitable proof of the propriety of using instruments in our praise in the fact that John, in the Apocalypse, represents the glorified spirits before the throne "having every one of them harps," and those on the Sea of Glass as "having the harps of God," and says, "I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps." With some that is sufficient to settle the whole question, and with a look of mingled pity and triumph they ask, "Is not what is good enough for glorified saints good enough for us, in offering our praises to God?" And what poetry and poetic phrases we owe to this supposed apostolic description of things above, as "Harps of Angels, 'harps of glory,' 'harps of eternity,'" whilst many chant with enthusiasm, "Let highborn seraphs tune their lyres," etc., etc. No doubt all this is very fine, and withal so grand that it is almost a pity to spoil it, but after all it is only like a balloon, a bag of gas, which, though it may raise some minds up toward the clouds, needs only to be pricked, and down come both it and its burden. This is obvious from the fact, that none of the passages referred to apply to anything in the heaven of glory at all, but they all describe things occurring daily here on earth, under the mediatorial administration. This administration is simply called heaven, as the kingdom of Christ on earth is called, "The kingdom of heaven," but it means a throne, and presence, and administration *here*, as various facts in the description show. For example, it is a heaven, not only with God and His throne, and the Mediator in the midst of the throne, with attendants, messengers and agents becoming a king; but it is a heaven in which there is a temple, and incense, and an altar and night and day, sun, moon and stars, and sea. It is a heaven into which Satan, the great red dragon, can come, and in which there is war, and a travailing and suffering woman, representing the Church militant, not the Church triumphant. It is only when we come to the last two chapters that the heaven of glory, and the Church triumphant, are described, and then there is no temple, nor night, nor sun, nor moon, nor sea, all showing that the expressions quoted have no reference to any worship offered in the heaven of glory. Nor is there in the whole Bible a single expression that would warrant such language as, "Angels harps," harps of glory," etc. The language, however, which gives harps to the elders as they "fall down before the throne," and to those who "stand on the sea of glass," when carefully examined, instead of furnishing any argument for instrumental music in the worship of the church, in her present militant state, tends just the other way. Thus it is said (V. 8.) "the four living creatures

and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints." These living creatures and elders represented the Church universal on earth, and if we argue that, because each one had a harp, we are warranted, taking the language literally, to employ instruments in our worship, must we not insist that *each worshiper* have an instrument, and besides that each be furnished with a vial or bottle of some strong perfume, to diffuse through the place, while the harps are playing. But it so happens that the "vials full of odors," are explained as meaning, not the essence of incense, but "the prayers of saints." On the same principle, then, should we not understand the harps, as meaning something spiritual, too? Would it not be absurd to understand the one word literally, and the other figuratively? And thus when stripped of the figure what does the expression mean, but that the worship of God chiefly consists of prayer and praise, and that *each worshiper* must bring *both*, as he falls down before the throne. And how admirably consistent is the whole figurative scene. The court of God is here described as on the great day of atonement in the temple. The High Priest, the Lamb, is gone inside into the Holy of Holies, unto the very "midst of the throne," there are altar, incense, courts and congregation, and to complete the figure "harpers harping with their harps;" all showing that sweet odors, or incense, and harps were in place literally when in a literal temple, and are now in place only spiritually, when we speak of the spiritual house, "build-ed together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

3. Instrumental music in worship finds no warrant in the practice of the primitive Church. Next to the argument from the Old Testament and the New, the practice of the Church, in the apostolic and immediate post-apostolic period, ought to be of special weight in this controversy. As has been already shown, instrumentalists regard various forms of expression in the New Testament as covering the lawfulness of such a form of praise as they advocate, and hence, they argue that even if instruments were not used in Apostolic times, their absence can be satisfactorily accounted for without supposing that they were then regarded as unlawful. It is however an observable fact that the Apostles were very minute and specific in what ordinances they set up in the churches which they planted and organized. Paul not only says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you," but of smaller and less important things, than the observance of the Supper, he adds, "The rest will I set in order when I come." It is therefore inconceivable that the practice of instrumental music in their assemblies has no mention, or even obscure hint as to its presence, if it was one of the things "delivered" and "set in order," especially when there are minute directions about prayer, prophesying, singing, communicating, and even about decent dress and behavior and pecuniary contributions. It is not strange that such things as the obligation

