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A  
D I S S E R T A T I O N  
O N  
S I N G I N G

I N T H E  
W O R S H I P O F G O D :

Interspersed with Occasional STRICTURES

O N

Mr. BOYCE's late TRACT,

E N T I T L E D,

“ SERIOUS THOUGHTS on the present  
“ Mode and Practice of SINGING in the  
“ public Worship of God.”

---

By DAN TAYLOR.

---

“ The present practice of SINGING in public Wor-  
“ ship, either is, or is not, an error : if it is not,  
“ I hope our Brethren, who plead for, and practise  
“ it, will be kind enough, at least, to endeavour to  
“ prove it a truth ; as it certainly belongs to them  
“ so to do.”

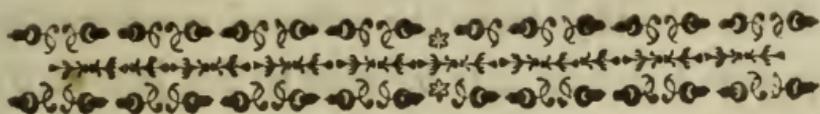
SERIOUS THOUGHTS, Page 5.

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L O N D O N :

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T O T H E

Reverend Mr. B O Y C E.

S I R,

**W**HEN I had heard of your intention to write and publish against singing the praises of God in divine worship, I was very averse to taking up my pen on that subject ; though I was much solicited to do it, by several of my friends. I had many reasons for this, which I need not now to name. And when I received and read your tract on the subject, which was  
some

some time after its publication, ; I had one reason more added to the former : it was this ; I was afraid, from the cast and contents of it, lest I should not be able to do justice to what I apprehended to be the truth ; and yet to manifest a proper degree of respect to the “ hoary head ; especially when found “ in the way of righteousness.” But, when in a few days after, I received your last private letter, on the 23d of December, for reasons derived from that, which you will easily judge of the force of, when you recollect what your letter contained ; I came to a resolution to put together a few thoughts ; and, if I heard of nothing printed, or designed by any other, I would put them to the press. Accordingly, I now send them abroad ; with earnest and repeated prayers, that, by the blessing of God, they may contribute to his glory, the discovery of truth, and the establishment of any who waver ; or the conviction of any who err, respecting the practice in question. I did not think it necessary or

propert

proper to go regularly through your piece, and take it in course; as this might lead to some personal reflections. I mean chiefly, on those large parts of your tract which are so evidently addressed to the passions rather than the judgment. Nor did your requisitions at the beginning and end of your tract, seem to require me to take this method. I am not conscious, however, of having omitted any thing that is properly argumentative. Such as my performance is, I pray that the blessing of God may attend the reading of it, for the purposes designed; and am,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother,

In the bonds of the Gospel,

DAN TAYLOR.

Turvile Street,  
Jan. 7, 1786.

A D I S.



## A

## DISSERTATION, &amp;c.

I. **T**O SING is to pronounce *musically*, by modulating the voice, and proportioning the sounds of the syllables to one another; in such a manner as may be harmonious, and pleasant to the hearer. And to sing the praises of God, is to *pronounce* the praises of God in this harmonious manner. Thus it is different from speaking; from prayer; from giving thanks; from joy and thankfulness of heart; and from every other operation both of mind and tongue in which there is no such melody. Thus it is understood in common life; and this is undeniably the meaning of the word in scripture; both in our English version, and in the original languages; as can easily be evinced, if necessary. But Mr. BOYCE seems not to dispute this; and; therefore, I at present take it for granted as what is on both sides allowed,

II. SING-

II. SINGING the praises of God, is plainly and frequently recommended in the sacred scriptures,

“ Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed  
 “ gloriously.—Sing praises to the Lord, which  
 “ dwelleth in Zion.—Sing unto the Lord, O ye  
 “ faints of his; and give thanks at the remem-  
 “ brance of his holiness.—Sing unto him with the  
 “ psaltery, and an instrument of ten strings.—Sing  
 “ unto him a new *song*; play skilfully with a *loud*  
 “ *voice*.—Sing praises to God, *sing* praises; *sing*  
 “ praises unto our king, *sing* praises: for God  
 “ is the king of all the earth: *sing* ye praises with  
 “ understanding.—Make a *joyful noise* unto God,  
 “ all ye lands: *sing* forth the honour of his name:  
 “ make his praise glorious.—O let the nations be  
 “ glad, and *sing* for joy. — Sing unto God, *sing*  
 “ praises to his name; extol him that rideth upon  
 “ the heavens, by his name JAH, and rejoice before  
 “ him.—Sing aloud unto God our strength: make  
 “ a *joyful noise* unto the God of Jacob.—O come  
 “ let us *sing* unto the Lord, let us make a *joyful*  
 “ *noise* unto the rock of our salvation. Let us  
 “ come before his presence with thanksgiving,  
 “ and make a *joyful noise* unto him with *psalms*.  
 “ —O *sing* unto the Lord a new *song*: *sing* unto  
 “ the Lord all the earth: *sing* unto the Lord,  
 “ blest his name; shew forth his salvation from  
 “ day to day.—Make a *joyful noise* unto the  
 “ Lord, all ye lands: serve the Lord with glad-  
 “ ness; come before his presence with *singing*.—  
 “ Sing unto him, *sing psalms* unto him: talk ye of  
 “ all his wonderful works.—Praise ye the Lord,  
 “ for the Lord is good: *sing* praises unto his  
 “ name, for it is pleasant.—Praise ye the Lord;  
 “ for it is good to *sing* praises unto the Lord;  
 “ for

“ for it is pleasant ; and praise is comely.—*Sing*  
 “ unto the Lord with thanksgiving ; *sing* praise  
 “ upon the harp unto our God.—*Sing* unto the  
 “ Lord a new *song*, and his praise in the congrega-  
 “ tion of the saints.—*Sing* unto the Lord, for  
 “ he hath done excellent things : this is known  
 “ in all the earth.—*Sing* unto the Lord a new  
 “ *song* ; and his praise from the end of the earth.  
 “ —Let the wilderness, and the cities thereof,  
 “ lift up their voices : the villages that Kedar  
 “ doth inhabit.—Let the inhabitants of the rock  
 “ *sing*, let them *shout* from the tops of the moun-  
 “ tains.—Speaking to yourselves in *psalms* and  
 “ *hymns*, and spiritual *songs*, *singing*, and making  
 “ melody in your hearts to the Lord.—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.—Is any among you afflicted ? let  
 “ him pray. Is any merry ? let him *sing psalms*.”

See Exod. xv. 21. Psal. ix. 11. xxx. 4. xxxiii.  
 2, 3. xlvii. 6, 7. lxvi. 1, 2. lxvii. 4. lxviii. 4.  
 lxxxii. 1. xcv. 1, 2. xcvi. 1, 2. c. 1, 2. cv. 2.  
 cxxxv. 3. cxlvii. 1, 7. cxlvix. 1. Isa. xii. 5. xlii.  
 10, 11. Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. James v. 13.

Thus it appears, that singing to the Lord, and  
 singing his praises, is frequently and warmly re-  
 commended in that book, which I readily allow,  
 as well as Mr. B. is “ the only rule of our faith  
 “ and practice in all things of a purely religious  
 nature§.” Mr. B. takes a great deal of pains to ad-  
 dress our passions ; but very little to inform our

understandings ; which, with submission, is not, I think, very laudable in matters of controversy. It may impose upon the ignorant, and terrify the timorous, and the tender conscience, as the Bulls of the Pope, and the Anathemas of Athanasius, also do ; but it will never settle the mind on the firm basis of infallible truth. He says a great deal, in his way, about “ answering it to God at last,”—“ venturing on as we do,”—“ being firmly established in this pleasing error,” about “ answering for this in the lower court of conscience, and the supreme above,” &c. &c. &c.† But, in my opinion, this might have been all very well spared, with little disadvantage to his cause, till we had acknowledged our error, and confessed ourselves wrong. He speaks rather tauntingly of “ *singing* God’s praises,” and “ RE-“ MINDS us,” how we “ all open our mouths together to *sing* God’s praises ; as we call it :” which appears a little more ludicrous than might have been expected. And, if I had not known the author, I should probably have called it *profane* ; because these are not the words of men, but of God himself ; and therefore demand our reverence. For proof of which I refer the reader to the collection of scriptures, which I have made above ; and many more, some of which may be cited in the following pages. I only here observe, that the *manner* of singing may be considered afterwards. With regard to the practice itself, I beg leave to ask Mr. Boyce two questions.

1. As

† P. 21, 33, &c.

1. As it is evident this practice is so much recommended in the inspired volume; is it not the duty of those who chuse to oppose it, to shew where it is abrogated, and where the blessed God has appointed it to be laid aside? 2. If this cannot be done, whether it is not more becoming a Christian, to perform it as well as he can, than to pass it over in neglect? And may not the same be said of Christian churches, as of individuals; especially as these injunctions and recommendations of the practice are addressed to churches, as well as individuals?

III. *Singing* the praises of God is not only frequently recommended in scripture; but it is recommended as an *excellent* practice too.—And this, not only in the judgment of carnal men, but of God himself; that is, of those who spoke by the Spirit of God.—And great numbers have experienced the truth of it. “Praise the Lord; for the Lord is good: *sing* praises unto his name, for it is PLEASANT. It is a *good* thing to give thanks unto the Lord; and to *sing* praises unto thy name, O thou most High. Praise ye the Lord; for it is *good* to *sing* praises unto our God; for it is *pleasant*; and *praise* is comely.” Psal. xcii. 1. cxxxv. 3. cxlvii. 1. I forbear to amplify and enlarge upon these several expressions, for the sake of brevity. It is enough that we have the testimony of him, who “knows what is in man;” to the *comeliness*, the *pleasantness*, the *goodness* of *singing* our great Creator’s praises. I also omit those passages of the *New Testament* (Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16.) in which the apostle informs us, that we receive mutual *instruction* and *admonition* in

in this sacred and delightful exercise ; because, my friend, and I yet differ with regard to the meaning of those passages, and their authenticity in favour of the practice of *singing* in Christian worship. I also here omit all remarks arising from the nature of man, and the effects that melody confessedly has upon the human mind ; though these would help to demonstrate the wisdom and goodness of God, in recommending to us this sacred exercise. These things I pass by, because I wish to proceed on sure and *uncontested* ground ; and to leave as little room as I can for quarrel and altercation. Suffice it then, to say here, that God himself sets his own *probatum est* to the goodness and pleasantness of *singing* the praises of his great name.

