

LECTURE III.

PSALMODY.

IN the previous lectures I have been dealing with abstract questions. I now turn to the concrete, and examine some of the forms that music has assumed when enlisted in the service of the Church. Two alternative methods of procedure have suggested themselves to me, the historical and what I may call the topical. Under the former the history of Church music would engage our attention as matter of interest in itself; we should go back to the earliest times and endeavour to show from what humble beginnings it arose, what were the influences that contributed to its development, and how the various forms which it has assumed in the course of that development came to be evolved. Under the latter method we should start from the opposite end, and taking the various forms with which we are familiar as the things that specially concern us here, would touch on the historical conditions under which they have been evolved only in so far as they may help to cast light on their character and function. It seems to me that for our purpose the

latter method is to be preferred. The history of Church music would require much more detailed treatment than is possible within the scope of these lectures, and a much more intimate knowledge of the subject than I possess. There is abundant provision made in the text-books on the subject for those who wish to make a special study of it. Our interest in it here, I take it, is of a more practical character. We are concerned with the history of the subject only in so far as it may help us to understand and appreciate the inheritance handed down to us. So I propose that instead of taking the subject of Church music as a whole and endeavouring to give a connected account of its historical development, we should treat the various sides of it each by itself, and dip into history only in so far as it may help us better to understand their significance and possibilities. If we adopt this method and concentrate upon the forms of Church music which are of special interest to ourselves, that means, of course, that we shall leave unconsidered certain forms of Church music, such as the music of the Mass, which have played an important part in the evolution of Church music and would certainly fall to be dealt with in any purely historical inquiry, but which, as no longer forming part of our Church service, do not come within the scope of the present lectures.

Proceeding on this method, then, let us start with the musical use of the Psalter, which is certainly

one of the most characteristic features of Church music from the time of the Jewish temple to the present day. It is not easy to estimate the indebtedness of Christianity to Judaism. The roots of the new religion run down deep into Jewish soil. But perhaps the most precious inheritance that the Christian Church has received from Judaism is the Psalter, which touches some of the tenderest chords in the human heart and has become by general consent the treasury of song for the Church. No book of the Bible, not even the Gospels themselves, has taken such hold of the heart and so woven itself into the life of man. It makes universal appeal, for it touches the deepest instincts of our nature and ministers to its most pressing needs. Its theme is the converse of the soul with God; and in the presence of Him who has searched and known us, the inmost secrets of the heart are laid bare and the deepest feelings poured forth with such frankness, that, as Athanasius says, "the Psalms are to him who sings them as a mirror, wherein he may see himself and the motions of his soul." They sound the deepest feelings of the heart and give utterance to its most passionate yearnings. The book ranges over the whole gamut of human emotion. Joy and sorrow, hope and despair, doubt and trustfulness, anxiety and confidence, chase one another across its pages like the shadows of the clouds upon the hills. "Where," asks Luther,¹ "will you find words more

¹ Preface to the Psalter.

aptly chosen to express joy, than in the Psalms of praise and the Psalms of thanksgiving? There thou mayest look into the heart of all the saints, as into fair delightful gardens, yea, even into heaven itself, and note with what wonderful variety there spring up therein, like so many exquisite, hearty, delightful flowers, sweet and gladsome thoughts of God and His benefits. On the other hand, where canst thou find deeper, sadder, more lamentable words of sorrow than are to be found in the Psalms of complaint? There again thou mayest look into the heart of all the saints, as into death, yea, as into hell. How dark and gloomy it is there with the manifold hiding of God's countenance! So likewise when the Psalms speak of fear or hope, they speak in such manner of words that no painter could so paint the fear or the hope, and no Cicero or master of oratory could express them to the life more happily." In our deepest religious experience the words of the Psalms rise to our lips as the most fitting expression of the feelings. It was in the words of a Psalm that the Saviour uttered that cry of despair that was wrung from Him as He hung upon the cross, in the words of a Psalm that He committed His soul to God as He gave up the ghost. And throughout the ages the Psalter has supplied the language in which saint and sinner, gentle and simple, the learned theologian and the unlettered peasant have found most appropriate expression for their religious feelings. Men who have been the bitterest enemies

in life have died with the same words of the Psalter on their lips. Churches which are most widely divided in doctrine or government agree in the place of honour they assign to the Psalms. Of all the resources which the Holy Catholic Church has at its disposal, there is none which has in a more marked degree the property of catholicity than the Psalter.

In proceeding to discuss the part that the Psalter has played in the worship of the Church, let us go back to the source from which it sprung, and consider the use that was made of it in the Jewish Church. The information at our disposal is, unfortunately, very scanty, and much must be left to conjecture based on internal evidence. What makes the situation peculiarly irritating is that the inscriptions of the Psalms in many cases supply liturgical or musical directions which, if we could interpret them, would doubtless throw considerable light upon the Jewish practice; but unfortunately these directions are usually so obscure, and the interpretations of the authorities so divergent, that no reliable conclusions can be drawn from them. They remain, as Ewald says, "as scattered Sibylline leaves out of the lost book of old Hebrew music."

While the Psalter has been adopted by the Christian Church for use in public worship, it is questionable whether the book as a whole was originally designed for such a purpose. We must beware of transporting our ideas back to earlier times, and identifying the

use made of the Psalter in the Christian Church with its original purpose. As Duhm¹ points out to those who regard the Psalter as "the song-book of the congregation," there was no congregation to sing the Psalms in the temple as a Protestant congregation sings its chorales. And he is of opinion that the aim of the editors of the Psalter was rather to prepare a religious handbook which, while assisting the laity in the performance of their part of the temple worship, would serve likewise and more specially as a manual of devotion and religious edification. Be that as it may, we must recognise that there are some portions of the Psalter which seem fitted for private use rather than public worship :—

Let my prayer be set forth as incense before thee ;
 The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice ;
 —Psalm cxli. 2, R.V.

—that is evidently the utterance of private devotion which feels that the sacrifice of the lips is no less acceptable to God than the offering laid upon the altar. Some Psalms are meant to be sung in the privacy of the home during the watches of the night (e.g., cxlix., 5) ; some are prayers so intimate and personal in character that they seem designed not for liturgical use but for private devotion by the "still in the land ;" others, such as the 119th or the alphabetical Psalms, appear to be framed for didactic purposes.

¹ *Psalmen*, p. xxiv.

But if there be some portions of the Psalter which seem intended for private devotion, there are others which are plainly designed for use in public worship. Sometimes the heading indicates the liturgical use to which the Psalm is put. For instance Psalm c. has the heading : A Psalm for the Thank-offering ; Psalm xcii. : A Song for the Sabbath Day ; and Psalm xxx. : A Song at the Dedication of the house of David. There is nothing, indeed, in the last Psalm, which is a song of deliverance from grave danger, to indicate that it was composed for the special occasion indicated by the heading ; but it may very well be that the Psalm was used at such a religious celebration after some period of great national danger, such for instance as threatened under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. But the indications as to the liturgical use of the Psalms supplied by the headings are comparatively few in number. More instructive is the light shed upon the subject by the evidence of the Psalms themselves. Let me direct attention to some of the conclusions we may draw along these lines.