to observe a weekly Sabbath, or the duty of parents to seek baptism for their children, are not frequently or pointedly referred to, because they received these as moral natural duties from the Old Testament, but how account for the absence of the music? Oh, say some, the churches were too poor to go to the expense of costly instruments. But the instruments employed in the temple were not costly. A harp, lyre, trumpet or cymbal could be purchased at trifling expense, and besides they were profusely liberal of the means they had, and many of the churches, as Corinth and Laodicea, were "rich and increased in goods." Therefore it could not be the want of means. Others say, Oh they had to avoid display, so as not to offend their heathen neighbors. But in fact the argument looks the other way, for if they had given free operatic concerts, and elaborate musical entertainments, like some modern Protestant and even Presbyterian Churches, their heathen and irreligious neighbors would have been very glad to drop in and enjoy the performance, just as is the case still. Again, one of the most gifted and distinguished of the advocates of instrumental worship, in another country, argues that the lawfulness of such worship must have been taken for granted in Apostolic times because, "while there were great strife and debates about circumcision, eating meats and observing days, on the question of instruments in the church, there never occurred any debate." But the reason is plain. The Gentile Churches were never in any sense under the Mosaic economy, except in what was moral natural. The Jewish element in the early church, however, would force on the Gentiles certain observances of a more private and social nature, but never any of the temple institutions. They never asked the Gentiles to accept the priesthood and literal sacrifice and incense. About these there was no debate, because nobody thought of continuing them in the Christian Church. And so of ritual music. The fact that it excited no debate was evidently because no one ever thought that it should have a place in the new order of things.

But there is most positive and abundant proof in the testimony of the early Christian Fathers that the early churches used no musical instruments in the worship of God, but regarded their use in the former dispensation as entirely typical and symbolic. And as an anti-instrumentalist in another land has well argued, "Had instruments in worship been the rule at any time in the primitive church, how account for their removal without strife or debate." We can easily account for how they got in, but it is impossible to explain how, without opposition, they were left out for centuries if they had a divine warrant and were the rule for all time. And how is it that the great eastern section of the church, known as the Greek Church and the Armenian and the Syrian Churches have never had them at all? While it may be difficult to fix with certainty the exact year in which they were introduced into the western branch of the church, yet certain it is that it was not till the Church had become greatly corrupted, and the man

of sin had set up, as God, in the temple of God, and claimed the power that alone belongs to God, to decree rites and ceremonies in his house and worship. And at that time it was perfectly consistent, nay, in some respects necessary, to introduce instrumental music. They had set up, as far as possible, an image of the temple service. Now they had a high priest and ordinary priests, and sacrifice, and incense, and Levites in the acolytes of their shrines, and it was perfectly reasonable and appropriate that they should have processions and choirs and an instrumental orchestra to complete the hierarchical and ritual system. But the reformers, and all who are guided solely by the word of God, have held that such is no authority for us to introduce into our Presbyterian worship what evidently had no place in the primitive church.

4. There is no need of instrumental music in Christian worship and it serves no good end when introduced. We know that many advantages are supposed to be connected with the introduction of instrumental music into our church service, and many churches and congregations are supposed to suffer from its absence. First it is alleged that it helps us to higher devotional feelings, and elevates our mind in the service of praise. It was on this ground that in the discussion of the music question, in the General Presbyterian Assembly in Ireland a few years ago, an eloquent member made a powerful speech on behalf of instruments, from the words, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Strange text for such a sermon. But instrumental music is an imitative art, employed more forcibly to affect the senses, either separately or in connection with the human voice, of which it is an imitation. If, therefore, through our senses it gives us a clearer apprehension of God and of divine things, it is precisely in its action of the nature of a sacrament, "in which by sensible signs Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers." In that case it is a means of grace and requires a divine appointment, so that we may worship not "in spirit" only but "in truth." But if, disregarding the question of truth, we use such music as a means of grace, why not use helps from the other senses, so as to rise to a higher experience. Some say that images and pictures afford through the eye great help to stimulate devotion, and surely it is just as lawful to affect the mind devotionally through the eye as through the ear. And why not through the olfactory nerves in the use of incense and sweet odors. In fact the principle fully developed would land us in all the abuses of that system from which, at the Reformation, we happily escaped. If we can separate in worship "in the spirit" from "in the truth" then we can gladly accept many things, which our fathers not only rejected, but suffered to the death rather than practise.