Mr. B. takes much pains to persuade us that this practice is of no use † : But he must allow us to prefer the judgment of an all-wise God, to that of fallible men. He very gravely tells his *singing brethren*, that he, “ don't see wherein they “ are more holy, more heavenly-minded, &c.” which, indeed, has nothing to do with the present dispute : but if it had, Mr. B. undoubtedly takes an effectual method not to be confuted : for he can never think his singing brethren will boast of their improvement in grace and holiness ; and pretend, that they are in these superior to others. And if this must be determined by examining all the hearts and all the lives of those who do sing, and those who do not ; which is the only method I can think of : then, to be sure, the debate could not be brought to an issue

† P. 27, 30, 31.

in this age, nor the next. “The judgment of the great day” alone can decide this question. Should the people commonly called Quakers argue in this manner with the Baptists respecting Baptism and the Lord’s supper, for instance; *their* arguments would appear to Mr. B. in their proper colours of ridicule and contempt. The question is, does God *approve* of the practice? The answer is, he *recommends* it, because it is *good* and *pleasant*. And therefore, however abused by some, or however unprofitable to others; it ought to be attended to.

I venture to add, that what the blessed God here declares to be the excellency of singing his praises, great numbers have happily proved by experience; and thousands now alive can, without any hesitation set their seal to it, as well as in former ages. Not a few have known it to contribute greatly to their conversion to God. I could mention some of their names, if needful and proper. And great numbers more have proved its influence and advantage in their progress in grace and holiness. How St Austin, Beza, Luther, and others, of equal learning and piety have attested the comfort, support, and spiritual advantage they have received by this sacred exercise, is well known. But the brevity I aim at, forbids me to transcribe their words. In short, I am well persuaded, that few have sincerely attended to this *good work*, who have not proved the benefit of it: and who are not able by experience, as well as in faith, to say, “It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High!”

IV. SINGING the praises of God is an ancient practice, and so far as we can find, has been continued from age to age; though it may not have been universally practised.

That this was the practice of good men, under the Old Testament, will not be denied by any who believe the scriptures. The evidences of it are so numerous, and so clear, that it would be equally tedious and unnecessary here to adduce them. The whole book of Psalms, and many parts of the Old Testament history, make it undeniable. Nor am I able to recollect any evidence, from the little knowledge I have of antiquity, that it was ever laid aside, or the practice of it discarded in the New Testament Church. But that our Saviour and his apostles, and, at least the Churches at Corinth, Ephesus, and Coloss practised it, is allowed by Mr. B. himself. See his Tract, at large.

Mr. B. prefixes to his performance, what he calls, “a word of intelligence;” which is designed, as may be supposed, to persuade his readers that singing was not practised in the primitive ages of Christianity. But whoever will be at the pains to examine the early writers of antiquity, such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origin, Cyprian, &c. will find sufficient proof of the contrary<sup>†</sup>. I beg leave to give one citation only, from *Tertullian*, who flourished about  
A. D.

<sup>†</sup> Those who are not able, or not willing to consult the *Fathers*, may read Dr. Gill's Sermon on 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Bingham's Antiquities, B. 14. chap. 1. p. 661. Folio edit. 1726. and Sir Peter King's Inquiry. Part 2. chap. 1. &c.

A. D. 200. Speaking of the Christian worship, he mentions these four parts : Reading the scriptures ; singing of Psalms, preaching Sermons, and Prayer§. One of our ablest writers, therefore says, “ We affirm that plain singing has been in use, from the beginning of the Church, and is grounded upon the example of our Saviour, and the command of his apostles||.” And to me it is wonderful that any man of reading should deny it.

Our Author says, “ The practice of singing in the public worship of God, if I mistake not, was introduced and set up in the baptized churches, by Mr. B. Keach, and Mr. W. Allen, in the last century : Such a practice having been never known among them before†.” I venture to ask my aged friend, what kind of churches were the Christian Churches in the time of Tertullian ? Were not they baptized churches ? A man must have a good deal of assurance, who would undertake to prove, that there were at that time, any other than baptized churches. And yet at that time the Scriptures were read, “ and Psalms sung,” in the “ public worship “ of God.”

That singing in the worship of God was the practice of the following ages, I suppose Mr. B. will not deny. That singing the praises of God

B 2

was

§ Jam vero prout scripturæ leguntur, aut Psalms canuntur, aut adlocutiones proferuntur, aut petitiones delegantur, &c. De Anima, cap. ix. p 270. Edit. 1675.

† Pierce's Vindication of the Disseneers, Part III. Chap. 3.

† P. 5.

was much practised by the chief instruments in the reformation, and that it was a great mean of promoting the Reformation too, is well known. I think it may not be inconsistent with my intended brevity, to transcribe a few lines from that most laborious writer, Mr. John Quick †, “It  
 “ was the great care of the first reformers to  
 “ preach up sound doctrine, to institute and cele-  
 “ brate pure evangelical worship, and to restore  
 “ the ancient primitive discipline. They set up  
 “ purity of worship, according to the scripture  
 “ rule.—The holy bible is read in their solemn  
 “ meetings, in the great congregations.—*Cle-*  
 “ *ment Marot*, a courtier, and a great wit, was  
 “ advised by Mr. *Vatablus*, Regius Professor of  
 “ the Hebrew tongue in the university of *Paris*,  
 “ to consecrate his muse to God; which coun-  
 “ sel he embraceth, and translateth fifty of *Da-*  
 “ *vid’s* psalms into French metre. Mr. *Beza* did  
 “ the other hundred, and all the scripture songs.  
 “ *Lewis Guaimel*, another *Asaph* or *Jeduthun*,  
 “ a most skilful master of music, set those sweet  
 “ and melodious tunes, unto which they are  
 “ sung, even unto this day. This holy ordi-  
 “ nance charmed the ears, hearts, and affections  
 “ of court and city, town and country. They  
 “ were sung in the *Louvre*, as well as in the *Pres*  
 “ *des Clerks*, by the ladies, princes, yea, and by  
 “ *Henry the Second* himself. This one ordi-  
 “ nance only, contributed mightily to the down-  
 “ fal of popery, and the propagation of the gos-  
 “ pel.” This is one, among many testimonies,  
 of the usefulness of singing psalms; and the regard

† Synodicon in Gallia Reformata, Vol I. p. 5. 1692.  
 -paid

paid to it at the Reformation, not only in France, but also in England, and other parts, where the Reformation was carried on with vigour and success. Let it be granted, that this (as well as other ordinances) is misimproved, and abused by wicked men. That can be no reason for laying it aside, unless we are to lay all ordinances aside for the same reason. I am mistaken, if it will not be found, on examination, that whenever the Lord has revived his work in any particular manner, either in the hearts of his people, or in the conversion of sinners; this practice has been revived at the same time. Nor is this to be at all wondered at, because it is a practice peculiarly suitable to the disposition of one who is truly alive to God. This is manifest, not only by constant experience and observation; but also by the general tenor of the Book of Psalms, and many historical anecdotes in the Old Testament; and by Acts xvi. 25. and James v. 13, in the New Testament.

Mr. B. however, seems to lay some stress on the *date* of singing in the *baptized churches*. For he not only tells us, at the beginning of his tract, that Mr. Keach and Mr. Allen introduced it among them; but afterwards calls it a “new invention;” a “new invented way, &c\*.” How far this may work on the prejudices and passions of the unthoughtful, the end it is particularly calculated to serve; I presume not to say. But it puts me in mind of the ingenuity of some other controvertists on other subjects. The Papists cry to the Protestants, “Where was

\* P. 5, 30, 34.

your doctrine before Luther?" And the pædo-baptists would discard the Baptists by deriving their practice from *Munster*, and dating it about 1532. They are both properly answered, "the Protestant doctrine, and that of Believers Baptism, are contained in the bible, and were received in the churches, from Christ and his apostles many ages before Luther was born; before the troubles at Munster; and before the commencement of the sixteenth century." The same answer will serve here. The practice of "singing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," not only was recommended by the apostles, and abundantly enforced by precept and example in the Old and New Testament; but was received from the apostles, and practised in the first ages of the Christian church fifteen hundred years before Mr. Keach and Mr. Allen came into existence. The testimonies of Pliny, the Heathen, and the early writers of the church above-mentioned, are incontestible proofs of this.

This appears to be a proper place to answer a Query, which has often been proposed; and seems with some, a matter of great importance: the query is, "In what manner did the ancients Christians perform this service?" I venture to answer "in the words of the learned and indefatigable BINGHAM; who refers to many ancient writers in proof of what he asserts. (1) Sometimes the *psalms* were sung by one person alone; the rest hearing only with attention. (2.) Sometimes they were sung by the whole assembly, joining all together. (3.) Sometimes alternately, by the congregation divided into dis-

" tinct

“ tinct quires ; the one part repeating one verse,  
 “ the other another. (4.) Sometimes one person  
 “ repeated the first part of the verse, and the rest  
 “ joining altogether in the close of it.”

As Mr. Boyce's insinuations, concerning the *novelty* of singing in the baptized churches, will, I am persuaded, have much influence on the minds of weak people, different ways ; I beg the reader's patience a little longer on this subject. When this practice is called, “ a new invention,” among them, &c. the ignorant reader, may be led to conclude, that the baptists had worshipped God publickly, as a separate community, in this nation, long before singing was begun ; and that in comparison of that time, the business of singing is but of very short duration. But these should consider, that though there is good reason to believe there were always those in the christian church who adhered to, and steadily maintained the doctrine and practice of believer's Baptism ; yet we have no evidence, that I know of, that they separated themselves from others, and set up the public worship of God, and formed churches among

\* Antiquities, B. xiv. ch. 1. p. 665. The reader, however, should here be apprized, that Antiphonous singing, or singing by turns, does not appear to be as early as the apostolic age. Historians differ about the time when it was introduced. *Socrates* places it soon after the apostles ; in the days of *Ignatius*. *Theodorit*, in the fourth century. The subject is discussed by Mr. *Pierce*.

Vindication of the Dissenters, Part 3. chap. 3,  
 pages 101, 102.

themselves, as a distinct body, till pretty far in the last century; and not long before singing was introduced among them. It is certain, indeed, there were some Baptists in England at the very dawn of the Reformation from Popery: and thirty-one of them, who fled from *England*, were put to death at *Delft*, in the year 1539; the men were beheaded, and the women drowned\*. And two Baptists were burnt in *Smithfield* about the same time†. But the Baptists continued almost one hundred years after that time, in communion with other churches, labouring to promote the Reformation, and to reduce religious matters to the only proper standard, *the word of God*; which priests and princes opposed, and endeavoured to prevent. And all this time they were persecuted in a manner, which shocks humanity to relate. It does not appear, that they began to form separate societies for public worship, till about the year 1633, or afterwards †: so that till this period we have no accounts of the public worship of the Baptized churches†.

Now

\* Brandt's Hist. of the Reformation, Vol. I. p. 77.

† Fuller's Church History, Book iv.