Plainly some of the Psalms are meant to be used in the sacred processions which were a feature of the Jewish ritual. The law recognised three great feasts, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles, and it is a significant fact that the Hebrew word for Feast originally meant a procession. In the religious procession the people went up, with the priest at their head and to the

accompaniment of music and song, to the temple—in early times, perhaps, carrying the ark of Jehovah just as their heathen neighbours used to carry the images of their gods—and marched round the altar joining in the sacred dance. Many of the Psalms bring this religious procession before our eyes. So in Psalm lxxviii. :—

They see Thy processions, Yahweh, into the sanctuary.
The singers go before ; behind the musicians ;
In the midst damsels playing on timbrels.

—v. 24, Briggs's transl.

Again the latter part of Psalm xxiv. evidently points to the bringing of the ark into the sanctuary—we do not know for what purpose it had been taken away—or it may go back even to the original bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem, in which case the “ ancient doors ” will refer to the gates of the city, not of the temple. In Psalm xlvi. we have a description of a procession through Jerusalem, probably by a company of Jews of the Dispersion who have come up to Jerusalem for some Feast. The Psalm is to be conceived as sung in the temple (v. 9) before the procession begins ; then the company march forth to compass Jerusalem, to mark her bulwarks and her palaces, and note the beauty and strength of the city of which they have heard and which they have now the joy of seeing. As I have said dancing played an important part in the religious procession, and there is occasional reference to

it in the Psalms (e.g., cxviii. 27 [Baethgen's trans.]; cxlix. 3; cl. 4). Closely akin to the Procession Psalms are the so-called Pilgrim Psalms, cxx.-cxxxiv., called in the titles of the Authorised Version, Songs of Degrees. There is some difference of opinion among scholars as to what is meant by this heading. One commonly received explanation is that it means "Songs of Pilgrimage," i.e., songs sung by pilgrims going up to the Feasts.

In addition to the Procession and Pilgrim Psalms there were likewise Psalms for use at the great religious and national festivals. In many cases these too may have been sung in procession as the people marched up to the temple to celebrate the festival in question. There were Passover Psalms, Feast of Tabernacles Psalms, Psalms to celebrate outstanding events in national history, Psalms of victory, and so on. In a people of such deep religious feeling as Israel, it is only to be expected that that sense of dependence upon God, which is such an outstanding feature of their religion, should find occasion for supplication or thanksgiving in all the varied experiences of life. When Hezekiah received the insulting letter from Sennacherib, we read that he went up to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord (Is. xxxvii. 14). It is characteristic of the spirit of the Jewish religion. It takes the daily experiences of life, its trials and its sorrows, its joys and its blessings, up to the house of the Lord, and spreads them before the Lord. Consequently

we find in the Psalter a faithful reflection of the life of the people. They pour forth their sorrows before God, they plead with Him to deliver them from their affliction, they praise Him for victory vouchsafed over their enemies, they thank Him for the daily mercies bestowed upon them. They mingle their songs with the thank-offerings which they bring into the house of the Lord (Jer. xxxiii. 11). We may well believe that the Psalter must have contributed in no small measure to that spiritualising of religion which reaches its culmination in Christianity. Originally the sacrifice was the all-important thing, the song of praise which accompanied it a mere adjunct. But in course of time more and more emphasis came to be laid upon the "sacrifice of the lips," until at last when the Master came He could speak of the temple not as the place of sacrifice but as the house of prayer.

The music of the temple was in the hands of a special class of singers and musicians belonging to the order of Levites. According to the Talmud female voices were not admitted to the temple service. It is unlikely that the body of the people participated to any large extent in the praise. In the Procession Psalms we may perhaps conceive them joining in the song as they marched round the altar; but for the most part their contribution would be confined to occasional responses to the song of the choir, such as Amen, Hallelujah, or the refrain in Psalm cxviii.: "Because His mercy endureth

for ever." The singing of the choir would in all probability be antiphonal in character, whether as between a soloist and the choir as a whole, or between different sections of the choir. In view of the parallelism of Hebrew poetry it seems natural to suppose that if the Psalms were sung antiphonally, the alternation would be between the two halves of the verse rather than verse by verse. But while this seems the reasonable proceeding, the main *raison d'être* indeed of antiphonal chant, we cannot be certain that it was so ; and modern Jewish practice, I believe, bears witness to the opposite effect, the alternation being by the verse not the half-verse.

The stringed instruments used in the temple orchestra were chiefly the *hinnor* and the *nebel* (the lyre and the harp). According to a verse in Isaiah and the express testimony of the Talmud, flutes were likewise employed. Trumpets were also introduced on occasion, and were blown by the priests. Cymbals were employed to mark the beat. The orchestra accompanied the singing, and added occasional preludes and interludes. The mysterious symbol *Selah*, which the LXX translates *διάψαλμα*, is usually taken nowadays as a musical direction to the orchestra to strike in with louder music in an instrumental interlude. We have no reason to believe that the Hebrews had any knowledge of harmony ; so we have to imagine the accompaniment of the instruments as a mere duplication of the melody sung by the choir.

We are unfortunately quite in ignorance of the character of the music used for the Psalms. It must have been something of the nature of a chant, to suit the varying length of the verses. There are some who think to trace back the Gregorian tones to the music used by the Hebrews in their temple worship. There is no evidence, indeed, upon which to base any such deduction ; but we can well believe that the Hebrew chant, designed for the same purpose as the Gregorian, may have been somewhat similar in character. Some of the headings of the Psalms refer to what seem to be titles of songs, e.g., " Hind of the dawn " (Ps. xxii.), " The dove of the distant terebinths " (Ps. lvi. with change of reading) ; and it is possible that they point to the employment of some melody or mode associated with the songs known by these titles, just as Burns puts at the head of some of his songs the name of the tunes to which he had written the words. It is probable that if we could hear the strains of the temple music, we should be rather disappointed, and marvel at the appeal made to the Hebrew by music which sounds to us uncouth and repellent. But we must not judge by our modern standards. Whatever we might think of it, there is no question but that it went home to the heart of the pious Jew. It came to him laden with tenderest memories, enhanced by the solemnity of the impressive ceremonial with which it was associated, endeared by sacred traditions reaching far back through many vicissitudes of fortune to the

most glorious times of the national history ; and we can well believe that in virtue of these hallowed associations its appeal was as direct and powerful as the most finished products of modern art, or the familiar melodies of the old Psalm tunes which have so warm a place in our affections.

