

by the organist and choir, in the most *artistic style*, in sacred words. Recently, at a Sabbath evening service, in one of our largest *orthodox* churches, a distinguished clergyman from a distance preached. He opened the service by reading a very solemn and appropriate hymn; but the choir, consisting of three professional singers, proceeded to perform an anthem, in fancy style, much to the surprise of the congregation. In the villages of New England, the evil prevails—the same in kind, differing in degree. There, during the summer, the writer attended, for some weeks, two evangelical Congregational churches, where, in the music, every thing was sacrificed to effect. The airs were well adapted to drive away all serious thoughts.”

Do such evils exist? Can they grow to such magnitude, except where human compositions have displaced inspired songs?

The voice of nature, the voice of God, directs to congregational singing, where the object contemplated is congregational worship. Whatever effects we must ascribe to music and song, they are enhanced by the union of hearts, leading to union of voices. Indeed, the union of voices strengthens the union of hearts, and throws the uniting and binding cord over those who are indifferent, and draws them within its circle of magic influence. “Sacred music,” says the St. Louis *Presbyterian*, “is not like prayer, in which, to avoid confusion, one must speak audibly, and all others silently unite; for its effect is heightened by the union of many voices. One individual may so sing as to produce strong emotions in the hearers; but he must be an uncommon singer. A few persons, as in a choir, may produce a powerful impression on an audience; but they must have sweeter voices, must select tunes of extraordinary melody, and must sing much better than most of our choirs. But let five hundred voices join in singing the same piece. The different parts may not be scientifically balanced; there may be some jarring; and they may not sing *soft* and *loud* according to the books; but the effect will be far greater upon any worshipping congregation. Most evidently God has made it the duty, as well as the privilege, of the *people* to join in this part of the service, and, in proportion as they fail to do so, sacred music is perverted, and ceases to be part of God’s worship.”

Such is also the judgment of the Westminster divines. “It is the duty of Christians,” says the directory for public worship, “to praise God publicly, by singing of Psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family. In singing of Psalms, the voice to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with the understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody to the Lord.” Such was the judgment of Jonathan Edwards. “As it is the command of God that all should sing, so all should make conscience of learning to sing, as it is a thing that cannot be decently performed at all