‡ Nr. Neal says, 1640. But in this, and some other hints concerning the Baptists, he appears not to have been sufficiently accurate. Compare Neal's History of the Puritans, Vol. ii. p. 392. History of Religion, Vol. iv. p. 200. Crosby's History of the Baptists, Vol. i. p. 148.

§ I observe here, by the way, that lest any should be weak enough to asperse the Baptists as a *novel sect*, which has sometimes been inadvertently done; they ought to remember, that the first *Independent* church in *England* was only founded in the year 1616: and  
the

Now Mr. Keach was born in 1640, and wrote in favour of *singing* in the year 1691, at most not sixty years after the first Baptist church was founded in England : and now almost a hundred years ago : and if we consider how many errors in circumstantials there were among the Baptists, as well as other parties, at their first emerging from Popish darkness ;—how full the nation was of Popery; even at that time ;—how much difficulty, and what sufferings they underwent to maintain their ground in more fundamental matters ; how much they were tormented and grieved with unmeaning *Antiphonias* ;—and how strong human prejudices generally are ;—it is no wonder to me that they they did not sooner enquire into, and more readily embrace this sacred practice ; or that many opposed it ; even after that good man had written in favour of it. On the whole, however, it is neither the novelty nor the antiquity of any practice, that proves it right or wrong ; but it's conformity with the scripture, or the contrary.

(V.) *Singing* the praises of God was not peculiar to the Jewish dispensation ; but is equally proper, if not more so under the gospel. By some of Mr. B's expressions, one would almost think he meant to consider it as merely a Jewish ordinance ; though I confess he is not explicit on this head. That it was enjoined and practised among the Jews he will not deny. Now if he wish us to consider it as *confined* to

the *Baptists* being independents, in point of church government, had fellowship with them, till 1633. See Neal's History, Vol. ii. p. 108.

tha<sub>t</sub>

that dispensation, I think he should have proved that it *ought* to be so confined. But this he has not done ; nor do I think this can be proved. On the contrary, several arguments may be offered for the continuance of this practice to the end of time. I mention the following.

We have no account of the institution of it among the positive rites of the Jews, as, if it had been peculiar to that dispensation, might naturally have been expected. Though I do not pretend that this argument is absolutely decisive ; yet it carries some probability in it. And, I add,

We have no intimation that singing was to be laid aside with the Jewish Œconomy ; which is at least, an argument equally probable in favor of it's being an ordinance continuing through the christian dispensation. It was practised by good men, before the Jewish law was given, Exod. xv. It is not any where mentioned among the Jewish positive institutes. The psalmist calls upon the heathens, upon all nations, and all lands to praise the Lord, Pf. lxvi. lxvii. xcvi. And the heathen nations did, in fact, practise this, as their writings testify\*.—The angels practised it at the creation, Job xxxviii. 6, 7. And it will be the work of saints and angels in heaven, for ever.

The psalmist himself considers it not only as different from, but superior to Jewish sacrifices ; and more pleasing to God than they are, Pf. lxix.

\* See Dr. GILL's Sermon, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. where several of these thoughts are illustrated more largely.

lxix. 30, 31—And the New Testament is not only silent with respect to the abolition of it; but inculcates and enforces it both by precept and example, Matt. xxvi. 30. Mark xiv. 26. Acts xvi. 25. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. Jam. v. 13. Can we reasonably suppose all this to be less than a certain proof, that singing the praises of God is to be considered as a branch of natural religion, a part of moral duty; and to be continued in the church as a part of New Testament worship?

I think it would be easy to prove that many prophecies foretell that the christian church would sing the praises of God, and that in the most literal sense, as Ps. xlvii, xlviii. xcv. Is. xxxv. li. lii. &c. But, as this would require some labour and time; and more easily admit the quibbles of an adversary, I forego the advantage, and here farther add, that singing is evidently a gospel ordinance, because the apostle is particularly careful to inculcate the practice even in those very epistles, where he shews that the Jewish ceremonial laws and rites are abrogated. Compare Eph. ii. 14, 15. Col. ii. 14. 16, 17. 20. where he professedly speaks of the abrogation of Jewish ceremonies, with Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. Where he professedly inculcates and enforces the practice of singing. Now can we imagine the apostle would in this manner discard Jewish ceremonies, and enjoin singing, if both stood on the same ground? If singing were not designed to be a continued practice, even when Jewish ceremonies are all ended?

Besides,

Besides, does not singing answer the same moral purposes still, as it did under the law? Hath it not all the *goodness* and *pleasantness* in it now, that it had in the days of Moses and David? Why then should it be laid aside under the gospel?

Again, I beg leave farther to add, I could never yet see that nearly the same arguments may not be used against praying or preaching under the New testament, as against singing.

I venture here to ask, Mr. B. a few questions, Are not both praying, preaching, and singing commanded under the New Testament, as well as under the Old; and one as expressly as the other? Are they not all enjoined by the same authority? May they not all be performed by wicked men? Are there any *particular* directions given concerning the *manner* of preaching and praying in the New Testament, more than concerning the *manner* of singing? Are there not sufficient *general* directions given concerning the *manner* of praying and preaching? Of the *manner* of singing we may enquire again by and by. I add; Do prayer and preaching answer valuable ends for the instruction and admonition of men? And is it not plain, from Col. iii. 16. that singing does so too? And, though a few receive not this benefit on account of their prejudices; yet have not thousands and millions testified the truth of it from their own experience?

VI. Mr. B. seems sometimes to object absolutely against all singing in publick worship\*. Sometimes he appears only to militate against “such a sort of singing as we practise in our churches

\* P. 5. &c.

churches§." He frankly allows, that singing Psalms and Hymns was practised in the apostles' days†; and seems to admit that, 1 Cor. xiv. 15. refers to singing in the Church||. This indeed is undeniably manifest to any one who reads the chapter attentively over. And therefore I take it for granted that our author has no objection to "singing in public worship," if it be performed as it ought to be.

But still he objects against our manner of singing in three or four respects. Against our *joint* singing; — singing the compositions of other men; and all sorts of persons singing promiscuously†. And here he objects to *carnal people*, and *women*, joining in the song§§. Before we discuss these several objections separately, I think it may be proper to make one general remark, which I apprehend he will admit the propriety of. It is this. "When any duty is "enjoined, or any practice recommended both "in the Old Testament and the New, and no "command or direction given in the New "Testament, to vary in the *manner* of performing that duty from the manner in which it was performed under the Old Testament dispensation, it is a good and safe method to reason "from the manner used in the Old Testament to "that of the New; and to practise accordingly." This is admitted, if I mistake not, by Mr. B. and by all considerate men, in many other instances; and why not in that of singing? If therefore, Singing have been practised *jointly*,—

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§ P. 11, &c. † P. 8, 9. || P. 17. † P. 9.  
 §§ P. 18, 19. 29. 37. &c.

and *promiscuously*;—and if persons have sung the compositions of *others*, and that with divine approbation; and if it have formerly been *good, pleasant, and edifying* so to do, and if the blessed God have never signified his disapprobation of it in the New Testament, who has a right to forbid it, or to account it wrong?

FIRST. With respect then to the first objection.—Against “singing with *joint voices*.” It is so manifest that this was done in the Old Testament Church, that I think none will pretend to deny it. Nor do I recollect that Mr. B. questions this. Now why should there be any change made in the New Testament church, unless we had some intimation given us that our great Master designed, and appointed such a change. But instead of that, it is at least evident, that we have one instance of this *joint singing* in the practice of our Lord, and his apostles. Matt. xxvi. 30. Mark. xiv. 26. To say that, “they “only gave thanks,” is to insult common sense. Because the word is quite different, and of different signification from that which is rendered to give thanks‡.—We are likewise just *before* informed that our Lord had given thanks, and when thanksgiving is mentioned, the word is *singular*, and applied to our Lord himself, and to him alone, as the head of the community; because he gave thanks in the name of the rest, which is common in all like cases. But when the historian mentions their *singing*, the word is *plural*; plainly denoting that in this act, the disciples

‡ ευχαριστας ver. 27. υμνησαντες ver. 30. in Mat. xxvi. and the same in ver. 23. 26. Mark xvi.

disciples joined with their blessed master : To dispute a fact so much crowded with evidence, has the resemblance of petulant obstinacy, in adhering to education prejudices.

Some may possibly think, that 1 Cor. xiv. militates against *joint* singing; though I don't remember that Mr. B. has produced any argument against it from this chapter. But it is very evident, the apostle is speaking of the manner in which the brethren ought to employ their EXTRAORDINARY gifts; and not giving rules for their constant proceeding in their common public worship. And more plain still, that this chapter cannot be considered as a directory for the conducting of publick worship in following ages, when these extraordinary gifts were ceased.

SECONDLY. As to "singing *promiscuously*." It is not to be denied that this was admitted in the Old Testament Church; and if *then*, why not *now*, unless forbidden in the New Testament? I know Mr. B. disapproves of this argument †. "It is no where forbidden;" and thinks it similar to that of some weak persons who argue thus for infant baptism, because say they, "it is "no where forbidden." But the case is very different. If Baptism had been a standing ordinance under the law, an ordinance from the beginning, and always administered to infants, then undoubtedly the argument of our pœdo-baptist brethren would be valid and unanswerable. For in that case, nothing less than a divine prohibition could vindicate our refusing

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to administer this ordinance to infants now. On the same foundation, it may be incontestibly argued in favour of promiscuous singing. This was practised in the worship of the Old Testament. Singing is still enjoined, and no prohibition to sing promiscuously. It therefore unavoidably follows, *cæteris paribus*, that promiscuous singing is right and proper still.

Mr. B. apprehends that promiscuous singing is wrong on two accounts. "It admits carnal people to join in it," "and women take their part in the service." But we should take care that we don't set up our own wisdom above that of God. Carnal people evidently joined in it formerly.—Carnal people are allowed and encouraged to attend to, and join in other parts of divine worship, and why not in this, as well as the rest?—Carnal people have often been instructed and admonished, and otherwise benefited in this exercise. Why then should they be deprived of the opportunity of attending to it? If it be a part of *moral duty*, as I think we have proved it is, then carnal people ought to attend to it, as well as others. With all deference and submission to so venerable a man as Mr. B. I humbly suppose his objection against this, arises from two mistaken grounds. A mistaken idea of the nature and design of singing; and a mistaken interpretation of some passages of scripture.

A mistaken idea of the nature and design of singing in divine worship.—He and many others seem to conceive of it as if it implied an immediate address to God, arising from present or past sensations; and expressive of present or past experiences. Now to me it appears evident that

that this is not what is intended by it; but rather an agreeable and harmonious musing or ruminating on any subject whatsoever, in such a manner as is calculated to strike and engage the mind, and thereby to instruct, admonish, and edify. And hence, the Psalms of David, Asaph, and others, which were sung in the *Jewish*-church, were some of them prayers, and some of them narrations of facts; while others were moral precepts, as well as immediate addresses of praise and thanksgiving to God. The whole book of Psalms will afford abundant proof of this. Hence David says, thy *statutes*,—not thy praises only, but thy *statutes* have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. Ps. cxix. 54. Now why should it not be right and necessary for carnal men to sing these songs as well as spiritual men?