From the Jewish Church the Psalter passed over to the Christian. That the Jewish Christians should prize and make abundant use of it, is only what is to be expected ; and the Gentiles who were received into the Church would likewise be initiated into its use, and made familiar with its contents. At first when the infant Church was subject to persecution, the meetings of the Christians had to be held in secret. But in course of time the need for secrecy passed, and the Psalms were sung with boldness, a demonstration and a challenge to the world around. " Throughout the whole world," says Eusebius,¹ " in towns and villages and in the fields also, in short, in the whole Church, the people of Christ, who are gathered from all nations, sing to the one God, whom the prophets foretold, hymns and psalms with a loud voice, so that the voice of the psalm-singers is heard by those standing outside." The Psalms were particularly used at vigils as a means of keeping the congregation attentive. Certain Psalms were assigned to special occasions, e.g., the 63rd : " O God, thou art my God ; early will I seek thee," to

¹ *Ad Psalm, 65.*

the morning service; the 141st: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice," to the evening; the 22nd to Good Friday. In public worship the Psalms were intercalated between the Lessons, which some think the reason of their being called Responsoy Psalms, because they answered the Lessons. This sounds rather a fanciful explanation of the title. It seems more reasonable to attribute it to the manner of performance, to which I shall refer presently. In monastic establishments the Psalms were in constant use, a considerable number being sung one after the other. We hear of a peculiar custom which obtained in some cases of proportioning the number of Psalms sung to the number of the canonical hour, singing six at the sixth hour and ten at the tenth. In the daily life of the people the Psalms were in constant use. Tertullian¹ urges Christian husbands and wives to emulate one another in Psalm-singing. It was, as we learn from another Father, the custom to sing them before and after meals, and before going to sleep. In fact the Psalms were in such continual use that they became woven into the very texture of the life. "If the faithful are keeping vigil in the church," says Chrysostom,² "David is first, middle, and last. If at dawn anyone wishes to sing hymns, David is first, middle, and last. At funeral processions and burials, David is first,

¹ *Ad uxor.*, II, 8.

² *Hom.*, 6, *de pœnit.*

middle, and last. In the holy monasteries, among the ranks of the heavenly warriors, David is first, middle, and last. In the convents of virgins, who are imitators of Mary, David is first, middle, and last." It soon became a custom to learn the Psalter by heart. "Never let the book disappear from thy hand or thy sight," says Jerome ¹ to a monk, "thou must learn the psalms word for word by heart." One of the Councils of the Church even went the length of making a knowledge of the Psalter an indispensable condition in the consecration of a bishop.

As to the manner of rendering the Psalms a variety of methods existed. Sometimes the performance was left to the precentor, the congregation striking in from time to time with a refrain such as in Psalm cxxxvi.: "For His mercy endureth for ever," or with some exclamations such as Amen, Alleluia, *Gloria Patri et Filio*. This seems the most natural explanation of the term "Responsory" as applied to certain Psalms. As a general rule the response of the congregation consisted of the same refrain repeated time and again; but occasionally they responded to the precentor with alternate verses. In the congregational contribution to the Psalmody the whole body of the people participated. There was doubt in the minds of some as to the propriety of allowing women to join in, in view of the injunction of the Apostle that they should keep silence, and some

¹ *Patr. Lat.*, xxxii. 1078.

went the length of prohibiting it. But generally it was permitted. "Women and men," says Chrysostom,¹ "old men and children differ in sex and age, but they differ not in the harmony of singing hymns; for the Spirit tempers all their voices together, making melody of them all."

In course of time when choirs were introduced, the antiphonal method of performance was adopted. This consisted in two choirs chanting alternate verses. Tradition assigns the innovation to Ignatius, who had a vision of the angels so singing to the Holy Trinity. But in view of the existence of the practice in the Jewish Church, no such supernatural explanation is required. The antiphonal method of chanting was introduced into the West by Ambrose, who took the opportunity afforded by his faithful flock being shut up with him in church, at the time of his persecution by the Empress Justina, to instruct them in this method of singing.

With the development of music in the Church certain elaborations were made in the performance of the Psalms. It had been the custom to sing a short solo-melody before the Psalm to make the singers familiar with the tune. This developed in course of time into the practice of singing to the melody of the Psalm some words from another source, designed to enforce the meaning of the text of the Psalm. This was called the Antiphon, and

¹ *Hom.*, 36.

it was repeated from time to time in the course of the performance of the Psalm. Another elaboration was the expansion of the Alleluia into a jubilant melody of "linked sweetness long drawn out." As Augustine¹ says: "It is a song of joy without words: it is the voice of a heart dissolved in joy, which tries as far as possible to express the feeling, even if it does not understand the meaning." This *jubilus*, as it was called, gave scope to the musical powers of the singers.

In the rendering of the Psalms no instrumental music was employed, probably because of the worldly association suggested by such. "We sing God's praise," says Eusebius,² "with living psaltery, inspired cithara, and spiritual songs. For more pleasant and dear to God than any instrument is the harmony of the whole Christian people, when in all the churches of Christ we sing psalms and hymns with harmonious minds and well-tuned hearts." The music employed was the liturgical chant of the Latin Church, which came to be known by the name of Gregorian Chant. Its distinguishing characteristics were its use of the ancient modes and its rhythmical freedom. A word or two of explanation on these points may perhaps be serviceable. Our modern music uses—or at least did use until quite recently, when revolutionary experiments in the way of tonality have been made by present-day

¹ *In Psalm.* 99.

² *In Psalm.* 91.

composers—only two modes, the major and the minor, and the various scales in use are really only repetitions of these two modes at different pitch. The scale is composed of tones and semi-tones; and what constitutes the distinct character of the mode, major or minor, is the place where these tones and semi-tones occur. Since the seventeenth century the major and minor modes have been firmly established; and so familiar have they become, so strange does any departure from them sound in our ears, that we are apt to fancy that they are due to some natural law. But that is not so. These modes are not the only ones that have been employed, and among the Greeks certain other modes, i.e., arrangements of the place of the tone and semi-tone in the scale, were in general use, and it is these that are employed in the Gregorian Chant. Originally there were only four such modes employed, introduced by Ambrose about the end of the fourth century and called Authentic Modes. Two centuries later Gregory added four other modes which were called Plagal, the distinction being that whereas in the Authentic Mode the range of the melody was from the keynote, called the Final, to the octave above, as e.g., in "The Blue-bells of Scotland," in the Plagal Mode this keynote was midway between the two extremes of the scale, and the melody was partly above and partly below it, as e.g., in "Ye Banks and Braes." The different place of the semi-tone in the old modes gives them a distinct character and colouring. Each

of these different modes had its own chant or tone as it was called. The structure of the tone was as follows. It consisted of two parts, corresponding to the two halves of the verse. Each part contained a reciting note, which was followed in the first half by a cadence called the Mediation, in the second half by another cadence called the Final. There were different forms of these endings for some of the tones, which lent variety. The first strain was preceded by a few notes called the Intonation, which was sung only at the first verse of the Psalm.

