

D. Dana

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1849d

# THE NEW SONG

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A

S E R M O N ,

DELIVERED IN

BOWDOIN-STREET CHURCH, BOSTON.

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BY DANIEL DANA, D. D.,  
Minister of the Gospel in Newburyport.

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This Sermon has been preached in several pulpits ; and by the advice and request of several judicious friends, it is now submitted to the public.

It contains little more than those plain truths which are familiar and dear to the pious mind, and by which genuine religion is kept alive in the world. Yet as it may too often be justly said of these very truths, that "they've been so long remember'd, they're forgot," the author is quite content to act, in the case, the humble part of a *remembrancer*.

*Newburyport, June 10, 1849.*

# S E R M O N

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REVELATION V, 9.

*And they sung a new song.*

FOR the wisest reasons, our heavenly Father has shrouded in obscurity each of the widely different worlds which lie before us. A distinct view, either of the glories of the one, or the horrors of the other, would confound and overwhelm our feeble faculties. Even were it otherwise, such a view would comport neither with the duties, nor the conflicts, nor the comforts of our present state of being. But, in the inspired page before us, the veil which separates between earth and heaven seems, for a moment, uplifted; and we obtain a glimpse of the sublime felicities and employments of the celestial state. Let us then escape awhile from the low and polluted scenes of earth. Let us rise, in thought, to a superior region. Let us listen to the concert of the blest. Let us catch the notes which resound through the arches of heaven, and which engage the ear of THE HIGH AND LOFTY ONE who inhabits eternity.

We will distinctly inquire, what is the song here intended?—why it is called a *new* song?—by whom it is sung?—and with what emotions?

The song itself is a hymn of praise to the divine Redeemer. The inspired writer informs us that when no created being in the universe was found worthy to unseal and explain the book which was held in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne of heaven, and which contained his eternal counsels and purposes respecting his church, then he “ beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, (or *living beings*,) and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth: and he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.” It was on this great occasion that “ the four living beings, and the 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.” Immediately it is added, “ And they sung a new song, saying, THOU art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.” It appears, then, that the *new song* which resounds through the regions of bliss, is a song of praise to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. His name calls forth from the myriads of the redeemed, their sweetest,

loftiest notes of adoration. His glories, his love, his humiliations, his triumphs constitute the theme of their everlasting hallelujahs. But in paying these divine honors to the Son of God, the redeemed are not alone. "I beheld," says the inspired writer, "and I heard the voice of many *angels* round about the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." But even this is not all. The *whole creation* is represented as uniting with redeemed and angelic spirits in adoring the Redeemer. "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

What, my brethren, shall we say to these things? Is heaven a scene of idolatry? Do its arches ring with eternal hallelujahs to a creature? Do glorified saints, and spotless seraphs pay their highest, humblest adorations to a creature? And does all creation unite its voice to swell the mighty chorus of praise to a creature?—The thought is too full of impiety and horror, to be for a moment admitted. What then is the inference; the necessary, irresistible inference? **JESUS CHRIST IS GOD.** He is worthy of the same honor, the same glory, the same worship, which is due to the eter-

nal Father. To pay him this tribute, is no idolatry ; but the first, the most indispensable, the most delightful of duties. Let those who proscribe this homage, strengthen themselves by such arguments as ingenuity or sophistry can devise. We confidently oppose to them *the songs of heaven* ; the example of glorified saints, of angels, of the whole creation of God. We will cherish this most precious doctrine of our Saviour's divinity in our inmost hearts. It shall never, never be wrested from us. We will cling to it with the greater tenacity, the more it is denied and opposed. Nor will we fear to adore, while on earth, that Redeemer whom we humbly hope to adore eternally in heaven.

Farther ; the redeemed, while celebrating the glories of their Saviour, celebrate with peculiar emphasis, his *sufferings and death*. These constitute the *burden* of their everlasting song. "Thou art worthy," say they, "to take the book, and to open the seals thereof ; for thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed* us to God by thy *blood*, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests ; and we shall reign on the earth." Here, the sufferings and death of Christ have a *prominence* which strikingly illustrates their infinite moment and worth. They are acknowledged by the redeemed, as the grand procuring cause of their salvation ; as the source of all their blessings, and joys, and honors, in time and eternity. In their Saviour's blood, they have a real *redemption*—redemption from sin, and all its dreadful consequences ; redemption to God, and to im-

mortal glory. They do not regard the death of Christ, as it has been too often regarded, merely as an example of submission, or as a seal of the truth of his doctrines, or as a mere exhibition of God's regard for his law, or as placing sinners within the reach of pardon.