It has also been alleged that our plain Presbyterian service is too

bald and that our singing is poor, and that we require something more esthetic to meet the tastes of the more educated and refined. Well, we admit that it is so, and that this argument is really invincible, that is, if these things are to be regulated by the wisdom of this world—if human tastes and esthetic feeling and a love of the sensuous, be allowed the power of a pope to decree rites and ceremonies in the worship of God, then the argument is most powerful. Such, however, is not God's wisdom, nor has the religion of Jesus conquered the world by purveying carnal delights for our sensuous nature. When the might of the sword of the Lord and of Gideon was figuratively set forth it was, "Lo a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian;" and as humble and impotent may God's way appear to the world, but it is "God's wisdom," and "mighty through God," and we had better not try to improve on God's appointments.

Besides many think that we require fine instrumental music to attract people to the house of God, and to hold them in the church. The principle, however, is utterly false, namely, that we may set up a sensuous show in the house of God, to induce men from carnal motives to attend there. The principle was really put in a true, though ludicrous, light by a well known minister of the Presbyterian Church, in this country some ten years ago, who, when asked what he thought of placing an organ in a Sabbath School to attract scholars, replied, "Well, if you wish something to attract merely, a cage of monkeys would answer the purpose." The principle is false, and besides would keep the churches in a constant state of rivalry which could have the finest music and the grandest show. Of course nobody cares much about the sermon. It can be borne if it happens to be on the last shipwreck or fire, or earthquake, or at least something sensational, and well spiced with jokes or bits of fun, provoking laughter and applause, or in other words, if it be just as amusing as the music, and touch and hurt nobody by coming too close to the conscience and life. Besides, where is this principle threatening to carry us. It is a well known fact that both in this country and in Great Britain many leading Presbyterian ministers are advocating a return to the use of a liturgy, and responsive reading, and old medieval practices, on the ground that Episcopal Churches by such things are attracting crowds and growing in numbers, and that if we are to keep our people and not be left behind, we must modify our service so as to resemble theirs, and thus return to what the Reformers declared to be contrary to the word of God. Where then, if this principle guide us, are we to stop? Truly "the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God."

5. Instead of being a benefit instrumental music mars the true worship of God, and has been productive of many evils wherever it has been introduced into the New Testament church.

We are aware that many practical advantages have been claimed for it, but we think that a careful examination will disprove many

things said in its favor. First, it undoubtedly mars the spirituality of many in worship, as the mind is so taken up with the music that there is no room for spiritual exercise. It, moreover, prevents many from joining in the singing, and thus, "Offering to God the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of the lips." Then again, account for it as we may, no church that introduces instrumental music continues to use the inspired psalms in its worship. However instrumental, as they have been called, some of the psalms are, it is undeniable that somehow they cannot be married to modern instrumental music, and long survive the union. Perhaps it is that the bride is too old and sedate for the youthful windy husband, the modern organ, and that she soon gracefully dies off to allow him to wed younger and gayer spouse, modern hymnology; or it may be that from incompatibility of temper they have consented to a divorce. Yet here remains the stubborn fact that they cannot long live under the same roof. Well, to our taste we would rather want the organ than want the psalms, since it seems impossible that we can have both.