The other distinctive feature of the Gregorian Chant is its freedom of rhythm. The notes of the Mediation and the Final are not written in any fixed time. They have no accent of their own, but take whatever accent suits the words. The music, in short, has the freedom of the rhythm of prose, and is consequently able to adapt itself to the varying accent of the words of the Psalm. Another feature of the Gregorian Chant is that it is sung in unison or the octave. At the time of its introduction, harmony was as yet an undiscovered art.

Gregorian Chant held the field till after the Reformation. In England it encountered a formidable rival in the shape of the Anglican Chant, which has for the most part succeeded in displacing it. Historically the Anglican Chant is a development of the Gregorian, and some of the earliest examples were little more than adaptations of Gregorian melodies. Gregorian Chants were in general use in

England till well on in the seventeenth century, and it was not till the time of the Restoration that the Anglican Chant came into favour. Its characteristics are its abandonment of the ancient modes; its wider range and more interesting type of melody; its harmonic structure; and its fixity of rhythm, the chant, with the exception of the reciting note, being written in strict time, to which the words have to accommodate themselves. Originally the Anglican Chant was, like the Gregorian, a single one, to be sung to one verse. But in course of time it was expanded into the double chant, which provided music for two verses, and both single and double chants are now in common use. Some of the Anglican chants, particularly the older ones, are admirable, chaste, and reverent in character, and with something of the same ecclesiastical tone about them as we associate with the Gregorian. But others, particularly those of a later date, lack the gravity and decorum which we look for in Church music.

It would be rash to attempt to adjudicate between these two rival systems of chanting. Each has its warm supporters, who have strong things to say about the opposite method. For the Gregorian Chant it is claimed that it has a distinct ecclesiastical flavour about it which is often sadly lacking in the Anglican; that it is reverent in spirit; that it is easily singable by the congregation; that it is faithful to the principle that must ever guide us in all questions

of Church music, in that it subordinates the music to the words and makes the liturgical factor the supreme consideration.¹ If it be charged with monotony in view of the poverty of its melodic content, it can reply with a similar objection to the monotony of the Anglican Chant in respect of its harmony. The upholders of the Anglican Chant regard the Gregorian as an interesting historical relic which it is idle to attempt to restore to general use. They protest that it is foolish to refuse to take advantage of the richer resources of modern music, simply because another style was perforce in existence before these resources had been revealed. They declare that we cannot put back the hands of the clock, and that it is absurd to imagine that the uncouth and monotonous strains of a bygone era will ever commend themselves to an age which breathes an entirely different musical atmosphere. It is a difficult subject—not as yet a vital one for us in the Church of Scotland, where the question is rather as to getting the chanting of the Psalms introduced at all, than as to the form of chanting, Gregorian or Anglican, to be adopted.

It is matter for regret, I think, that the Psalter is not more largely used in our worship in Scotland

¹ Cp. A. S. Duncan-Jones, *Church Music*, p. vii: "Church music should not be sought in the *Encyclopædia* as a sub-heading of the article on Music, but rather under the letter L as a department of Liturgy. For that is its proper place."

than it is. So far as the metrical Psalms are concerned, of which I shall speak presently, we have reason to be satisfied at the hold they have gained on the affection of the people. To a certain extent they have, of course, been ousted from the unique place they once held by the introduction of hymns. But though they do not now constitute the whole of the praise at public worship, they still hold a worthy place, and there is little fear, I believe, that the Scottish people will abandon their allegiance to them. But it is mainly for the music to which they are sung that the metrical Psalms are held in such esteem in our Scottish worship. However high we may rank them—and there is a rugged strength and homeliness about them that speak to the heart—no one will seriously contend that they are anything but a feeble substitute for the sonorous language of the prose version.¹ Even if we were to sing them

¹ "It is very certain that the Hebrew poetry cannot be rendered into English verse without robbing it of its very peculiar beauties—its terseness, the force of its expressions, the peculiar antithetic construction of the sentences, most of the excellencies, in fact, on which its power of impressing the heart and adhering to the memory depend. Little or none of those solemn, thrilling feelings of respect and awe, which are produced by reading a sublime passage of the Psalms or Prophets in the common version, would be felt if the same passage were turned into metre and rhyme. Who that reads a Psalm for devotion or instruction, ever reads it in Brady and Tate? In order to render the words metrical, and to make the lines correspond with the original,

all through, we should still miss much by knowing the Psalms only in the metrical version. And of course we are very far from singing them all through. We use only snippets of them, singing from four to eight verses at a time. On the musical side this is one of the most satisfactory features of the service, because the tunes, to which the metrical Psalms are sung, are among the choicest gems of our Church psalmody. But as a serious attempt to take advantage of the treasury of sacred song placed within our reach by the Psalter, it is lamentably inadequate. Is it not right that we should make more generous use of this veritable mine of devotion than we do? "What is there necessary for man to know," asks Hooker,¹ "which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. . . . Let there be any grief or disease incident into the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found. Hereof it is that we covet to make the Psalms

expressions require to be lengthened out and diluted, till they have lost their terseness and vigour; others to be added, which have not authority from the original, but merely help to fill up the line" (*Popular Tract on Church Music*, by Robert Druitt, 1845, p. 24 f.).

¹ *Eccles. Polity*, v. 37 (2).

especially familiar unto all. This is the very cause why we iterate the Psalms oftener than any other part of Scripture besides ; the cause whereof we inure the people together with their minister, and not the minister alone to read them as other parts of Scripture he doth." All who are zealous of God's house will likewise "covet to make the Psalms specially familiar unto all." We lose much by not gaining that intimate acquaintance with the beautiful language of the Psalter that comes from hearing the Psalms iterated at our public worship. Chanting is not really a difficult matter, being really, as Hullah said, "a species rather of musical elocution than of music," and any choir worthy of the name that seriously addresses itself to the task should succeed in attaining sufficient proficiency. With the congregation it may be another matter. If they are to participate, it is essential that they have a pointed text. Even with that it may take some time, when the chanting of the Psalms is an innovation, before they acquire sufficient confidence to join in with heartiness. But even if the congregation do not take part audibly, they can join in the spirit. As Chrysostom says :¹ "It is possible to sing without the voice, if the understanding gives echo." While I am jealous of any attempt to deprive the congregation of their participation, in the praise of the sanctuary, I believe that even if this part of the

¹ *In Psalm. 41.*

worship has to be left in great measure to the choir alone, what we gain by having the prose Psalms made a regular feature of our public worship far more than compensates for what is lost by relegating another of the items of praise to the choir.