I think too, that Mr. B has mistaken the sense of some passages of scripture. I mean, particularly, Ephes. v. 19—Col. iii. 16. He tells us, “ver. 18. in Ephes. v. is—the very “ground on which ver. 19. stands‡.” It is, he says, “the very cause and reason of his bidding them speak to themselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs,” On Col. iii. 16. that “the command to “let the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom,” was that they might be able to continue “teaching and “admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, “and spiritual songs§.” And he insists that the former part of Col. iii. 16. describes the essential qualification for the performance of  
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what is contained in the latter part of it†. But he has not, that I can find, given us, nor even attempted to give us the least proof of all this; nor can I see in what manner he would go about to prove it. It cannot be proved from any thing asserted by the apostle, because we have no such assertion in either of these places. It cannot be proved from any conjunction, or any other connecting words in these verses; for there are not any such conjunctive or connecting words in either place. The apostle does not say, for instance, in Ephes. “Ye must be filled with the spirit, that ye may speak to yourselves, &c.” Nor any thing of like meaning or force. And yet if he had said this, it would be no proof that it will always be needful to be “filled with the spirit,” in order to sing as here directed, and for the purpose here mentioned: and that no one must ever sing psalms, hymns, &c. but those who are “filled with the spirit.” To prove this, I mention only one passage, which Mr. B. will allow is, at least, tantamount in signification: It is Acts vi. 3. &c. “Brethren, look ye out seven men—full of the Holy Ghost, whom we may appoint over this business.” Will Mr. B. say, that none are to be deacons in the church, but those who are, in his sense, “full of the spirit, or of the Holy Ghost?” And yet if he chused to assert this, as I believe he hardly will, he would easily deduce proof of it from Acts vi. 3. much more cogent than can be deduced from Ephes. ver. 18, 19. in favor of his interpretation of those verses.

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Farther, I hope Mr. B. will not undertake to prove what he asserts on Ephes. v. 18, 19, from the two verses being *joined* in the same period, and the *order* in which the two clauses stand. Almost numberless other passages would demonstrate that this is no proof at all. But if he only read to the end of the period, to ver. 22, he may have full satisfaction. Will he say that none *can*, and consequently none *ought to* "give thanks to God," as ver. 20; or to submit "themselves," as v. 21, unless he be filled with the extraordinary gift of the spirit? I hope not. And yet it is incontestibly evident, that he has the same proof of this, as of the assertion I have above transcribed from him. I therefore venture to take it for granted, that our author proceeds to his conclusion on mistaken premises; and that if he had attempted to give fair proof of what he so positively asserts, he would soon have discovered the fallacy of his own reasoning; and that all he has said on this passage, with a view to oppose promiscuous singing must unavoidably fall to the ground. And for the same reason, we are obliged to draw the same conclusion respecting what he says on Col. iii. 16, which is in the same strain, and built on the same foundation; and therefore I pass it by, for the sake of brevity.

After all, I readily grant that ungodly men *do* not perform this, or any other duty as they ought to do, and from a right spirit. But then this can never be a reason why they should lay such duties aside. Their "prayer is abomination unto the Lord." The very "plowing of the wicked is sin." But are they, on this  
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account to lay aside all religious duties, and all civil exercises? And never more regard either the duties of religion or of their calling? Surely not. I think it evidently follows then, that nothing Mr. B. has said, is sufficiently cogent against permitting, and even encouraging carnal men to sing the praises of God.

Yet again, our author still insists *vehemently* insists upon it, that *women* ought not to join in singing the praises of God, in public worship; and says a great deal indeed, in order to expose this practice, and dissuade from it. I think the whole of what he has said on this subject, that is properly argumentative, is reducible to these two heads: "We have no scripture authority to encourage women thus to sing." And, "Singing is speaking, and teaching; but women are not to speak or to teach in the church; and therefore not to sing."\*

As to "scripture authority," if by this be meant, no scripture enjoins in so many words, that "women in public worship, shall join with men in singing;" it need not be asserted. Where is it expressly enjoined that women should attend public worship at all? Where are women expressly commanded to sit down at the Lord's table? where we are expressly commanded to preach, or to pray, or to read the scriptures in public worship? I might ask the same questions on multitudes of other subjects: but this would be trifling. I propose these to shew that these requisitions on any subject in dispute, are generally unmeaning and unbecoming

\* P. 18—24. and P. 45.

quibbles. The blessed God considers men as possessed of rational faculties, and capable of understanding the general design of his word, without these punctilios of expression in every subject.

Women, as well as men have rational capacities ;—they, as well as men, have immortal souls ;—they, as well as men, are made for an eternal duration ; they, as well as men, are the creatures of God.—If singing the praises of God be a moral duty, which I think has been proved already, they, as well as men, are under an obligation to perform it ;—they, as well as men, have received many blessings from God, which they ought to praise him for.—Consider singing as proper and useful on any subject ; praise, prayer, narration, or precept, as we have considered it above ; women, as well as men, are interested in all these subjects ; they, as well as men, can understand them all ;—and they can profit by them all. — They, as well as men, have capacities to sing on them all. They have the organs of speech, and “ the daughters of musick,” as well as men.—They can therefore enjoy the advantages of singing, and experience the *goodness* of it, and the *pleasantness* of it ; and be edified, and taught, and admonished by it, as well as men.—Nothing is more common in scripture, nor more freely allowed by grammarians, nor more usual in language, on all subjects, political, common, and sacred, than to include the woman in the man : and when directions are given to men, to understand those directions as also binding on women. The instances are innumerable ; but needless to be here given. The scripture, however, sufficiently in-  
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forms us that women have joined with men in singing; and that in public worship too: and we have no evidence that the blessed God disapproves of it; but the contrary. *Miriam*, and the Israelitish women joined with Moses, and the rest of the children of Israel. (Exod. xv. i, 20, 21.) Deborah joined with Barak, (Judg. v. 1.) There were singing *women*, among the Jews, as well as singing *men*. Ezra ii. 65. Nehem. vii. 67. The daughters of Heman were under the hands of their father for SONG, and for song IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, and for *service* IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD too, as well as this sons. (1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6.) Women, therefore, have joined in this service; and if the blessed God have never expressed his disapprobation of it, and appointed any change to be made in it, why should they be excluded from it more than men? And why should they be excluded under the New Testament dispensation, more than under the Old?

But singing, says Mr. B. “is *speaking*; and “we are to *teach* by singing. Now women are “not allowed to *teach*, or to speak in the church; “and therefore not to sing.” I venture to answer thus. When women are forbidden to speak or to teach in the church, it must either be understood in the most strict and unlimited sense; it must be understood with some restrictions and limitations; such as the nature of things, the tenor of scripture, and the contexts in question will suggest. Let us examine the subject in both these views.

(1.) Is it to be understood in the most strict and unlimited sense? I apprehend not; for the  
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the reasons following.—It is evident that when *teaching* is applied to singing, it is in an unusual and extraordinary sense; not in the sense in which it is commonly understood, as respecting the regular stated worship of God in the church. Now the apostle only forbids women's *teaching* in one single place, 1 Tim. 11, 12. And in that place he is not speaking, that I can perceive, of any thing extraordinary or unusual; but if he be speaking of public worship at all, which I much question, he is evidently speaking of the ordinary stated worship of the church. Consequently, it is reasonable, and natural to understand teaching there in the common and usual sense. It seems proper, and I think necessary, for women to *spea*k in the church on some occasions. For, not here to mention relating experiences, which might possibly excite disputes of another kind, that might divert us from the point in question; there seems to be a necessity that they should on many occasions give an account of facts in the church, which they alone are acquainted with, and yet are needful to be laid open; and this they cannot do without *speaking*. — If any false charges are exhibited against women, by which their reputation in the church is any way injured; or on account of which they are in danger of being excluded; it seems an intolerable hardship if the women, in such case, be not permitted to vindicate themselves, and clear their characters. but they cannot do this without *speaking*.—If women at any time behave disorderly, and hereby make the church unhappy, or injure its reputation; it appears to be in this case, highly necessary that the church should examine their  
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conduct, and require them to give an account of it, that it may appear in its own light. And this cannot be regularly done, if women be not permitted to speak in the church—If women repent of their conduct, and be ready to give an account of this repentance, they ought to have liberty to do it. But they cannot do this with regularity, and in a satisfactory manner, unless they are permitted to *speak* in the church. If any difference arise among women, or between women and other members in the church, when they have taken the previous steps mentioned Mat. xviii. 15, 16. 17. If these prove unsuccessful, they must bring the matter before the church. But how can they properly do this, without *speaking* in the church? When a church undertakes any thing of peculiar importance or difficulty in which the women may have occasion to be concerned; or to the experiences of which they may have a call to contribute; or in the good, or bad effects of which, they may be, at least, as much interested as the men are; it is right they should give their voice in it, and their advice concerning it; and it appears to be intolerant not to allow them this privilege. Besides there may be, and I am persuaded there are many things which some of the women understand better than some of the men. But they are denied this privilege, and treated in a very intolerant manner, if they be not permitted on any account to *speak* in the church. This may be applied particularly, to the admission of new members, and the choice of officers, pastors, or deacons in the church; on which occasions, for several most obvious reasons which  
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need not be here mentioned, it is not only right, but even necessary for women to have liberty to *spea*k, as well as men.

Yet farther. I think this rule cannot be taken in its most extensive and unlimited sense; for that seems to be inconsistent with some offices which women bore, and some gifts they were possessed of, in the days of the apostles. It is generally granted, if I mistake not, and I think, justly too, that there were *Deaconesses* in the primitive Church; and that Phœbe, (Rom. xvi. 1) was one of these, and the word *διακονου*, which we render *servant*, seems to imply this. It appears very natural to suppose, that an officer in the church must sometimes have occasion to speak in it. But even this could not be, if the apostle's direction be understood and applied without restriction.—Women in the primitive Church, had certainly the gift of *prophecy*. This was foretold, by the prophet Joel, ii. 28. and commenced on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 16, 17.) The four daughters of Philip had this gift, (Acts xxi. 9.) And this gift was peculiarly exercised in the Church, for the believers, not the unbelievers, 1 Cor. xiv. 22. &c. But they surely could not *prophecy* in the church, unless they *spake* in it. Yet again, the apostle plainly supposes that women did both pray and prophecy in the Church, and gives them directions to do it decently. (1 Cor. xi. 5. &c.) They were then most certainly permitted to *spea*k in the church, on some occasions: therefore I conclude that when the apostle “forbids women to speak in the church,” he is to be understood with some limitation; and that,

2. This limitation must be determined, according to the established rules of interpretation, by “the context in question, the nature of things, and the general tenor of scripture. The prohibitions are two; not to “speak in “the Church,” and “not to teach, or to usurp “authority over the man. The passages where they are found are, 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. which I desire the reader to consult.

