

THE PSALMS IN MUSIC

A brief study of the use of the Psalms in
the music life of the Church.

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I. A General Introduction to a more Specific subject

A. The Problems we are going to face:

1. We hope to sing a number of Psalms...giving you access to the material without violating copyright standards is going to be tough. We have permission for some things...and we will work within the framework of law...and sometimes you will have to use your imagination.
2. Our overhead facilities, although vastly improved over the years, are still not adequate for this large room and the public use of the screen. We will just do the best we are able to do and hope you will bear with us.
3. My wife, Ruth, will play the piano and there will be no trouble at that spot...but I will serve as song leader when needed and there may be a lot of problems in that position. I always thought a half note was one that just didn't do its job well.

B. A testimonial word:

The leader of the discussion was converted, some years ago, in a church which at that time largely used the Psalter for its services. Coming from a singing family it was easy to want to sing the songs of the church and being able to read music in a faltering sort of way helped a good bit. My mother would also play the piano at our home...rather in a two or three finger way...but plenty good for a bunch of ruralites, and we would sing the songs of the hymnbook at great length, especially the Psalms or the "near-Psalms". The first such I ever knew by heart was the rendition of Psalm 91 in the Bible Songs hymnal of the old United Presbyterian Church:

Under the care of my God, the Almighty,
Safe in the secret place of the Most High!
He is my refuge, the Lord is my fortress,
Him I am trusting when trouble is nigh.

Under His wings, under His wings,
Safe in the refuge hide thee;
Trusting His truth and faithfulness,
No evil can betide me.

You can see that we borrowed Sankey's tune while taking the metrical words of the Psalm. I later learned the "uninspired words" as well and today can hardly sing it at all...my mind sees mother playing the tune and my ears hear our crackling voices...and my eyes dissolve!