But if there be any doubt upon this point, the inclusion of the prose Psalms may still be retained and the participation of the congregation secured by having the Psalms read instead of chanted. One wonders that this method is not more generally practised. Perhaps the shyness of our Scottish congregations to take any vocal part in the service except in the singing may account for it. But one can believe that any diffidence on the part of the congregation would soon disappear. The reading of the Psalms might be divided between minister and congregation, the minister reading the first half of the verse and the congregation responding with the second half. This seems the proper method of alternation, though as a general rule when antiphonal chanting is practised the alternation is by the verse not by the half-verse. All arguments for antiphony of this kind based upon the parallelism of Hebrew poetry seem beside the point, for the parallelism in Hebrew poetry is between the half-verses, not between the verses. It was by the half-verse that Mendelssohn¹ heard the Psalms sung in

¹ *Letters*, 16 June, 1831.

Holy Week in Rome, and this is the plan adopted in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, and St. John's College, Cambridge. Just as we have our Psalters pointed for chanting, so we might have them arranged for such antiphonal reading between minister and congregation as I am referring to. Something of the kind would be necessary if the whole Psalter were to be brought into use ; for while as a general rule the parallelism of Hebrew poetry runs by the half-verse, there are frequent cases where other varieties of structure are introduced, and one can well conceive how useful a Psalter arranged for such alternate reading as I am urging would prove. Whatever the method adopted, chanting or alternate reading, it is in the highest degree desirable that in our Scottish churches a worthier place be assigned to the Psalter than is secured by the rendering of one or two portions of the metrical Psalms.

But let us turn now to consider the part which the metrical version of the Psalms has played in the worship of the Church. The practice of singing metrical versions of the Psalms originated in France, where the version of Marot attained great popularity at the court of Francis I., who encouraged the poet in the work of translation and to whom the book was dedicated. Marot was not himself a Protestant, but being suspected of heresy he fled to Geneva ; and though the singing of his metrical Psalms may not at first have been distinctively Protestant, it soon

became so, and the term psalm-singer came to be a synonym for Protestant. The book was adopted by the Genevan Church, and Calvin himself prepared a preface for the edition issued for use in that Church. Switzerland was the place of refuge for English and Scottish reformers during the religious persecutions at home; and when they returned to their own countries they introduced the practice of singing metrical versions of the Psalms which had gained such vogue upon the Continent. Luther had been keenly alive to the power of song as an instrument for the propagation of the truth, and he and his fellow workers in the Lutheran Church set themselves to the composition of hymns which should embody and stimulate the new spirit that was animating the Church. But in the Reformed Church a narrower spirit prevailed. Calvin would not admit original hymns. He restricted himself to the Psalms of David. They had, he thought, been dictated to him by the Holy Spirit, "and therefore," he declared, "when we sing them, we are as certain that God has put words into our mouths as if He Himself sang within us to exalt His glory." The only psalmody in the Genevan Church was a metrical rendering of the Psalms adapted to music of the simplest kind. This was the type of psalmody that the exiled reformers brought back to England and Scotland, and it soon attained great vogue. "Psalms," says Bishop Burnet, "were much sung by all who loved the Reformation; and it was a

sign by which men's affections to the work were measured, whether they used to sing them or not."

Various metrical versions of the Psalms were produced from time to time, and some secured a firm hold on popular affection. It would not be interesting to enumerate them all. I shall mention only one or two of the most important. In England the one which for a long time reigned supreme was Sternhold and Hopkins. Sternhold was groom of His Majesty's robes, and the story goes that as a boy of twelve King Edward VI. heard him singing his Psalms to the organ, and expressed his delight at the performance. It is rather a striking coincidence, as Hawkins¹ points out, that both in France and England the first metrical versions of the Psalms should have been by courtiers. As Marot dedicated his version to Francis I., so Sternhold dedicated his first edition (1545), which contained fifty-one Psalms, to Edward VI. Hawkins was a schoolmaster. He added another fifty-eight to the fifty-one Psalms of Sternhold. The remaining versions were the work of various hands. The first complete edition appeared in 1562. The Psalter was designed for use not only in church but likewise in private houses, in the hope that it might take the place of the frivolous and sometimes indecorous songs that were on the lips of the people, as set forth on the title

¹ *History of Music*, IV., chap. ix.

page of the 1560 edition: "Very mete to be used of all sorts of people privately for their godly solace and comfort, laying aparte all ungodly songes and ballades, which tende only to the nourishing of vice, and corrupting of youth." In respect of poetic merit it must be confessed that the Sternhold and Hopkins version has but little to recommend it. Fuller said of the versifiers that "their piety was better than their poetry, and they had drunk more of Jordan than of Helicon." And Campbell declared that they "with the best intentions and the worst taste, degraded the spirit of Hebrew psalmody by flat and homely phraseology, and, mistaking vulgarity for simplicity, turned into bathos what they found sublime." But it achieved great popularity. Crowds joined in the singing. The very roughness and uncouthness of the translation strengthened the directness of the appeal. In course of time the language of the versifiers came to acquire something of the sacredness of inspired Scripture in the eyes of the vulgar, and when a new version was introduced to take the place of the old, it encountered an enormous amount of prejudice. The new version which was proposed in place of Sternhold and Hopkins was by Tate and Brady. It was published in 1696. While it was admitted to be smoother and more elegant than the old, these very qualities were regarded as blemishes by those who had been enamoured of the crudities of Sternhold and Hopkins; and it had to run the gauntlet

of a very severe and prejudiced criticism, and never attained anything like the popularity of the old version.

One version of some interest was composed by Archbishop Parker during his exile. It was printed privately about 1560, but for some reason was never published. It is musically interesting because it contained nine tunes by Tallis composed in the different modes. Some of these are still in common use amongst us, e.g., the Psalm tune Tallis and the well-known Tallis canon. In the English Hymnal the First, Second, and Third Mode Melodies are also preserved. The Parker metrical version likewise contains a classification of the modes according to their emotional effect, which it may be interesting to reproduce:—

The Nature of the Eight Tunes.

1. The first is meeke : devout to see
2. The second sad : in majesty
3. The third doth rage : and roughly brayth
4. The fourth doth fawne : and flattry playth
5. The fifth deligth : and laugheth the more
6. The sixt bewayleth : it weepeth full sore
7. The seventh tredeth stoute : in frowar race
8. The eyghte goeth milde : in modest pace.

The 1562 edition of Sternhold and Hopkins was the first English Psalter published with music, but this was restricted to the melody. An edition with a four-part setting of the tunes was published by Day

in 1563. Sometimes two or three different settings of the same tune are provided by different composers, and in addition a considerable number of new tunes are added. Various musical editions were published from time to time, among the best known being those of Damon, 1591, Este, 1592, Ravenscroft, 1621, and Playford, 1671 and 1677. At first the melody was given to the tenor, as was the custom of the time. Damon's Psalter was published in two books, the second bearing the title: "The second Booke of the Musicke of M. William Damon, conteining all the tunes of David's Psalmes, differing from the former in respect that the highest part singeth the Church tune." This was the principle adopted in Playford's 1677 edition, in which the tunes were set in three parts with the melody at the top. Musically this edition was inferior to some of those that had preceded it. In many respects it is a concession to the limited abilities of the singers. Where the tune appears too elaborate, an alternative setting is given; where the metre of the version is peculiar, a second version in ordinary metre is provided. As Mr. Frere says in the introduction to the *Historical Edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern*: "He gauged his public well, and made sufficient sacrifices to save his cargo. His *Whole Book of Psalms* became the standard book for the whole of the rest of the seventeenth century, and the greater part of the eighteenth—almost as long, in fact, as the Old Version in any real degree held the field."

