

what you shall sing or how, whether by one or all."

This is marvelous! I suppose he regards (as spurious) such Scripture as Col. 3: 16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Here is the "what," namely, "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs," and "how." We have also the example of the first disciples singing in the assembly, Matt. 26: 30.

Again, to baptize you must provide much water, for you can't baptize without it; and as you cannot baptize every where at once you must decide on a place. Whether you dig a pool, put in a baptistry, or go miles to a place in a creek is a question of expediency, but the providing the place is a necessity inhering in the thing to be done. So too the building a meeting-house, for since the Christians of a given community are to come together in one place they must have the place to meet in of necessity, and this is the authority in the thing to be done. The nature of the place is a question of expediency, but the place is a necessity and of divine authority. Hence a hall, or grove, or brick or frame house, would all or any of them, be of divine authority.

"No reference to a week-day meeting." Why does he write thus when he must know the Scriptures that especially mention the worshippers as meeting for prayer on other than the Lord's day; see Acts 12, and 1 Cor. 14: 16, *et al.* As to "the hour" on Lord's day, some hour is a necessity and in being enjoined to meet on that day the special hour is authorized in the instruction.

"No provision for a Sunday-school." The thing to be done is *teach all nations.* The assembling of the young or old on Sunday to learn is a Sunday-school. The provision is in the thing to be done, and this is true of all expediences. But why all this whipping round and this charging the brethren with doing things unauthorized, as though by their own imaginations they had conjured them up, and had not learned of them in the Bible? Why this? is easily explained. He wants a plug in "an organ" and a "christmas-tree" and a "church paper," &c., about which people

can not read in the New Testament, and which are not a necessity in doing anything that is enjoined in the word of God. The thing to be done is "sing hymns and spiritual songs," now when one plays on an instrument he doesn't sing, he plays. He does something else which is not in the singing and not therefore necessary to the singing, and hence not a matter of expedience at all. If the teaching had been that we are to play on an instrument without specifying the kind, then, as we should have to use some kind, whatever kind we used would be divinely authorized even to a bass drum; but in the absence of any teaching to use instruments of music in the church they who use an organ do so despite the word of God, and in subversion of the plea that we make, and also to the rending of the body of Christ.

Think of the following from one who claims to be a teacher: "You may take an instrument and use it to help read or to aid you in praising God. The use of an instrument is not in itself wrong, but the manner determines." How does he know that any use of an instrument aids in praising God? He says everything must be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, and rightly, but how can he do a thing in the name of, by the authority of the Lord Jesus, which is in no way authorized?

Whoever thought that "the use of an instrument is in itself wrong?" or the use of anything else, for that matter. Why bless you, the circumstances, or the manner, determine the use, and they determine the wrong in everything; and it is the use of a musical instrument in the house of God that is wrong, not the use of the instrument. He says: "If a Christian can use an organ any where, he can use it in the assembly of the saints." Who said he could not? He can do a great many other unauthorized and hurtful things as well.

Read this from same source: "If it is right for an individual Christian or family to use an organ at home, or anywhere, it is not wrong to use it in the assembly." *Shades of Hamilton!* How does he know this? He can know it only by knowing the following, viz.: Whatever is right for a Christian, or family, to use anywhere is not wrong for them to use in the assembly of the saints, in the church of God; and he knows as

does everybody that this is not so. The Corinthians tried a little of this and brought their suppers and ate them in the church; for which they were rebuked by the apostle who said they came together thus for the worse. They had homes to eat and drink in and Paul said eat and drink at home. To do this in the church is to "despise the church of God." Paul and our brother do not agree!

The wild notion of our brother that a man can do anything he pleases in the name of the Lord, about which he can learn nothing in the Bible, is the fruitful source of all hurtful innovations and corruptions, the cause of all creeds and all departures from the simplicity that is in Christ. The Lord save us from his folly.

Now, has our brother instructed us on "Christian Coöperation?" Yes, somewhat. He might have done so fully if he had written on his subject. All that the brethren need is to see that it is authorized, and can therefore be done in the name of the Lord, and they will do it. Its authority rests in the Commission itself, and in the assurance that the church is the pillar and support of the truth, and in the duty to "hold forth the word of life." Whether the gospel is preached by a single church or by any number of churches working together, the thing to be done is seen in the way of doing it (not in doing something else which the Lord has not authorized) and this united effort is Christian Coöperation.

THE PRAYER MEETING.

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It has been said, and perhaps with considerable degree of truth, that the prayer meeting is the thermometer of the church. It stands next to the pulpit as a means of spiritual life and growth in the church. Prayer and praise is the Christian's vital breath. It is the church's vital breath too. Sometimes a church may survive awhile and thrive without pulpit work; but without the prayer meeting never. Then if such a meeting is potent help in church growth in grace and faith and strength we should study how to conduct them to the best advantage.

The prayer meeting is a very tender plant and is subject to very many injuries. One man may

make the pulpit influence a success. But the spiritual condition of many people is the measure of the prayer meeting. This is why it has many dangers. It requires the amiable concurrence of several individuals to produce a kindling flow of religious fervor. One weak-headed or troublesome person may mar the whole. Self conceit often monopolizes the social meeting. The prayer meeting is an institution that no monopolist can run successfully. Those monopolists are proverbially long winded. They frequently repeat themselves *ad infinitum*. These are usually the best friends the meeting has, but the hand that meant to heal gives the blow of death. Some men talk in ruts. They always tell the same tale. This shows that they give the prayer meeting but little thought until the appointed hour. An aimless speech should never be made. And a man whose character is in any way doubtful had better remain silent. People do not feel right while such are talking. But it is a fine opportunity, indeed it is the best time to unbosom one's faults and ask the forgiveness and confidence of the brethren. Who has not at some time sat in the glory of such a meeting, when a wayward brother made that confession which is good for the soul.

Nothing is worse for a prayer meeting than to drift into a set plan. The exercises should vary from time to time. The prevailing feeling should be observed on all occasions. The atmosphere, the news, the company, and many surroundings give help or hindrance or feature to a meeting. Sometimes we don't feel like talking. Never talk unless you feel like it. Sometimes even prayer is not the soul's desire. Humor has much to do. Humor pervades audiences thus, just as it does individuals. There is no better alternative than song. Do not call a social meeting a failure if it on occasions be spent wholly in a praise service. Nothing is more acceptable to God. Nothing is better for spiritual growth. And how often a few bright happy songs has wakened an entire audience into a different humor and paved the way for other things.

Brevity in each exercise and an energetic leader will be found the right and left arms of power in the meeting. Short songs, short prayers (like the Savior's custom), short speeches, short sessions. The ob-