Then again, it has not been found possible in any church, into which this form of music has been introduced, to keep out many things corrupting to the worship and immoral in their tendency. How often for example, have we even on the part of evangelical churches programmes of Christmas and Easter music, to be performed on the Sabbath, published simply to attract. The "Te Deum," "Magnificat," "Gloria in excelsis," with Christmas and Easter carols, and operatic music, often of very questionable character, all to be gone through by organ and choir, a musical performance for the amusement of the pious on the Lord's day: is it not a positive breach of the holy Sabbath and a violation of the Fourth Commandment. And when we add that professional s from the theatre and opera house, with bands of boys and girls, often in theatrical costume, are sometimes added to make the show still more attractive, can we possibly regard the thing as worship at all and not rather a desecration of the Lord's day, and an excellent way of preparing our youth for attending the more perfect theatrical performances, so attractive a feature of all our large cities? The same may be said of "voluntaries" on the organ at assembling and dispersing, they are not even intended to be worship. Some may say, Oh, we do not intend going so far as that. But when we start on a false principle we do not know how far we will go. The angle of divergence may be very small and acute at first, but soon gradual departure widens the distance betwixt us and the true position, and a false step to-day may in the next or following generation result in courses we, at one time, would have thought not to be possible. Dr. Candlish of Scotland, many years ago, said on this very subject, "For my part I am persuaded that if the organ be admitted there is no barrier in principle against the Sacerdotal system in all its fullness, against the substitution again, in our whole religion, of the formal for the spiritual, the symbolical for the

real." With the words of Spurgeon we close, "The human voice is so transcendently superior to all that wind or strings can accomplish, that it is a shame to degrade its harmonies by association with blowing and scraping. It is not better music which we get from organs and viols, but inferior sounds which unsophisticated ears judge to be harsh and meaningless, when compared with a melodious human voice. That the great Lord cares to be praised with bellows we very gravely question, we cannot see any connexion between the glory of God and sounds produced by machinery. One broken note from a grateful heart must have more real acceptable praise in it than all the wind which ever swept through whistling pipes. Instrumental music with its flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, du'cimer, and all kinds of noise-makers, was no doubt well suited to the worship of the golden image, which Nebuchadnezzar the King had set up, and harps and trumpets served well the infant state of the Church under the law, but in the spiritual domain of the gospel, these may well be let go, with all the other beggarly elements."

Current Topics.

THE JEWS IN ITALY AND PALESTINE.

The Jews in Italy are free from the persecutions to which their race has been subjected of late in various other countries. Here they enjoy equal rights with other citizens, and their remarkable genius and industry have elevated them to a prominence which is out of all proportion to their number. This is estimated at 37,000 by the rabbis, but the number returned is less. It is probable, however, that many Jews are not known as such, even to the rabbis, and that the number is greater than appears from the statistics. At least five Jews are in Parliament; many are professors, editors, men of letters, physicians, musical composers, and poets, while some of the largest stores on the Corso and the most extensive wholesale houses belong to Jews. The number in Rome is estimated at 5,000, many of whom occupy the best houses in the city. They are notably charitable to their poorer brethren.

The Ghetto, so long the dwelling-place of the Jews of Rome, will soon disappear, as the new works on the Tiber require its destruction. Its narrow, dark streets, populated with industrious workers, will soon be a vision of the past. The high buildings almost meeting overhead and shutting out the sunlight and the sky from the people below, will be taken down, and the cellars and first floors will no longer be filled with mud and water at every inundation of the Tiber. It will be a hard day for the Jews of the Ghetto when they are obliged to desert their ancient homes, all of which they have for almost nominal rents by an old law.

A Jewish colony existed in Rome long before the destruction of Jerusalem. An addition to this community was made by Pompey, who, after he had taken Jerusalem, planted a colony at the Fountain Egeria. Then commenced the persecutions which only ended on the 20th of September, 1820. The Ghetto was at the time of Christ a part of the city filled with splendid edifices, the ruins of which still remain. Among these are the Theatre of Marcellus, the Portico of Octavia, the Circus of Balbus, and the temples of Jupiter and Juno. Near the Piazza Cenci are the five synagogues to suit the different creeds of the Jews,