In Scotland, too, metrical Psalms were introduced by refugees returned from Geneva. John Knox was for some time pastor of the English congregation in Geneva, which used an Order of Service containing a selection of the Psalms in metre, fifty-one in number, each furnished with a tune. Of these fifty-one Psalms forty-four were by Sternhold and Hopkins, but considerably altered. This book would no doubt be brought over by the refugees on their return and used in public worship. The formal authorisation of a version of the Psalms by the General Assembly did not take place till 1564. Previous to this the Genevan Psalter had been increased from fifty-one first to sixty-five, and then to eighty-seven Psalms, and all these were included in the version approved by the Assembly of 1564. As we have seen, a considerable portion of the Genevan Psalter was based upon Sternhold and Hopkins. In its final form the Scottish Psalter differed from the English in forty-one versions of the Psalms, besides which the English had five duplicates not in the Scottish. As this 1564 version held the field, like Sternhold and Hopkins, for a long period, it may be of interest to give a detailed account of it. As has been said, it contained the whole eighty-seven Psalms in the Genevan collection. In addition there were forty-two from the recently published portion of the English Psalter—the complete Sternhold and Hopkins had appeared, as has been said, only in 1562—and twenty-one new contributions. One outstanding

feature of this version was the variety of metres employed. There were ninety-nine in C.M., eleven in L.M., and five in S.M., while for the thirty-five remaining Psalms there were no less than twenty-seven different kinds of metre. Many of these varieties of metre are imitations of the French, the tune being that to which the corresponding Psalm in the French version was set. In some of the subsequent editions of the Psalter, but not in the 1564 one, are included some so-called Spiritual Songs, i.e., metrical renderings of some portions of Scripture, such as the songs of Mary and Simeon, the Lord's Prayer, also the Creed and the Veni Creator. It is doubtful if these were ever used in public worship. An interesting feature which appeared in later editions was the printing of the prose version of the Psalms in the margin. The version of the text adopted for this purpose was that of the Genevan Bible, i.e., the Bible prepared and published at Geneva by the English exiles there. Curiously enough this version was retained for this purpose after the publication of the Authorised Version. The Aberdeen Psalter of 1633 was the first to adopt the Authorised Version for this marginal use. One edition of the Psalter (1595) has a full set of appropriate prayers, one for each Psalm, and also a set of so-called Conclusions. These Conclusions were doxologies, though not so called, and were intended to be sung at the close of the Psalm or portion of the Psalm that had been sung. As there was such

a number of different metres employed in this Psalter, it was necessary to have a corresponding number of Conclusions in like metres. How these prayers and Conclusions came to be introduced in this edition, we do not know. Probably it was due to some desire on the part of the promoters to conform to Episcopalian practices. The prayers were not included in any subsequent edition. The Conclusions likewise disappear in later editions, with the exception of that in common metre which is retained in the edition of 1635. A letter from Robert Baillie,¹ one of the delegates to the Westminster Assembly of Divines, indicates that the use of the Conclusions was abandoned in deference to the Puritanic spirit which animated the Conference: "Also about the Conclusion of the Psalmes we [the Scottish Commissioners] had no debate with them [the English Divines]: without scruple Independents and all sang it, so far as I know, where it was printed at the end of two or three psalmes. But in the new translation of the Psalmes, resolving to keep punctuallie to the originall text, without any addition, we and they were content to omitt that whereupon we saw both the Popish and Prelaticall partie did so much dote, as to put it to the end of most of their lessons and all their psalmes."

It may be of interest to have a specimen of the prayers and Conclusions of which I have been speak-

¹ 25th April, 1645.

ing. Here is the prayer "upon" the 23rd Psalm: "Eternall and everlasting Father, fountaine of all felicitie: uue rander thee prayses and thanks for that thou hes declarit unto us our Pastour and defender quha sall delyuer us from the pouer of our adversaries. Grant unto us that uue castand auuay all feir and terrour of deith, may embrace and confesse thy trueth, quhilk it hes plesit the to reueill to us by thy son our Lord and soueraigne Maister, Christ Jesus." Here is one of the Conclusions from the full set, that, viz., to Psalm lxxx. :—

To our Father bening,
 That made us of nocht
 To Christ our Lord and King,
 from deith that us bocht,
 And the halle Spreit
 that faild ns neuer:
 Be glorie infinite
 for nouu and for euer.

And here is the one to which Baillie is probably referring in his letter quoted above :—

Glorie to the Father, to the Son,
 And to the holy Ghost,
 As it was in the beginning,
 Is now, and ay shall last.

It remains to speak of the music of this Psalter. As we have seen, the source from which it was derived was the Genevan Psalter of 1556, which

contained fifty-one Psalms, each with a tune of its own. Such tunes associated with particular Psalms are known as Proper Tunes. When the number of Psalms in the Genevan Psalter was increased, no new tunes were added, but in the case of the new Psalms a reference was given to the tune of another Psalm to which it might be sung. This was the practice adopted in the 1564 Psalter. The next step was the introduction of the Common Tune, i.e., a tune not associated with any particular Psalm but available for general use. The first edition fully harmonised was not published till 1635. Of this a reprint has been published, edited by the Rev. Neil Livingston, with much interesting material in the Dissertations and Notes; and as this edition supplies the best evidence for the state of music in the Church at this time, it may be of interest to give an account of it. It contains 104 Proper Tunes, thirty-one Common ones and eight in Reports. These last are tunes with a certain amount of *quasi* fugal treatment. We have still two in our present-day Psalters, Bon-Accord and Aberfeldy. Besides tunes in the major and minor modes, there are some in the old ecclesiastical modes, the Dorian, the Phrygian and the Mixo-Lydian. To speak of the Proper Tunes first, a very large number of these are what we call double, which seems to indicate that in these days the common metre stanza was regarded as consisting of four long lines of fourteen syllables, instead of four short lines as with us of 8686. There

is still evidence in our metrical Psalters of to-day of this having been the original structure of the stanza, the alternate short lines being printed without capitals at the beginning. Sometimes the adaptation of the tune to the words of the Psalm strikes us at first as rather incongruous, cheerful sentiments being associated with the minor or Dorian mode, and sad ones with the major. But perhaps we are rather prone in these days, when we have but the two modes, to make the line of demarcation between them too pronounced, and our classification of sentiments appropriate to either too peremptory. A closer examination of some of these old tunes proves to us that there are much subtler shades of difference within the limits of the various modes than are contemplated by our rough and ready classification. And when we take into account the difference that may be made by the manner of performance, the rate at which the tune is sung, the spirit in which it is rendered, whether plaintive or joyful, sprightly or dignified, we may come to realise that that incongruity which at first strikes us between the sentiment and the music is largely due to our ignorance or prejudice. We can say little definite as to the origin of these Proper Tunes. As we have seen, the nucleus of the Scottish Psalter was the collection in use in the English congregation in Geneva, and forty-two of the tunes from this Psalter were incorporated in the Scottish Psalter of 1564. Whence were these tunes in the Genevan Psalter