But they regard it as a proper atonement for sin, and the meritorious price of all spiritual and eternal blessings for his people. Such is the doctrine uniformly and most explicitly taught throughout the sacred Scriptures. Such is the foundation on which the pious of every age have reposed with confidence for time, and for eternity. Deny the atonement; and you blot out the grand peculiarity of the gospel; you blot out the sun from the spiritual heavens, and you tear from the bosom of the Christian his dearest hope. Deny the atonement; and you restore to death its sting, and to the grave its baleful victory. Deny the atonement; and you rob the Saviour of his highest glory; while you strike a note of harshest discord with the eternal song of the redeemed.

But why is this song styled, in the text, a *new* song?

We reply, first; because there was a period when it was literally new to heaven itself. The church, under the ancient dispensation, celebrated the glories of God the Creator. They gave him honor for all his wonders of power and mercy wrought in their behalf. Especially did they celebrate, in strains of rapture, the deliverance of his church from Egypt—the type of a more glorious redemption from the bondage of sin and Satan. And all the pious of ancient time looked for-

ward to the day of the Messiah with humble faith, and joyful anticipation. From the redemption he was to accomplish, they derived all their comfort in life, their support in death, and their hope of immortal glory. But they could not celebrate this great work as actually finished. Nor, before the advent of Christ, could even the church triumphant celebrate the price of its ransom, and its glory as actually paid. But when the Son of God appeared in flesh; and when, having expired on the cross as a sacrifice, he reascended to heaven, clothed with all his mediatorial offices and glories, then a new scene commenced. A new lustre gladdened the regions of immortal light. New raptures of joy were poured into the hearts of its blest inhabitants. They beheld in the midst of them, the Friend, the Saviour, who had recently died, in unutterable agony, for their redemption. They beheld, even in his glorified body, the signatures of those sufferings, perhaps the scars of those wounds, to which they traced their immortal salvation. Hence their new anthems of praise. Hence their *new song*—a song unheard, even in heaven before: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain”—“Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.”

Again; it is called a *new song*, on account of its *transcendent excellence*. Such, sometimes, is the import and force of the term employed. When the Psalmist exclaims, in a rapture of devotion: “O sing unto the Lord a new song,” he calls for a strain of praise more grand and sublime than any which had

been known before—praise which might correspond with the new and transcendent display of divine glory and goodness. The song of the redeemed far transcends in excellence all other songs. It converses with the brightest glories of the Deity. It celebrates the most sublime and stupendous of all his works—mysteries into which angels desire to look—a scheme of redemption which employed the counsels of Heaven from eternity; and which, in its gradual development, displays such unsearchable riches of wisdom and power, such matchless combinations of majesty and condescension, truth and mercy, purity and love, as are calculated to pour a flood of rapture into the astonished mind, and to call forth all its faculties, and all its affections, to their highest possible exercise.

In a word; it may well be called a *new* song, as it will never become *old*; never lose its attractions; never cease to supply to the most enlarged and exalted minds, materials for delightful contemplation. There are few themes, my hearers, which are absolutely inexhaustible. Most of the subjects of our contemplation, as they lose their novelty, lose likewise their attractions. Some subjects which have attracted, and even surprised us for a while, have, on a more familiar acquaintance, left us no ground of wonder, excepting our former admiration. Far different, in all these respects, is the subject of redemption. To the transient and superficial observer, it exhibits little to surprise, or to interest. But to the careful, devoted student, it discloses unsuspected beauties, and unknown wonders.

Every accession of knowledge imparts new delight, and excites new astonishment. And he who has penetrated farthest into the mysteries of this divine theme, is most convinced that it is absolutely exhaustless ; that it contains new mysteries, not only undiscovered, but by finite minds, absolutely undiscoverable. Yes ; in the love of Jesus, there is a height and a depth, a length and a breadth, calculated to afford everlasting employment to the ever expanding, ever active mind of man ; calculated to call forth an admiration forever fresh, and a song forever new.

And who are the happy persons that sing this new and everlasting song ?