In the former, the apostle says, “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted to them to speak? &c. I think it is undeniable, from what is said above, that the meaning cannot be unlimited; that they are never to be permitted to speak in the church, on any occasion whatever. For that seems to be contrary both to the nature of things, and the tenor of scripture. In order to judge of the apostle’s meaning from the *context*, it may be observed,—that the apostle is enjoining regularity and *order* in the church, ver. 33. Now it is certain there is no disorder in women joining with men in singing the praises of God, any more than there is, when *men* jointly sing his praises; nor more than there is when both sexes join in prayer. If the divine Being had esteemed it *disorderly*, he would have blamed it under the law. But we don’t find that he did blame it. Again; though the apostle forbids women to *speak* in the church; and though, in a sense, we do speak when we *sing*; yet singing and speaking are very different. Both the name and signification differ: and they are always differently understood, both in scripture, in common life, and in all authors of judgment  
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and credit. Nothing is more plain and certain, or more universally known than this. So that no necessary inference can be drawn from the one to the other.

The *context* will generally be one of the best *keys* to the meaning of an author. But the context *here*, will by no means authorise us to suppose that the apostle had his eye upon *singing*. Let the passage be read (1 Cor. xiv. 33, 34, 35.) and it will appear,—(1.) that the injunction is to prevent confusion, and for the sake of order, ver. 33. “God is not the author of confusion, “but of peace.” Now it is evident, that when women join with men in singing, there is no *confusion*, nor any thing that tends to the breach of *peace*, more than if only one person sing; or if all the men sing together, and the women remain silent. Women can sing as orderly as men; and can join in the song as harmoniously and as peaceably as men.

(2.) The argument by which the injunction is enforced, has no relation to *singing*. “They “are commanded to be under obedience.” (cited from Gen. iii. 16.) But women can be subject and obedient to their husbands, and yet join with them in singing. Children are commanded to be obedient to their parents, and servants to their masters; yet Mr. B. will not say that this is any reason why a *son* should not join with his *father*, or a servant with his master, in singing the praises of God; and therefore the injunction cannot from hence be supposed to have any relation to singing.

3. The apostle prescribes an *expedient* for women, which shews that he had no regard to singing, when he enjoins silence upon them. If

they would learn any thing says he, “ let them ask their husbands at home.” But to “ ask their husbands at home,” could be no *succedaneum* for *singing*. The one could never compensate the disadvantage of being prohibited the other. If Paul had said, “ Let them *sing* with their husbands at home,” we should easily have understood that he meant, “ let them not sing in the church.” And, by parity of reason, “ let them ask their husbands at home,” implies, “ let them not ask questions in the church, to disorder and discompose the church.”

(4.) The apostle, in the last place, subjoins, “ For it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” But it is plain, from the constant practice and approbation of it, both in the *Jewish* and *Christian* churches, that it is by no means accounted *shameful* or *indecent* for women to join with men in singing the praises of God.

On the whole, it appears that the **SPEAKING** the apostle forbids in 1 Cor. xiv. is such as would be disorderly, and make confusion in the church:—such as is shameful, or *indecent*:—such as is contrary to the woman’s subjection to her husband:—and such as will be, at least, in a good measure, precluded, and rendered unnecessary, by “ asking their husbands at home.” I think it is evident that no kind of speaking will answer this description, unless it be dictating to the church, and pretending to teach the church, or proposing questions, to the obstruction of church business, and the hindrance of its regular proceedings. The *former* is assuming authority over the man; and they are *both* disorderly and indecent. But singing does not  
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come within this description ; and therefore does not seem to be in the thoughts of the apostle.

As to the other text, 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. though Mr. B. seems to take it for granted that the apostle has here an eye to public worship ; I confess, I can see no reason to admit that he has ; and therefore cannot consider it at all in point to the present question. But if he will so understand it, still it has no weight in his favor ; as appears by the considerations above-mentioned. I have been the more large on this branch of the subject, because Mr. B. lays much stress upon it.

Thirdly. Mr. B. objects against “ our practice of singing,” that “ we sing the compositions of others ;—and these are *human* compositions ;—and even the compositions of those we would not chuse to be in church-fellowship with\*.” As to singing the compositions of others, this was constantly practised in the Old Testament church. The book of Psalms, composed by David, Asaph, and others was used for this purpose ; and the psalms were sent or given to “ the chief musician.” to be sung according to the directions sent or given with them. This is clear from many of the titles of the Psalms. See the titles of Psalm iv. v. vi. vii. viii. and many others. It is mentioned to the honour of good king Hezekiah, that, among his other excellent attempts to reform the church and nation, “ he commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer.” (2 Chron. xxix. 30.” There cannot then be any moral turpitude in singing the composition

\* P. 34, &c.

positions of others And did the great God ever appoint a change to be made in this branch of worship? If not, who has a right to forbid, or to alter it now? *Singing* is as strictly enjoined in the New Testament, as it was in the Old, if not more strictly; and we have no command, or direction, that I know of, to sing in a different manner from that in which the Jews performed this service.

Still Mr. B. complains that the compositions we sing are “*human* compositions;” that is, not the compositions of inspired men. Admitting, for a moment, the *criminality* of this. It can only be alledged against part of what we sing. For a great part of our songs are the psalms of David, and others. These are inspired. Mr. B. I think, will not object, as some have weakly done, that they are *human*, because they are translated into *English*. Nor will he object, it is hoped, that they are human, because they are *verse*. He has often heard, that the Psalms, and some other parts of the Old Testament, were written in *Hebrew* verse. Translating them into *English* verse then, is only modifying them in a proper manner, that they may better resemble what they originally were; and more completely answer the purpose for which they were originally designed. And if the person who so modifies them, be judicious and faithful, and give the true sense of the sacred writers; they are, at least, very nearly, as much a divine composition as our *English* translation is. And I think, no competent judge will deny, that the sacred ardor of the Hebrew poet, which is very essential to good Psalms and

Hymns

Hymns, may be preserved better in English *verse*, than in English *prose*.

And if some other sacred songs be composed by uninspired men, on other subjects; if the truth of scripture be regarded in them, they are no more *human* compositions, than our prayers and sermons are. For all our prayers and all our sermons, whether precomposed, or uttered extempore, are, in this sense, *human*. And, I own, I could never see any more harm in a Psalm or Hymn, than in a prayer or sermon, in this sense, composed by men. It may be said, the "Psalms and Hymns are not perhaps, according to scripture." The same may be said of the prayers and sermons. And who is to be the judge of this? Certainly every man for himself. And surely none will sing in the presence of God, what he believes to be a falsehood. "But one person judges of the hymn for the whole congregation." True; and so it is in prayer, and preaching. And any one in the congregation has the same right to reject any part of the Psalm or Hymn, and to refuse joining his voice with the rest in singing it, which he has to refuse joining in a prayer, or receiving the sentiments contained in a sermon, that he apprehends to be unscriptural.

Mr. B. excepts to these compositions, because they are "prescript, precomposed, and made ready to our hands\*." But if this had been any way improper, surely, we have reason to believe that our divine Master would have blamed the Jews for it, or have warned us against it.

\* P. 34. 35, 45, &c.

The Jews undoubtedly sung the Psalms of David and Asaph, "made ready to their hands;" and we have abundant evidence that the great God approved their conduct, and accepted their services. And I believe no man can prove that these were not the compositions sung by our Saviour and his disciples at his last supper; and by Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi; and recommended to the Ephesians and Colossians; and to such as are merry, Mat. xxvi. 30. Mark xiv. 26. Acts xvi. 25. Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. James v. 13. Indeed there is no necessity either to prove or to assert that they were such. But, if it were needful, I think, much more might be said for it than against it.

Mr. B. seems to wonder that we don't use precomposed sermons and prayers, as well as precomposed Psalms and Hymns†. Several reasons might be assigned for this: but I think it sufficient here to say, we have seen above, that we have Divine Authority for precomposed Psalms and Hymns; but not for precomposed sermons and prayers. We have also a book of Psalms, provided for us by our great Master in heaven; but not a book of sermons and prayers. There is also an evident propriety in the reason of things, to prevent confusion in social worship, in having precomposed Psalms and Hymns, rather than precomposed prayers and sermons.

Our author seems to taunt his "singing brethren," because they bring their Hymns in their *pockets*, to worship God‡. But taunts and jeers are light things, and can be easily borne.

‡ P. 35, &c.

† P. 8, 26, 35, &c.

However,

However, his “singing brethren” have no defensible warrant for this. When He, who is the source of wisdom, exhorts his people to worship him, he does not bid them *make* a Psalm, but *take* one; plainly supposing that it is *made* ready for them. “Sing aloud unto God our strength, make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob. TAKE a Psalm, and bring hither a timbrel; the pleasant harp with the psaltery.” (Psal: lxxxix. 1, 2.) The Lord commanded his people to *write* a song for posterity; and Moses “did so,” (Deut. xxxii. 19, 22.) And David, the man after God’s own heart, “*delivered* the Psalm to thank the Lord, to Asaph and his brethren.” (1 Chron. xvi. 7.) It is therefore no new or unscriptural practice for people to *take* Psalms and Hymns with them to divine worship: and whether we take them in our *pockets* or *hands*, or any other way, is a very immaterial circumstance; and it is hardly consistent with the dignity and the gravity of an aged minister of Christ to treat such a circumstance with ridicule and sneer.

Once more; the good gentleman I am engaged with, wonders and mourns, and pities us very much indeed, that we should use the compositions of those with whom we cannot unite in church-fellowship†. We answer, the reason we cannot think it proper to unite in church-fellowship with those good men who sprinkle infants, and do not baptize believers, is not because we have any disrespect to their persons, or any doubt of their christianity, or of their

† P. 34, 35, &c.

knowledge of gospel truth, in the chief and fundamental parts of it. But because we apprehend, and firmly believe, that no churches are formed according to the scripture rule, but those which are composed of such members as are baptized on profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.—And we have no rule but that laid down in the scripture;—and we are not Lords, but servants; and must act according to the will and direction of our King and Head; our “Master in heaven.” Now as he has given us no authority or licence to join in fellowship with any who are not, as we believe, baptized, our allegiance and subjection to him, require us not to do it. But if any of these good men compose either hymns or sermons, calculated to edify our souls, and agreeable to the truths of the gospel, we see no reason why we may not enjoy the advantage of their labours, as they do of ours, by *singing* their hymns, as well as reading their sermons, or hearing them preach. If we are mistaken in this, we desire to be taught better rather than laughed at, and mourned over. For neither laughter nor lamentation bring any conviction to our consciences.