derived? We cannot say for certain. Some of them may have been taken from other collections, though we have not been able to trace them. But others were no doubt composed specially for this Psalter. And the same holds with regard to many of the additional tunes that were inserted later, when the size of the collection was increased. Some are taken from existing sources, English, French, and German—the tune of the 112th Psalm is that of the Chorale “Vater unser”—but others were probably composed for the purpose, and may be claimed as English or Scottish. Taken as a whole the Proper Tunes are a most interesting collection. Some are apt to be tedious owing to lack of character in the melody, but others are excellent examples of what congregational psalmody should be; and one is glad to notice a tendency in some of our modern hymnals to make fuller use of them. What could one want finer in the way of a hymn tune than the Old 107th? How is it that such a tune has been allowed to fall into neglect? One can easily understand how the Common Tune came to be introduced. The learning of so many tunes—a different one practically for each Psalm—must have been rather a severe strain upon the musical powers of the congregations. As we have seen, the expedient of using the Proper Tune of one Psalm for another one had been adopted when the size of the Genevan Psalter was increased. This was the thin end of the wedge; and in course of time certain tunes were introduced which were meant

not for any special Psalm but for use with any in the metre in which they were composed. These Common Tunes have come in course of time to oust the Proper ones from their supremacy, and to us nowadays, with our cut-leaf arrangement in our Psalters, the typical Psalm tune is the Common one. The Proper Tune had, of course, been known by the number of the Psalm for which it was written; but in order to distinguish the Common Tunes some system of nomenclature had to be devised. The practice adopted was to call the tunes after the names of places. It is a plausible conjecture that the selection of the name for any tune may have been made with some reference to its origin; and in this way some tunes, such as Dunfermline, Dundee, Cheshire, and Durham, may witness to a Scottish or English source. But even this clue, slight as it is, fails us when we meet with cases where the English and the Scottish Psalters differ as to the names, as e.g., Dundee, which is known in the English Psalter as Windsor, while the English gives the name Dundee to the tune we know as French. Some of the Common Tunes in the 1635 Psalter are among the best known and most firmly established in popular favour, e.g., French, York (called Stilt), Dunfermline, Dundee. Others are still retained in our books, but are not in such common use, and are in danger of falling into complete neglect unless care be taken to introduce them in our worship. I refer to such tunes as Culross, Cheshire, Elgin, Martyrs, the two latter

more familiar, I am afraid, to most Scotsmen in Burns's well-known lines¹ than by actual acquaintance with the melody. Others, such as the Old Common, English, Inveness, Jedburgh, Glaston, have been dropped from our Psalters altogether, and are quite unknown to most of us. The tunes in Reports are of interest, being the modicum of musical elaboration admitted into the psalmody of the Church of Scotland during a long period of its history. Tunes in Reports first appear in an Aberdeen Psalter in 1633, which contains two examples, one of which is still in use amongst us and bears the appropriate name of Bon-Accord. Sometimes the tune in Reports is the same as the Proper Tune of the Psalm, e.g., in the 113th and the 137th, at other times it is a different tune altogether. In no case is the fugal treatment of the melody by any means elaborate. But slight though it be, it is still sufficient to require some musical efficiency on the part of the performers; and if these tunes in Reports were used in public worship, there must, one would think, have been a choir to carry through the performance.

A word or two about the general arrangements for the Church music of this period. The melody

¹ Perhaps Dundee's wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name;
Or noble Elgin beats the heav'nward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays.

—“The Cotter's Saturday Night.”

is given to the tenor, or Church part, as it is called. In the 1635 edition of which I have been speaking, the music is so printed that persons sitting on opposite sides of a table can read off the same book, tenor and contra being printed on a page which was upside down as compared with that of the treble and bass parts. The music was constructed on the principle of syllabic partition. The elaborate music of the Roman Catholic Church had tended to obscure the text for which the music was composed; and there was a strong feeling among the Reformers that music must be made thoroughly subservient to the Scriptural text which it was designed to enforce, but not to thrust aside. Cranmer had already, in his report to Henry VIII. upon translating the Liturgy into English, laid down the principle: "The song made thereunto should not be full of notes, but as much as may be for every syllable a note, so that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly." This was the principle adopted in the music for the metrical Psalms. The leader of the psalmody in worship was called "the uptaker of the Psalms." If there was a choir, it would probably be supplied by scholars from the Sang Schule, a relic of pre-Reformation times. In later times the practice of "lining out," as it was called, i.e., the precentor reading each line of the words before it was sung, was introduced. This was not really a Scottish custom at all, though it came to be regarded as such. It came from England where

it originated in consequence of the inability of the people to read, and was introduced into Scotland after the Westminster Assembly of 1643 in deference to the wishes of the English Divines. Psalm singing was fostered by the ecclesiastical authorities, and seems to have been a favourite recreation with the people. There must have been considerable musical proficiency among the body of the people to become acquainted with the large number of Proper Tunes in the Psalter. The historian tells us that on the return of Durie from temporary banishment he was met by a great crowd, which took up the 124th Psalm and sang it in four parts.

The 1564 Psalter held the field for a long time. Attempts were made to set it aside in place of the version by King James. But the acceptance of that version was bound up with the acceptance of Laud's Liturgy; and against this the Scottish Church rebelled. The version which was finally adopted in place of the 1564 Psalter was by Francis Rous, Provost of Eton. It was approved by the Westminster Assembly, 1643-49, and, after revision and amendment, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1649, and published in 1650. This is the version that is still in use amongst us. It can lay no claim to outstanding poetic merit. It were easy to criticise it for its many defects, its pedestrian style, its halting metres, its uncouth rhymes. But it has secured a warm place in the affections of the

people, and we should be loath to change it for any other version that had more pretensions to poetic worth. Suggestions have been made from time to time to have a revision made; and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has carried such a project through, the work having been done with very tender care. But in Scotland the proposal has met with no favour. In 1828, when the impression had got abroad that an alteration was contemplated, Sir Walter Scott wrote to the Convener of the General Assembly's Committee on Psalmody to the following effect—and his words express well what are the sentiments of the Scottish people regarding their metrical version: "The expression of the old metrical translation, though homely, is plain, forcible and intelligible, and very often possesses a rude sort of majesty which perhaps would be ill-exchanged for more eloquence. Their antiquity is also a circumstance striking to the imagination, and possessing a corresponding influence upon the feelings. They are the very words and accents of our early reformers—sung by them in woe and gratitude in the fields, in the churches, and on the scaffold. The parting with this very association of ideas is a serious loss to the cause of devotion, and scarce to be incurred without the certainty of corresponding advantages . . . I hope, therefore, they will be touched with a lenient hand."