The inquiry is most interesting. We have already described them under the general appellation of the *redeemed*. In the context, they are introduced to our view under the description of the *four living beings*, and the *four and twenty elders*. The former term has been generally understood to mean the *ministers of the gospel*, to whom pertained the office and duty of spreading the tidings of heavenly mercy throughout the four quarters of the earth. The four and twenty elders are probably to be considered as representing the twelve patriarchs, and the twelve apostles ; in other words, the whole church of God, both under the Old and New Testament dispensations. The new and everlasting song of heaven, then, is sung by all the faithful ministers of Jesus, and by all the members of his true church, collected from every age and clime, from every tribe and nation ; and by none beside.

A more particular and characteristic description of these happy persons, we shall find in another part of this inspired book. In the fourteenth chapter, they are represented as standing, together with their Redeemer, on mount Zion, *having his Father's name written in their foreheads*. This signifies that they belonged to the divine family; they bore the divine image; they openly and courageously declared themselves, while on earth, as on the Lord's side; and they substantiated the sacred profession by a real devotion of heart and life to his service and honor. They are likewise described as undefiled and chaste—*virgins*—pure in heart, and uncorrupt in deportment. It is declared of them, that *they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*. While they rely on his atoning blood for pardon, and salvation, they imbibe his spirit of meekness, love and purity; they imitate his perfect example; they adhere to his doctrines, precepts and ordinances; they resign themselves to the conduct of his word, his Spirit, his providence, though tribulation, persecution, or death itself should be the consequence. It is added, *These were redeemed from among men*—redeemed by *power*, as well as by price; redeemed by the Spirit of Christ, as well as by his blood; redeemed not only from the wrath to come, and an eternal hell, but from the power of sinful propensities, and from this present evil world. In fine, it is declared that *in their mouths was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God*. That is to say; they were free from hypocrisy and deceit; their profession

of love to Christ, and devotion to his cause, was the truth, and no lie. And notwithstanding ten thousand lamented infirmities and defects, they were chargeable with no habitually indulged sin; no, not in the judgment of the omniscient and heart-searching God.—Such are the persons, and such alone, who sing the new song; for, says the inspired writer, *no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty-four thousand which were redeemed from the earth.* None could cordially unite in it, none could taste its sweetness, none could even enter into its genuine *meaning*, but those whom the grace of Heaven has taught, and sanctified, and separated from a wicked world. It required a *spirit*, a *heart* attuned to its sacred strains. Therefore the impenitent and unholy were forever debarred, and *self-debarred* from having any part in it. It can be sung only by the redeemed and sanctified followers of the Lamb.

And with what *emotions* do they sing this new song?

Doubtless the language of mortals is very inadequate to express them. Nor can we even form a *conception* on the subject, which will not fall far short of the reality. Still, we may be assured that the spirit which animates the new song, is a spirit of the profoundest *humility* and *self-abasement*. For what were those who chant it, once, but rebels against their God, and ingrates to their Saviour? And rebels and ingrates they would have continued forever—wretched by their own depravity—doubly wretched by their Maker's

frown—but for his own sovereign and astonishing mercy. This they feel; and this they can never forget. They felt and confessed it, while on earth. But in heaven, their views of their unworthiness are vastly strengthened and enlarged. The glories of a present Deity dart on their minds new convictions of the malignity and odiousness of sin. And when they recollect how low they were originally sunk in guilt; how long they resisted the call of heavenly mercy; and what poor returns they rendered, even after their conversion, to the Saviour who redeemed them by his blood, and conquered their hearts by his power, how deep, how overwhelming must be their abasement. With what ardor must they breathe out the confession, that *not by works of righteousness which they have done*, but according to the riches of heavenly mercy they are saved. With what overwhelming sensibility must they exclaim, *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy name be glory.*

Hence we remark, that in proportion to their self-abasement, will be their *love and gratitude to their Saviour*. All their views of the guilt in which they were originally involved, of the depravity by which they were enchained, of the wrath to which they stood exposed, of the awful, endless ruin which they deserved, and of the astonishing deliverance which they have experienced, will but enhance their sense of their Saviour's love. And when they contemplate the astonishing forms in which that love has been expressed; when they behold in his sacred body, now glorified,

the memorials of the sufferings which he endured for them ; the prints of the nails, and the spear ; with what a tide of grateful emotions must they be overwhelmed. How must they pour out their very hearts in the song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain—Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.* To thee, bleeding Saviour, we owe all our salvation, and all our bliss. Thy dying agonies have redeemed us from eternal death. To thy cross are we indebted for these spotless robes of righteousness, these palms of victory, these crowns of unfading glory, these rivers of immortal delight.