VII. Being now on the subject, I beg leave, with all due respect and submission to my brethren in the ministry, of every denomination, and the churches under their care, to offer my thoughts freely concerning the *manner* of singing in *christian* churches. As this path is but little beaten, I entreat the candor of the judicious and pious reader; and venture to propose the following method.

FIRST.

FIRST. To examine the directions of the New Testament concerning this practice.

SECONDLY. To attempt answering some queries, and solving some cases of conscience respecting it.

THIRDLY. To offer a few general advices, respecting the best manner of conducting it; and the chief things to be regarded in it.

FIRST. The directions of the New Testament. And here we may consider—to whom they are given—and what they contain.

(1.) To whom they are given. It would be natural to suppose, if we had not full evidence of it, that these directions are given to the *churches*. The church is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” (1 Tim. iii. 15.) The great support, under Christ, of all that God has revealed. And with whom should our blessed Redeemer entrust his ordinances, but with his servants, his friends, his spouse, his brethren? Such titles are given to his church, from the different relations in which our Saviour stands to his people, and the correspondent dispositions that his people have towards him. None but these have spiritual understandings to discern what will be most for his honor, or spiritual dispositions to manage his concerns for him. None else have a cordial affection for Christ, that will excite a holy care for his glory.

And we find that these directions are, in fact, given to the churches, and to members of the churches, and to them only. These directions are given in four places. (1 Cor. xiv. Ephes. v. Col. iii. Jam. v.) All which epistles are indisputably written to the churches, and to none else. I add, these direc-  
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tions are evidently given in general terms, and to all the members of these churches without exception. For the apostles use no exceptive or restraining clauses, to confine these directions to one, more than another. But, as in all other universal directions, every one, according to his ability, is under obligation to observe them. Yet it may be proper to take notice, that (1 Cor. xiv.) relates to extraordinary gifts, both with respect to singing and other parts of divine worship. These are not to be expected at this day: and therefore none can now with propriety attempt to *sing*, any more than to pray, or preach, or prophesy, according to the directions there given. And (Jam. v. 13.) respects particularly those who are merry or chearful. "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms." Yet it cannot be *confined* to him who is *merry*. For if so, the former clause would imply that none but the afflicted are to *pray*; which would oppose the general tenor of scripture, and the common sense of mankind. But singing psalms is peculiarly suited to a chearful disposition, as prayer is to a state of affliction. The other passages (Ephes. v. 19. Col iii. 16.) are quite clear, as to the persons addressed in them, and need no comment. It is however manifest that those who have no capacity for singing, cannot be under obligation to practise it, any more than a blind man, can be under obligation to read and "search the scriptures." And the same may be said of every other general command contained in the bible. I venture to recommend it to those who are incapacitated to sing, that they *breathe* after  
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the fingers, or take such other methods as they may find most useful, in order to keep their mind attentive to the song, and to the matter contained in it. And, in doing this, whatever mere idle speculation may suggest, I know from good evidence, that the spiritual songs of the church, will be far from being unprofitable even to these.

There are others, whose capacities, both of voice and ear, are very slender ; yet there is in them a foundation for improvement, though a weak one. And it has been asserted by good judges, and skilful teachers, that these, by labour and diligence may make a considerable proficiency. These, therefore, ought to improve the small capacity they have, for the honor of God, the edification of the church, and their own advantage. And this is as evidently proper and requisite, as it is for a preacher to learn to speak well, that he may *preach* to the greater advantage of the people.

2. What do these directions contain ? Here we may observe, that Mr. B. takes much pains to expose “ our present way of singing ; and seems to insist upon it, that because we cannot prove it scriptural, in all the various circumstances of it, we ought to lay it aside. And this appears to be the chief design and object of his tract. But I beg leave to ask him, Can he vindicate by plain scripture, his *manner* of praying or preaching ? Can he by plain scripture vindicate that method of conducting public worship which is adopted by any party, or any particular church in Great Britain ? I freely confess, I cannot. What then ? Must prayer, and preaching, and all public worship be laid aside ? It is evident, if Mr.

B's arguments be valid enough to annul the practice of singing, they are equally so to annul the practice of praying and preaching; and to demolish the whole fabric of publick worship all together. The case appears to be this. The great God has condescended to give us *general* rules with respect to singing, preaching, and praying, sufficient for the edification of his church. But he has not given us *particular* rules with respect to mode and form, and other circumstances in any part of public worship. And, as Christian churches are so different, in capacity, situation, and other circumstances, it appears to be a great proof of divine Wisdom and goodness that such particular directions are not given; as we cannot see how they could have been given, without reducing Christianity to a state of bondage, like that of the Jews. Surely Mr. B. knows that singing is *differently* practised in different congregations. And the same is true of *praying* and *preaching*, and it is requisite that it should be so for the reasons above hinted at. And yet it is very possible that all these different ways of singing, praying, and preaching may be equally scriptural, because no *particular directions* are given; and they may all be equally conformable to *general* rules; of which we shall speak hereafter. Perhaps, if our author would consider these plain things, he would see the impropriety of calling "our practice of singing" by so many ugly names.

3. We return to the Directions; which relate to the *matter* of our songs;—the *use* and *design* of singing;—and the *manner* of conducting it.

As to the *matter* of it; we are directed to  
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sing "Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual songs." There is confessedly a difficulty in fixing the precise meaning of these words, and determining the exact *difference* of their significations. Yet this need not create any hesitation respecting the practice; for on every possible interpretation, the injunction retains its force; and the direction is sufficiently plain, for the purposes designed. It may be proper, however, to observe what the learned have said on these words.

PSALMS in the New Testament, evidently signifies that part of Scripture commonly called "the Book of Psalms." This is clear from Luke xx. 42. xxiv. 44. Acts i. 20. xiii. 33. Nor do I know of any imaginable reason why we should understand it differently here. And therefore, when we are singing any part of the Book of Psalms, we are not deviating from the rule. Yet the different composures in the Book of Psalms have not all the same title. Some are entitled *Songs*, the very word we have in the texts now in question. And the title of the 145th Psalm is a word which seems most naturally to signify praise, and to be equivalent to *Hymn*. And the same *Hebrew* word is the running title of the Book of Psalms. Hence some imagine that by Psalms, Hymns, and spiritual Songs, the Apostle intends the several compositions contained in the Book of Psalms. While others apprehend that the Apostle here directs us to sing, either David's Psalms, or the Songs of good men, composed before that time, as of Zacharias, Simeon, and others. Or any that might be composed in that very age, by those who had gifts for the purpose.

For it is a known fact that Hymns and Spiritual Songs, were composed in the early ages of the Christian Church; whether so early as the Apostle's time or not. Others explain the words thus. "Psalms are such composures as contain exhortations to holiness and good conduct; Hymns those which celebrate the praises of God, for the benefits we have received from him. Songs, those which teach us the doctrines of truth, &c||. How just soever this interpretation be, the Book of Psalms is an incontestible proof, that these are all proper subjects for sacred song; and consequently, that singing is not designed to be a direct and experimental address to God. But that persons may profitably sing in divine worship, on subjects in which they have no immediate concern. I have stated this matter in this familiar way, that, if possible, the most simple reader may form some satisfactory conceptions of it. On the whole, it appears clear to me, from these passages, and from what has been said above, that any Psalm, or Hymn, or Spiritual Song, that is founded on scripture, and consistent with it, though not in its very words, may be as properly, and as profitably used in divine worship, as any prayer or sermon, though ever so scriptural, which is not in the very words of scripture. Nor am I able to conceive a reason why persons should be confined to the language of scripture in singing, more than in prayer or preaching.

4. These directions relate to the usefulness and design of singing in the worship of God.

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¶ Vid. Liegh in verb: *υμνος*, & Polum in loc.

It is evident from Col. iii. 16. that this practice is designed for instruction and admonition. These psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, contain truths, narrate facts, recommend duties, relate experiences, and reprove and threaten sinners, in a manner suited to give this instruction and admonition. This is admirably clear in the psalms of David, to every attentive reader. While these are sung, the melody raises the spirits, and excites pleasure, whereby the contents of the song, more easily engage the attention, and affect the heart; and the instructions more agreeably insinuate themselves into the mind, I believe, I may truly say, that this is always, in a degree, the case with those who sing with attention.

Yet here it is questioned whether this instruction and admonition be *mutual*; i. e. whether a number of persons singing together can be supposed hereby to instruct and admonish *one another*. Mr. B. positively denies that in singing together, and singing the compositions of others, we teach and admonish at all. "You neither teach yourselves," he says "nor any body else§." But I don't see any great force in his reasoning on this head. I think it is not unusual, in common language, to say that we teach or admonish others, when we repeat to them what others have said or written, as well as when we speak from our own knowledge or experience.—And if the psalms which the churches were directed to sing, were the psalms of David, which is the meaning of the

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same word every where in the New Testament, and therefore most reasonably so understood here; then it is certain the churches did sing what was precomposed by others, for instruction and admonition among themselves. Consequently, it is certain, that singing precomposed forms, is perfectly consistent with teaching, so understood. And if the words in Col. iii. 16. be expressive of *mutual* teaching, then this practice is undeniably consistent with teaching mutually, or “teaching one another.

I say, “if the words be expressive of *mutual* teaching;” for though this is generally taken for granted, I cannot help doubting it†. I confess I am never fond of seeing the original referred to, and the common version changed in order to gain a point; though it may give light to a subject on some special occasions. However, lest Mr. B. should think I wish, in the present case, to take an advantage of him, I will beg leave to relate a simple fact, which, I hope, he will not ascribe to ostentation; and leave

‡ Good Mr. REES, in his Pamphlet on Singing (p. 29.) speaking of the Greek word *εαυτους*, used Col. iii. 16. says, “If the word be fairly examined, it denotes *mutuality*; or it necessarily implies doing a thing mutually, from one side to another.” Leigh, on the other hand, understands the *text*, in the common way; yet differs from Rees, as to the meaning of the *Greek Word*. His *salvo* is, *εαυτοις* pro *αλληλοις* usurpatur, Ephes. iv, 32. & *εαυτους* pro *αλληλους*, Col. iii. 16,” But neither of them gives proofs, only refers to Ephes. iv. 32: And I submit it to the genuine Critic, whether the sentiment be not too easily taken for granted, by Expositors in general.

leave him and the reader to draw the conclusion.