The period which succeeded the adoption of the 1564 Psalter may be regarded as the golden age of

Scottish Psalmody. That which followed the introduction of the new Psalter saw it reach its lowest depth. The early enthusiasm of the Reformation and Covenanting periods had waned, the tendency in the Church was for men to become "settled on their lees." Musical arrangements in Church worship did not tend to the encouragement of congregational praise. It was, as we have seen, after the Westminster Assembly that the custom of "lining out" was introduced, and that inevitably had a deleterious effect upon the congregational singing. The precentor, in addition to reading out the line to be sung, had to lead the congregation in the tune. But precentors were not satisfied with confining themselves to the music before them. They sought to magnify their office, and it became the custom to adorn the notes of the tune with all sorts of grace notes or "quavers," as they were called. For instance, a writer in the eighteenth century tells us of a precentor who insisted that there should be eight quavers to the first note of Elgin. The consequence was that the congregation had great difficulty in discovering what the tune was that they were intended to sing. The Sang Schules had been discontinued, and there was no provision made for the musical instruction of the people. The old Proper Tunes had been dropped, and of the Common ones only a limited number were in use. When an attempt was made in Aberdeen to increase the number, the Kirk Session passed a resolution for-

bidding their use in public worship, and appointing "their precentors to sing only in all time coming the twelve church tunes commonly sung in Scotland." Twelve church tunes—to such modest limits had the great wealth of Psalmody set before us in the 1635 Psalter been reduced! But in due course a movement for the improvement of Church psalmody took shape. It began in Aberdeenshire through the instrumentality of some English soldiers stationed there. They had made an impression by their manner of singing the Psalms, and their leader was induced to start a class. It proved a great success, and the choir which he gathered were invited to Aberdeen to give an exhibition. Enthusiasm was aroused. Aberdeen set to work to improve its psalmody. In course of time the movement spread to Edinburgh and Glasgow; singing schools were started which the congregations were exhorted to attend; and while the results were not all that might be desired, something was done to raise Scottish psalmody from the deplorable condition to which it had sunk.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, about the time when the florid style of hymn tune came into vogue in England, a new type of Psalm tune attained a certain measure of popularity in Scottish psalmody. It was evidently inspired by a desire to abate somewhat the severity and majesty of the older style of Psalm tune, and to introduce into our Scottish psalmody something of the vivacity and

brightness of the florid hymn tune which was finding favour in the sister country. The tunes of this period are more ornate than the old style of Psalm tune, depart from the note for syllable principle, and introduce occasional passages for two or three voices succeeded by repeated lines. They lack the dignity and massiveness of the old Psalm tunes; and while they gained vogue for a time, and succeeded in securing a place in contemporary collections, one is glad to note their disappearance from most modern Psalm books, though there are still some who deplore their loss and speak regretfully of the "old Scottish Psalm tunes"—a title to which they have no claim,—which have been allowed to fall into desuetude. It is of them that Mr. Hately speaks in his preface to "The Psalmody of the Free Church of Scotland," published in 1845: "A spurious kind of Psalmody has been gradually introduced, which threatens to destroy the character and pervert the object of Church music. The grave simplicity of the Psalm has been exchanged for a light and florid—and often mean and vulgar—melody, garnished with the airs and graces of secular music, full of unmeaning iteration of words, solos, and responses, and all the tricks and devices resorted to in order to tickle the ear, and reduce the praise of God to an amusement. Not only are multitudes of such things composed every day, but even in Collections appearing under the auspices of distinguished musical names, we see, with indignation,

Psalm tunes made out of popular ballads, and even out of airs taken from the gayest and most profane productions of the Opera Stage. And to make room for trash of this sort, the fine old standard tunes are almost entirely excluded."

The introduction of hymns has naturally put an entirely different aspect upon the situation. The Psalms no longer hold the unique place they did in the worship of the Church. In place of being the sole material employed in our praise, they now take their place alongside of other forms which, as a general rule, largely preponderate in point of quantity in our service. But while we welcome the introduction of hymns into our worship, we do well to be jealous of the preservation of the metrical Psalms. Words and music alike are very dear to us. When our sons and daughters beyond the seas think with longing of the service in the church at home where they sat with their parents as children, it is for the sound of the good old Psalm tunes that their heart yearns. The metrical version that we use was made by an Englishman, and we cannot say anything with certainty as to the origin of the tunes. But words and tunes, wherever they have come from, we have now made them our own. They are among the most distinctive features of our Scottish Church worship, the most characteristically Scottish and at the same time the most musically effective. I would plead for their still being accorded a place of honour in our worship. They are dear to us by many

hallowed associations. Rugged and uncouth though the metrical version sometimes be, it speaks home to the heart of the Scotsman with a potency that a chaster poetic style might fail to rival. And the grand old tunes, to which the words are wedded, have a massiveness and dignity which make them stand out as models of what music for congregational praise should be. It is matter for regret that some of them are being allowed to fall into disuse. The cut-leaf system at present in use in our metrical Psalters is designed to realise the purpose of the Common Tune. But it has had the result of diminishing the number of tunes called into use; and in many of our congregations the repertory of tunes in general use is approaching perilously near the scanty twelve which the Aberdeen Kirk Session enjoined its precentor not to exceed. One is gratified to notice that some modern English hymnals are drawing upon our Scottish Psalm tunes for adaptation to hymns. Martyrs, Wigton, Melrose, Cheshire—these, for instance, one finds in the English Hymnal. But how many of them are in use in our Scottish congregations? It will not be creditable to us in Scotland if we allow our neighbours south of the Tweed to become more familiar than ourselves with tunes which figure in our Psalters, but which we are allowing to fall into neglect. And there is another respect in which the cut-leaf system seems open to objection. It leads to great lack of uniformity throughout the Church. The Common Tune has

not been an unmixed blessing. Sometimes a certain tune has become so closely associated with a certain Psalm as to become almost proper to it, as for instance French to the 121st. But for the most part there is little uniformity in the practice of different congregations; and one hears a Psalm sung to one tune in one church, to another in another. Would it not be desirable to try to establish association between certain tunes and certain Psalms, and to have a greater measure of uniformity prevailing throughout the Church? But whether that proposal be adopted or not, I plead for the use of a larger number of the Psalm tunes than at present enter into the repertory of many of our congregations, and for the rescue of many of the fine old tunes that are now in danger of falling into oblivion. We can make no pretension to any elaborate music in our Scottish Church service. But so long as we cherish our Psalm tunes and give them the place of honour in our worship, we have a something for which many Churches with more advanced musical resources at their disposal may still envy us. Let us see to it that we utilise to the full the precious legacy we have received.