In fine, the redeemed sing the new song with unutterable emotions of exulting *joy*. If, while on earth, it was delightful to celebrate their Redeemer's praise ; if they esteemed those the brightest and most privileged moments of life, in which they could pour their hearts in gratitude to an unseen and distant Saviour ; what must it be to find themselves in his immediate presence ; to behold him *face to face* ; to perceive, yes, to *see* him listening with infinite condescension and complacency, to their songs of praise ? If the distant and trembling hope of heavenly blessedness was once so transporting, what must its actual and full possession be ? To look back on unutterable woes escaped ; to experience an overflowing fulness of present delight ; and to know, with undoubting certainty, that this delight will experience neither interruption nor end, what varied sources of happiness are here. But these are not the only sources of happiness to the glorified saint.

He enters, with a sacred and generous sympathy, into the joys and felicities of his fellow heirs of salvation. He is transported to find himself in the midst of an immense assembly in which every heart glows with exalted affection to his Redeemer, and every tongue is employed in celebrating his glory. Above all is he transported to see that once humbled and suffering Redeemer re-invested with his heavenly felicities; wearing those peculiar and immortal honors which his death has purchased; receiving the humblest, loftiest ascriptions of praise, not only from his ransomed people, but from angels and archangels, and from the whole creation of God.

But human language faints and sinks beneath the glories of the scene. Let us borrow, for a moment, the pen of heavenly Inspiration. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Let us close with some reflections.

1. We are here furnished with an answer to the most important question that can possibly occupy our

minds. *Who of us will be admitted to the joys of heaven?*—Surely, my beloved hearers, there is no question within the compass of human thought, which is important, compared with this. But important and infinitely interesting as it is, it admits an answer. You have seen what is the employment, what the felicity of glorified saints above. They are occupied in an eternal song of praise to their Redeemer. You have seen, too, that *it is not every one who can learn that song.* From the nature of the case, no unholy person can learn it. No man who is wedded to his sins, can learn it. No idolater of the world can learn it. No enemy of Christ can learn it. None who despise or neglect his salvation, or trample on his commands, can learn it.—It would be obviously fruitless and absurd for one to undertake to learn to *sing*, whom nature has denied both an ear, and a voice. And most surely, the unholy and impenitent are equally debarred by their moral state and disposition, from learning the *new song.* The only difference in the two cases is, that in the former, the disqualification is involuntary; in the latter, it is strictly voluntary. But the *redeemed* can learn this heavenly song. Those who have experienced a *real, actual* deliverance from the power of sin, can relish it, and will forever sing it. All who bear the image of a holy God; all who supremely love, who entirely trust, who humbly imitate, and who cordially obey the Saviour, will sing it. All who are pure in heart; who are sincere and upright in their transactions with their Maker, and their fellow-men, will sing

this new and everlasting song. Examine yourselves, my beloved hearers ; and impartially determine whether you have these characteristics, or not. If you possess them, you have decisive evidence, and the best possible evidence, that you will soon rise and share in the employments and joys of the heavenly world. But if enlightened conscience declares that you are utter strangers to these characteristics, cherish not the hope that, in your present state, you can ever enter heaven, or bear a part in the new song. No: *you must be born again*. You must be essentially, radically changed in temper, in disposition, in heart, in life. That Saviour who died for you ; that Saviour who never uttered an unkind word ; that Saviour from whose lips you will soon receive your final, unalterable sentence—He it is who declares: *You must be born again*. And this change must take place, not in another world, but in this. The new song, though *sung* in heaven, is never first *learned* in heaven. You must learn it on earth ; or forever bid adieu to the hope of singing it in a better world.

