

of the understanding, but a concentration of the thoughts. Just like a person who is used to very light labor, soon grows weary of hard work, and feels a dislike for it, so those who become accustomed to hymns soon acquire a disrelish for the psalms, because they demand a greater effort of the understanding, and exercise a moral control unknown to hymns. Perhaps the apostle had this danger in view when he enjoins christians to "sing with the understanding." Hymn singing does not lead to psalm singing. Fear on this point is not groundless. Do not those articles on Christian Hymnology, by Mr. Harvey, tend to lead to the singing of hymns more, but to the singing of psalms less? It is also a fact in those denominations which have adopted an enlarged hymnal, the hymn book is carried to the church while the Bible is left at home; such is the case in our own province, and the fact is too well known. And there is good reason to fear, that the discountenance of the good old Presbyterian practice of carrying the Bible to the house of God, will follow the adoption of an "enlarged hymnal."

We come now to consider the scriptural argument for the use of hymns in the service of praise. He tells us that "the introduction of the christian dispensation was marked by an outburst of sacred song."—He refers us to the saying of Mary the mother of Jesus, at the interview between her and Elizabeth, and the songs of Zacharias and Simeon. Grant that these extemporaneous utterances, as the Holy Spirit moved them, were in poetic language; what bearing it can have upon the subject he is discussing, it is impossible to conceive. What authority can be derived from them for the introduction of uninspired hymns into the public worship of God, is beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds.—These persons were not engaged in the solemn act of worship when they gave extemporaneous utterance to the overflowings of a full heart, as the Holy Spirit moved them. All that can be proved from this is, what no one ever doubted, namely, that it is proper for christians to express the emotion of their hearts in poetry. With more appearance of truth might hymnists attempt to prove from it, that it was as scriptural to praise God in the sanctuary with extemporaneous hymns, as with those already composed. Though the passage does not afford the least foundation for either.

Again he refers us to the 4th chap. of the Acts, in which is recorded the meeting of Peter and John after their release from imprisonment, with a company of believing brethren, and the exercises in which they engaged. Mr. Harvey says, "on their release they met with a little company of believers, and then with one accord, in choral

melody, they lifted up their voice to God in a triumphant hymn." He seems altogether to have mistaken the character of this passage. It is not a hymn at all, it is a prayer. The inspired narrative reads thus: "And being let go they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had done unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord," in the original *with one mind*, "and said Lord thou art God," &c. And then we are informed when they had ended prayer, or "when they had prayed," they received an immediate and miraculous answer to their prayer. On what ground he could conceive this to be a hymn is not easy to conjecture. Is it because they are said to have lifted up their voice? This is a form of expression of frequent occurrence in scripture to denote persons speaking aloud in addressing others or in weeping. Hence it is said in the 14th chap. of the Acts, when Paul and Barnabas healed the lame man at Lystra, that the people when they saw what was done, "lifted up their voices saying, in the speech of Lycaonia, the gods have come down to us in the likeness of men." So in 1 Sam. xxx. 4, "Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voices and wept." Is it because it is said, they lifted up their voices with *one accord*, in the original (*omothumadon*) of *one mind*? It is the form of expression frequently used in the New Testament, to denote the unity of mind which prevailed among the primitive christians.

The next reference is to 1 Cor. xiv. 26. This passage he thinks throws "some light upon the point." Let us examine it and see if it will prove a "lamp to our feet and a light unto our path," for certainly scriptural light is very much needed. The apostle says, "how is it brethren? when ye are come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying." It is evident from the verse itself, and from the preceding context, that the apostle is reproving the Corinthian Church for abuses which had crept into it, and condemns the irregularities which disfigured their public assemblies. He plainly intimates that these things were not edifying. When they met together for public worship, every one seemed to follow *his own inclination*, regardless of the feelings of others. Those who conceived that they had something to say, immediately proceeded to speak, others who felt disposed to sing, commenced to sing, and thus there was great confusion and disorder, a number of persons speaking, and singing, and perhaps praying at the same time. There could be no edification in this. And though miraculous gifts were