When I was carefully considering these two passages, Ephes. v. 19. Col. iii. 16. I was struck, as I have been before, to find the same pronoun rendered in Ephes. v. 19. "yourselves," and in Col. iii. 16. "one another." Upon this, I resolved deliberately to examine the Greek Testament on the subject. The result is, unless I have counted or judged wrong, that I find the same word used two hundred and seventy-three times; and there are only four places, besides the two in question, in which there is even the appearance of *mutuality*. The four places are, Ephes. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13. Heb. iii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 10. and how far it is absolutely necessary to understand the word as denoting mutuality in these places, I shall at present submit to those who are capable judges. But certainly, if the word in Col. iii. 16. be capable of another interpretation, one would not wish to explain it in a manner different from the general signification of it.

I grant, that "teaching and admonishing yourselves," is a little uncouth: but "speaking to yourselves," Ephes. v. 19. and "comfort yourselves" 1 Thes. v. 11. are nearly as much so. With these hints, however, simple as they are, I leave the subject to those who have leisure and inclination to consider it more minutely. And, for the present, I venture to give it as my own opinion, that not *mutual*, but *personal* instruction and admonition are designed by singing, and intended in Col. iii. 16.

5. Respecting the *manner* of singing. Here a few general remarks may deserve regard. (1.)  
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We have no particular directions given in the New Testament, that I remember, for the *manner of conducting* any part of divine worship. The New Testament is, in this, as well as in other respects, a “a law of liberty;” Our blessed Saviour perfectly knew that his followers would be attended with such a variety of differing circumstances as might, in many cases, make it very intrinsically to be tied up to *particular rules*; and therefore in his wisdom and love, he has not done it. Many wise and gracious purposes appear to be hereby answered. Now, as we have no particular direction given us with regard to any part of publick worship. it is no wonder we have none concerning the *manner of singing*. Nevertheless, we have sufficient *general* directions concerning every part of worship, and singing among the rest. (2.) It is very plain we have authority in the New Testament for *joint* singing, from the example of our Lord and his disciples, (Mat. xxvi. 30. Mark xiv. 26.) And it is most natural and reasonable, as all men must allow, to understand Acts xvi. 25, as an example of it.—But it is clear that a person may sing to advantage, and in a manner that is pleasing to God, when no other joins with him. James v. 13. “Is ANY merry, (or chearful, “*ευθυμισι*) let him sing Psalms.”—I add, that we learn from 1 Cor. xiv. that this, as well as other parts of divine worship, was performed in an *extraordinary* manner. But this cannot be a rule for other churches, or for after ages to be *confined* to; because then it would follow that all divine worship must be laid aside when extraordinary gifts ceased: which I  
hope

hope none will be desperate enough to assert. Thus it appears that we have clear authority for *joint*, for *separate*, and for *extraordinary* singing in the New Testament. (3.) We cannot, I think, learn with certainty, whether the directions given in Eph. v. and Col. iii. relate to public worship or no. To me it appears that they may justly be applied to any of the cases abovementioned. For whether the whole church be assembled, or only two or three; or a person be alone; in all these cases, we may "speak "to ourselves," and "teach and admonish ourselves in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual "Songs."

The *general* directions concerning this and every other part of divine worship, are such as these, "Let all things be done to *edifying*." 1 Cor. xiv. 26. "Let all things be done *decently* and in "order," ver. 40. "Whatsoever ye do, do all "to the *glory of God*." 1 Cor. x. 31. "Let all "your things be done with *charity*." 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

It is evident, at first sight, that these general rules are to be applied to all that is done in the church of Christ, and in the worship of God, and ought to be religiously kept in view in the performance of all, by every one concerned. But to enlarge particularly on the full import and intention of all these rules, would lead me far beyond my intended brevity.—And the *glory of God*;—the *edification* of our souls in knowledge, faith, comfort, and holiness;—*decency* and *order*; so as that every thing may obtain the approbation, as much as possible, of every wise, thoughtful, and good man; and harmony and  
*love*

*love*; that no mind may be hurt, no one's spirit embittered, no one deprived of his advantages; no one's affections alienated from any of his brethren;—these, I say, are such easy phrases, and the ideas conveyed by them so obvious, and so commonly understood by every church of Christ;—and can be so readily illustrated by every minister, and almost by any of the brethren, that there seems to be nothing requisite, but that our minds be properly influenced by the fear and love of God, in order to put them in practice. I may just observe, however,

1. That all these *general* directions are most evidently given to the church, and to every member of it without exception; and to none but those in church fellowship: and consequently all who are in church fellowship have a right, and are under the strongest obligation to see that they be attended to; and to give all the assistance they can in putting them in practice. And none can be clear before God, who does not observe them; though it is evident that those who have most understanding, and most influence in the church, are culpable in a peculiar degree, if they neglect them.

2. They all admit of variety, according to the different circumstances of churches, and of individual members. This is the case in singing, preaching, and prayer; and in almost every other branch of worship. The situations, the capacities, the dispositions, and even the prejudices of different individuals, *may*, and I think *ought*, to have some influence here, in order that these general rules may be all regarded, and kept in view. In preaching, for instance, the  
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same kind of address, the same style, the same method of handling a text; that would suit and profit one church, would be unsuitable and unprofitable to another. The instances by which this might be illustrated, are almost numberless. It is also the case with respect to *singing*. Some churches are well improved and far advanced in the knowledge and practice of it; and are situated among those, who, in general, understand it well. Some are directly the contrary. Now it is beyond a doubt with me, that one method of singing would be *edifying*, would tend to *love* and *harmony*, would be *orderly* and *decent*, in one of these churches, and yet would be quite different, and have a quite different effect in the other. And cases of this kind are easily multiplied by every minister, and by every man of consideration and judgment; and applied to every branch of worship. Mr. B. indeed says, "All the churches did undoubtedly observe one and the same method of carrying on and performing the several parts of publick worship." But he has given us no proof of the truth of this assertion. And if he mean with respect to *mode* and *form*, that they all sung and preached, and prayed exactly in the same method, I am persuaded it is both unscriptural and unreasonable to suppose any such thing. We can find no method prescribed to all the churches, and therefore there was no method needful to be thus universally attended to. The capacities of ministers, as well as of people, will hardly admit of it. The directions mentioned above,  
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and many others, suppose a difference in these and all other indifferent matters ; and therefore imply, that they did not in all things follow the same method. Their different circumstances would render the same method impracticable, consistent with observing the rules abovementioned. And therefore, it cannot, I think, be rationally supposed, that they were exactly confined to the same method. This leads me to observe,

3. That these *general* directions require close consideration, and wise and serious consultations in every church of Christ ; in order to be persuaded that they do worship God in that *manner* which is, on the whole, best calculated to answer these noble ends, and conformable to these rules ; that is, that all things be “ done to edifying, —decently, and in order,—to the glory of God,—and with charity.” Singing, praying, and preaching are all strictly enjoined, are all proper exercises for seasons of publick worship ; and have all, as far as we can learn, been attended to in publick worship in all ages. But we have no particular rules for the *manner* of performing any one of these exercises, that I can recollect. And therefore, the rules abovementioned are to be religiously kept in view ; and every minister, and every church evidently ought to consider all the circumstances of the whole community, so far as possible, and apply the rules to the circumstances, and act accordingly.

4. As no plan is calculated for general good, which may not in some instances, be against the taste, or interest of individuals ; it may be so in  
this

this case, after all that is done to make the singing, or any other part of worship, as generally agreeable and profitable as may be. When it so happens, then is the time to practise those duties of *submission* and *subjection* one to another, which are required of all the members of churches, which particularly suit these circumstances; and which are so amiable, useful, and honourable, wherever they are practised. “Ye  
 “ younger submit yourselves to the elder;  
 “ yea all of you be subject one to another;  
 “ and be clothed with humility.” “Submit  
 “ yourselves one to another, in the fear of  
 “ God †.” And where this care is taken, and these duties practised, there is no great danger of any thing being done materially wrong; or any part of divine worship being performed in a manner that is displeasing to God; or, on the whole, unprofitable to men. I proceed,

SECONDLY. To attempt the solution of some difficulties, or cases of conscience, that appear important to some persons, respecting the *manner* of singing.

I. Is it right to sing *Anthems* or Songs in prose, in public worship?

I answer, however profitably a single person, or a few persons together may sing these, I cannot think them a proper part of the *public* worship of Almighty God; for such reasons as the following.—All the members of churches are directed to join in singing, as we have seen above; and it is evidently incumbent on them, so far as they can. But few can join in the

† Ephes. v. 21:      1 Pet. v. 5.

singing of *Anthems*; nor have they sufficient time or skill to learn them. And therefore, if Anthems be sung, many of the brethren will generally be deprived of their privileges, and of an opportunity of doing their duty in the worship of God. One capital rule is, "Let all things be done to edifying." But, however it may please the ear, experience shews that the singing of Anthems is not so edifying to the soul, as Songs in verse, that are set to plain tunes.—The Psalms and Songs contained in Scripture, for the use of the Old Testament Church, were wrote in *verse*; which is, at least, a tacit admonition not to sing in *prose*, and a proof that singing in prose, in the worship of God is unscriptural.—We have no evidence that Christ, or his apostles, or the primitive church, ever sung *Anthems*; but good evidence that it took its rise in the fourth century, when the church was filling with corruptions, and popery was fast advancing towards its height§. —This, and all *antiphonal* singing, generally prevents many from the advantage and pleasure they would otherwise have in divine worship, and has generally been the foundation of setting up a *choir* of singers, many of them vain and carnal, to perform the worship of the church-members, whose right it is; and thus many of the members either perform not this worship at all, or they do it by *proxy*, which is vile in the extreme. And I should be glad to know why we may not pray, and receive the Lord's supper

§ Peirce's Vindication of Dissenters, Part iii. p. 101.  
&c. Tans'ur's Elements of Music displayed, p. 190.

by

by proxy, as well as sing by proxy; and why carnal people might not as well perform every other duty for us, as sing for us?—And that this practice destroys the solemnity, and spirituality of divine worship is too manifest to need a formal proof. Many other evils naturally follow, and have in fact followed this way of singing, which, for the sake of brevity I here pass over. But they would all be prevented, if singing were considered, as it ought to be, as *peculiarly* the business of the church; and if it were performed with that *gravity* and *simplicity* which are always requisite in religious matters, and which are the two chief glories of Christianity.

Q. 2. Ought Organs, and musical Instruments to be used in Christian Worship?

I answer, I am persuaded they ought not; for—they are not once mentioned in the New Testament which is the chief directory of Christians—And it is certain they were not introduced into the church till Popery had nearly arrived to its height. Even Bellarmine himself does not pretend that they began to be used sooner than A. D. 660. And there is good reason for supposing that they were far from being even so early as that age†. And, to me it is wonderful that any who fear God, can give countenance to them.