2. The subject reminds us of the transcendent excellence of the religion of the gospel, and its perfect adaptation to our race. Surely the spirit which animates the songs and felicities of the blest above, must constitute the essential, the vital spirit of religion. And what is this, but genuine *humility* ? Those beatified souls that behold and enjoy the unveiled glories of the Deity, sink proportionably low in self-abasement. This is their happiness. This is their heaven. Take

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from them their overwhelming sense of obligation for redeeming mercy, and the happiness of glorified saints would be far inferior to that of angels. But we know from the infallible word, that it will be far superior. The remembrance of their original guilt and ruin, and of that unutterable love by which they have been redeemed, is ever fresh in their bosoms. It gives a sweetness to their songs, an elevation to their joys, which angels cannot reach. And while it exalts them in bliss, it sinks them low in humility. This is the spirit of heaven. And this, be it remembered, is the grand, essential *preparation* for heaven. None who are destitute of a tender, grateful, abasing sense of the Saviour's condescending, dying love, can join in the everlasting song of the redeemed. None who possess it, can possibly fail of attaining this sublime felicity.

The same humility which prepares for heaven, and which characterizes the felicity of heaven, is the source of the best enjoyment on earth. It is this which gives a zest to every present comfort, while it gently extracts the sting from every affliction. Feeling that, as sinners, we have forfeited the mercy of Heaven, we receive the bounties of Providence with tender and delightful gratitude. Conscious that, as sinners, we merit only frowns and wrath, we bear the common trials of life, and even its severest calamities, with uncomplaining submission.

Who does not know that the neglect and reproach which we often receive from fellow-creatures, are acuminated chiefly by our own unsubdued pride? The

proud man is a kind of *sensitive plant*, shrinking from every touch; chilled and shriveled by every wind that blows. While the humble man finds shelter and comfort in his own calm and undisturbed spirit. While the one, too, groans under the self-imposed burden of resentment for every real or fancied injury, the other effectually eludes the trouble, by cherishing a meek and forgiving spirit.

So true is it, that that religion which trains us for heaven, is our best friend while we remain below. It puts a crown on all our comforts. It facilitates the exercise of our best and most difficult virtues. It removes, or it greatly mitigates, our afflictions. The man who lives daily on the promises, feasts daily on the bread of heaven. The man who, with his Saviour, can pray for his enemies, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*—this man is but a single remove from his Saviour's presence in glory.

3. Let Christians, in the view of our subject, be willing to die. You have felt the love of Christ. Those hearts of yours, once cold and insensible, have known the heaven-enkindled fervor of that sacred flame. In some favored, lucid moments of life, you have enjoyed a real and sweet communion with your Saviour. In those moments, you have indulged the transporting hope of praising him to eternity. And you have felt that eternity will be but long enough for the blissful employment. But it has not been always so. The world, its cares, its seductions have too often quenched these holy fervors. Too often has remaining

depravity chained your affections to earth, or dissipated them among a thousand unworthy objects. For this you mourn. You sigh and long for deliverance. And this deliverance shall come. It is near. Soon you shall be with the Saviour you love. There, with a golden lyre, and a seraph's ardor, you shall praise him as you wish to praise him. No sinful object, no wandering thought, no languid affection shall interrupt your joy. But to arrive at this height of bliss, you must pass through the dark and lowly vale. And why should you shrink from the thought? Why not cherish it with delight? Why not long for the kind messenger that comes to bring you to the presence of your Saviour, and to all the joy which that presence can give?

And is there nothing here, worthy of the attention and the solicitude of the irreligious? Can you doubt, my friends, that there is a holy and happy multitude, once apparently on the way to ruin, who are now surrounding the throne of heaven? Can you doubt that among this number, there are those whom you have known and loved, while on earth, and perhaps have gone in their company to the house of God? Can you doubt that even *their* blessedness would be greatly increased by receiving you to a partnership in their joys? Can you doubt that the Saviour, who left his heaven, that he might bring down heaven to you, is this moment waiting, with open arms, to receive you? Will you, my friends, *can* you continue to steel your hearts against such love, and such compassion? Or will you,

this day, this happy hour, break your covenant with death, and your league with hell, and yield yourselves, in faith, in penitence, in supreme and ardent devotion, to this heavenly Friend and Saviour? Do this, and joys unknown before, shall spring up in your bosoms. Do this, and you are *made for eternity*. Do this, and you may look forward to death without dismay, and with delightful anticipation, to the joys of an eternal heaven.

There, with united heart and voice,  
 Before the eternal throne,  
 Ten thousand thousand souls rejoice  
 In extacies unknown.  
 And yet ten thousand thousand more  
 Are welcome still to come!  
 Ye longing souls, the grace adore;  
 Approach, there yet is room.

I cannot persuade myself to leave this delightful subject, without offering a word on the dignity and importance of *sacred music*, considered as a part of the worship of God in the earthly sanctuary. We have seen that glorified saints above celebrate the praises of their God and Redeemer in a song. Thus they express their emotions of impassioned gratitude, and holy love. This is their unceasing employment, their sublime felicity. Nor is there any employment on earth, in which we make so near an approach to the work and bliss of heaven, as that in which we sing, with pious fervor and delight, the praises of God. For here we concentrate all the powers of our nature, our spiritual faculties, and our bodily organs, in the same service, and that of the noblest kind. The excellent President

Edwards informs us, that in a great revival of religion in Northampton, the pious people spent much time in *singing*; and that they found the employment remarkably efficacious to excite their religious affections, and to bring down something of heaven to earth. Nor can it be denied, that there is that in sacred music which is peculiarly fitted to solemnize and elevate the mind, to dischain it from earthly objects, and to rouse all its best and holiest affections into vigorous exercise. If such is the high office of sacred music, it ought surely to be considered as something very different from a mere gratification of sense, or a mere amusement of the fancy. To regard it in this light, is to degrade it. It is irreverent, not to say profane; for it is to pervert a divine ordinance to the purpose of mere unhallowed gratification. Never let it be forgotten, that when we engage in sacred music, we professedly place ourselves in the immediate presence of the Deity. We make a particular and solemn address to that awful Being with whom is the breath of our life, and the destiny of our immortal souls. Nothing can be more evident than that, in such circumstances, the utmost reverence is indispensably incumbent. If, as all must acknowledge, an air of thoughtlessness and levity, while we are engaged in *prayer*, is a species of impiety, why should it be thought less so when we are engaged in praise. Who that contemplates the profound solemnity and awe which pervades the worship of glorified saints and angels in heaven, can avoid being pained at the irreverence manifested in some pri-

vate circles, and even in some Christian assemblies, while praise is sung to the eternal and omnipresent Jehovah? Is it not likewise to be regretted, that the performance of this interesting part of divine worship should be confined, as it too generally is, to a very small portion of the assembly? Why should it be so? Is not singing the praises of God a divine ordinance? Has the Christian church fewer materials and incentives for praise, than were possessed by the Jewish church? If a very small portion in our assemblies are *constitutionally* debarred from an active part in this work, shall the great majority, who have no such disqualification, remain silent? Grant that accuracy and grace of performance are desirable, shall all be excluded who do not completely rise to this standard? Or shall a change in the tunes employed be so exceedingly frequent as to constrain nearly the whole congregation to be mere silent hearers?

It is likewise important that the music employed in the worship of God, should possess a character and style adapted to this high and sacred purpose. It is needless to say, that such is not the description of all music. Nor can it be denied that a considerable portion of the tunes which, for many years, have been employed in our congregations, are destitute of most of the attributes which should recommend them to the service of the sanctuary. Far from being fraught with that dignity, simplicity and tenderness which are fitted to excite and to express the best emotions of the soul, they have tended rather to dissipate serious thought,

to chill the ardor of devotion, to disgust cultivated minds, and to gratify only the frivolous and the gay. They may fill the ear, and they may gratify a vagrant fancy; but they starve the mind. It is, however, consoling to reflect that tunes of this description are, in many instances, sinking into merited disregard, and that a taste—perhaps I may say a *demand*—for music of a dignified and impressive character is diffusing itself in various regions of our country.

Is it not desirable, too, that with a change so auspicious in the *matter* of our psalmody, there should be a correspondent improvement in the style of execution?—an improvement which shall render the music of our public assemblies what it ought to be—one of the most solemn, impressive, delightful and edifying parts of the whole service. It is a sad and humbling evidence of the earthliness of our minds, that we are so capable of celebrating, with little emotion, the glories of the Deity, and the wonders of his creating power, and providential goodness. Still more humbling is it to reflect, that those mysteries of redeeming love which fill angelic minds with admiration, and glorified saints with rapture, should so often leave our hearts insensible and cold. O when shall it be otherwise? When shall we see a whole assembly animated with the spirit of pure devotion, and pouring the fervor of their inmost hearts into the songs of Zion? When shall the praises of the earthly sanctuary afford an emblem and anticipation of the songs and felicities of heaven?