Q. 3. Is it right to learn to sing by Notes?

I answer; To me it appears quite proper, and laudable, for those who have time and capacity for it. For—It is plain the Jews taught

this regularly, as other arts are taught. 1 Chron. vi. 31. xv. 22. 27. 2 Chron. xxiii. 13.—Singing must be performed “decently, and in order.” Nothing can be so done, that is not done *properly*. Nothing can be done *properly* that is not properly learnt. And the Notes most properly teach to sing with exactness and propriety.—Singing without *harmony* is most evidently indecent and disorderly. There cannot be harmony unless there be uniformity of voice, and sound : and to obtain this uniformity, nothing can be more advantageous than to have the Tune exactly pricked in Notes, and learnt from them.—A tune is nothing more than a collection of sounds properly modified and proportioned to each other, which is learnt by the position and form of the Notes. These sounds may undoubtedly be learnt, with considerable exactness by the *ear*. But every one acquainted with science well knows, that what is learnt both by *eye* and *ear* at the same time, is learnt with most ease, and to greater perfection.—And there is clearly the same reason why a singer should learn to sing by rules and notes, as there is for a preacher to have learnt the rules of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric, to enable him to speak properly, to reason justly, and to address mankind in an agreeable manner. And no man of understanding can dispute the propriety of this in a preacher. Yet I beg leave here to suggest, to prevent altercations and impositions in the church; that though learning to sing by pricked notes is evidently proper and laudable, in those who have opportunity; yet this is by no means absolutely *necessary*  
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for all who join in singing. Because—it is no where commanded in scripture.—And it is a known fact, that persons can learn to sing with sufficient exactness by the ear. Many can speak with tolerable propriety without learning Grammar by written rules ; can reason justly enough for common purposes, without reading a system of Logic ; and can instruct and persuade forcibly and agreeably, without making themselves masters of a Treatise of Rhetoric. I therefore conclude, that it would be well for all to learn the Notes, who can do it conveniently and consistently with other duties and engagements ; and that those who cannot, should unite with the brethren and assist each other as well as they are able, and all harmoniously join together in singing to the glory of God.

Q.4. Ought *carnal* people, or our own *children*, to join with us in singing the praises of God ?

Ans. To me it is clear that they ought. For,—consider singing as a *natural* action ; they are, in this view, as capable of performing it as others.—Consider it as a part of worship, and a *moral* duty, as prayer and hearing are, which, I think, has been already proved ; in this view, it is binding on all men, converted and unconverted.—Consider the advantages to be received from it ; *instruction* and *admonition*. They stand in need of these, and are capable of receiving them, through the blessing of God, as well as others ; and we know that some unconverted persons have received them in this part of worship.—Many places in the Psalms, exhort *all* men to sing to the Lord, and to sing his praises.—The objection, that “ they don’t experience “ what they sing ” has no weight at all, as we

have seen before, because that is unnecessary, from the very design of singing.

Q. 5. Is it right to sing in parts? And if so, in how many parts?

Ans. I know of no scripture, nor any rational argument, which militates against singing in parts, admitting it be done in *love*, and appear to be most for the spiritual *edification* of the church,—and supposing that upon mature consideration, it evidently appear to be most for the *glory of God*.—It cannot be denied that different voices will *best* suit different parts: and this, separately considered, may be allowed to be a plausible argument in favor of singing in parts. Yet this argument is by no means decisive; because it is well known that those who can sing the other, especially the higher parts, can generally join in the Tenor.—Singing in parts, whether more or fewer, is a matter of choice; and I think all men will acknowledge, that those who sing in one part only, sing as *properly*, though not as *melodiously* as those who sing in many. And if this, upon serious examination, should be found more to the edification of the church, this edification will be a rich compensation for defect in point of melody.—Because generally, the greatest part in most churches, have not such fine sensations, nor are so enamoured with the finest melody; as some others are. Yet these plain souls, (admit the expression) are to be edified, as well as the rest. When this is considered, perhaps it will appear that the simplest and plainest manner of singing will answer the best end in most churches. Singing in *two* parts, is  
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I think, most generally practised in Christian Churches; and in my opinion, it generally is the most profitable. But wherever it becomes a subject of controversy, there most evidently ought to be a serious consultation; and as it is a matter of mere choice, every member in the church has a right to give his voice and be heard upon it. The edification of all is to be regarded, and their voices, their dispositions, and sensations must be all tenderly examined, and the practice settled and regulated accordingly.

Q. 6. Who ought to be chiefly consulted, and most regarded in chusing the *Tunes* that shall be sung in divine worship, if this be debated in the church?

Ans. All undoubtedly ought to judge what is right, and to reason concerning it, according to the general Rules we have so often referred to. But there are frequently some who are fond of finer Musick and can profit by it too; while others cannot join in it, because they cannot understand it; and therefore cannot profit by it. Now in this case, and in every other, where indispensable duty does not bind, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself." Rom. xv. 1, 2, 3.—Reason and common humanity require this, For those who can be profited by finer and more difficult music, can be profited also by the plain and easy; and they can edify themselves at *other times*, by singing Psalms in Tunes which are  
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beyond the capacities of many of their brethren. It therefore looks cruel and inhuman to sing those tunes when their weaker brethren ought to join with them.—Consider the order of well-regulated families. In these, whatever belongs to real business, and to the interest of the parents or of the family in general, those children who are arrived at understanding and strength of body are charged to take the care of; and however disagreeable to the infants, this must be done. But whatever is merely circumstantial, and, according to the family phrase, “ signifies little or nothing,” the *children* must be pleased in this; and those who are grown to understanding must deny themselves. This family order is founded in nature, and there is every reason for observing it in the church of God.—Yet all ought to remember, that nothing is to be done in the church merely for the *pleasure* of Individuals; but the *edification* of the whole. 1 Cor. xiv.

Q. 7. Ought unconverted persons, who are not in church fellowship, to have *authority* in managing or directing this part of Christian worship?

Ans. We undoubtedly may, and ought to oblige even these, so far as we are able, consistent with the “edification of the body of Christ.” And this ought to be done in preaching, prayer, and every other part of worship. But certainly they ought not to have any such authority, as that mentioned in the Query. For—these are generally young persons; and therefore cannot be supposed to have examined things of this kind; or to be qualified to judge what is right  
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and wrong, as persons who have authority, or take the lead in divine worship ought to be.— They are too commonly *unsteady* in their tempers and more led by fancy than truth; so that giving *authority* to these, is like committing the direction of a ship to an unskilful pilot; the consequences of it may be fatal.— Besides, these not being converted, or “ led by the Spirit of “ God,” cannot be supposed to be so truly conscientious in consulting the edification of the whole church, as all who direct the worship of it ought to be.— Again, *experience* is one of the best helps in directing divine matters for universal edification: but edification supposes a *foundation laid*, of which these have no *experience*; and therefore the *authority* now in question is inconsistent with their character and state.— Farther, such people are not only *ignorant*, but frequently *obstinate* too; and unwilling to be controlled, and set right, when they are wrong. And such a temper as this utterly disqualifies any man for authority and direction in divine matters. Even a *minister* must not be *self-willed*. Tit. i. 7.— Once more, they neither have, nor (as unconverted) can have that sensible and sympathetic attachment to the interests of the church, and of the weak and ignorant in it, which is absolutely necessary in directing divine worship; that such directors may be excited to zeal, self-denial, and resolution, in studying, and labouring to promote the spiritual welfare of the whole church.— And lastly the directions concerning singing, are not given to these, as we have seen above; but to churches, and members of churches.

It may be thought I have have been too minute in the foregoing remarks. But the state of some churches, and the views of some persons, appear to me to afford a sufficient apology. And for the same reason, I shall venture,

THIRDLY. To mention a few such remarks and *rules*, as I think will be naturally collected from what has been said; and, if I mistake not, will be found agreeable both to reason and scripture: though I only mention them, and leave the reader to judge of their propriety and importance.

1. It is plain, that singing the praises of God is an essential duty, and an important part of Christian worship, strictly enjoined in both Testaments; which nothing but incapacity can justify the neglect of; and that general edification is the great object of it.

2. It is a duty enjoined on the church in *general*; and in the New Testament, on the church *alone*: though it is plain, from the nature of things, and from the Old Testament, that others have a right to join in it; and that they may do it to great advantage.

3. In order that the song may be general throughout the whole congregation, as it ought to be, it is requisite that such tunes be sung, and such only, as the members in general can join in. I cannot see how we can justify a person who leads the song, in fixing upon a tune generally unknown, better than we can justify one who *preaches* or *prays* in an unknown tongue. And though it be right that new tunes be introduced, yet they ought to be learnt at another time, and not in divine worship. For the science of music,  
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and the art of singing can have no more to do with this part of divine worship, than the art of grammar, rhetorick, or logic, have to do with preaching or praying. But learning these arts is work for another season, than that of divine worship; and therefore, so is learning the tunes that are to be sung in the house of God.

4. That the members of the church have all the authority and rule in their own hands, in whatever relates to this or any other part of divine worship: and that unconverted persons be not left to direct what tunes shall be sung, or the manner of singing them. Because the *edification* of the church, and the glory of God, are the great objects to be attended to; and unconverted people have not capacities to attend to them: for they are "spiritual things," to be "spiritually discerned," and cannot be understood by the "carnal man."

5. That those members, who have capacities for this part of Christian worship, make it their endeavour, by notes, or by the ear, to be able to join in it with concord and harmony, that all things may be "done decently and in order." For though there is no necessity for *fine* singing, any more than *fine* praying or preaching; yet there is the same necessity that singing be performed with propriety and harmony, as there is that those who pray or preach should use propriety of speech.

6. That unconverted people, and the children of the members of churches be not only *permitted* but *encouraged* to join in the exercise; that they also may receive instruction and admonition by it.

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7. That the capacities, and all other circumstances of every church be seriously considered among themselves; and that such parts, and so many parts be sung, as, upon careful examination of the matter, will appear most likely to answer the great end of general edification; “that all our works may be done with charity.”

8. Above all: Let every one remember, that whatever is done profitably and acceptably in religion, must be done seriously. Let the *heart* be engaged. “Sing with the Spirit.” Let the *mind* be employed. “Sing with the understanding.” Melody must be “made in our hearts to the Lord; and we must “sing to the Lord with grace in our hearts;” and in doing this, may expect his presence and approbation, through Jesus Christ.

Thus I have dropped a few thoughts freely, though briefly, “on SINGING in the Worship of God.” May He “who inhabits the praises of ISRAEL,” command his blessing on those who read them!

## T H E E N D.

## E R R A T A.

Page.	Line.	
15.	29.	for Psalm, read Psalms. !
26.	last.	for xvi. read xiv.
30.	33.	for ver. read v.
32.	27.	for we are, read are we.
34.	13.	for this, read their.
ib.	29.	for it, read or it.







