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PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

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Thomas Ford



1271 F[ord] (T[homas]) Singing of Psalmes,
the Duty of Christians under the New
Testament, or a Vindication of that Gospel-
Ordinance in V. Sermons, FIRST EDITION,
1653, 12mo, *a nice copy in contemporary
calf*



S I N G I N G
O F
P S A L M E S

T H E
Duty of Christians
Under the
NEW TESTAMENT.
OR A
VINDICATION
OF THAT
Gospel-Ordinance

I N
V. S E R M O N S

Upon E P H E S I A N S 5.19.

Wherein are Asserted and Cleared

1. That
2. What
3. How
4. Why

Benjamin Wilson
we must S I N G.

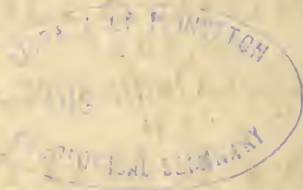
Thomas Ford

By T.F. Minister of the Gospel in E x o n.

1sm. 5.13. *Is any merry? Let him sing Psalms.*

Psal. 47.7. *For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises
with understanding.*

London, Printed by A.M. for Christopher Meredith
at the Crane in Pauls Church-yard. 1653.





TO THE
READER.

READER,

I*T is confest, and cannot
be denied, that as there
are already but too ma-
ny Books in the world,
so there are enough
written in the Vindi-
cation of this Gospel-Ordinance, if
men would heed and reade them as
they ought to do: And this con-
sideration (besides others) so swai-
ed the Author, as no importunity
could prevail with him to publish
A 2 these*

To the Reader.

these Sermons till he was inforc't to it, beyond and against his own opinion and inclination, by others, threatning to Print the Notes (which some had taken in short hand) though very imperfect. Therefore it is desired, if any fault be, the blame may light on those who are most guilty, the Author at worst being but an accessory. When these Sermons were Preacht, it was his desire and praier to God, that they might be imprinted on the Hearts of those that heard them; and it pleased the Lord (let him have all the glory) to second his Desires and Endeavours with a blessing so farre, as some who had neglected Singing were Convinced; others, that were wavering, were Confirmed; and many better Informed in the Nature, End and Use of that Duty, which formerly they little understood or heeded. They were principally intended for the more ignorant, (such as the most are who

To the Reader.

who question, or deny the Singing of Davids Psalmes) and therefore contriv'd and fram'd with the greatest plainnesse, so as they might best serve to give understanding unto the simple.

'Tis desired and hoped, that the wiser and more understanding Reader will take no offence at that plainnesse, which was affected and studied for the benefit and edification of a popular Auditory. Truth is never the lesse comely, when she walks abroad in a plain and homely dresse. But there needs no Apologie, since plain dealing (we use to say) is alwaies best. There are three sorts unto whom these Sermons are more especially Directed, or (if you will have it so) Dedicated.

First, Such as deny singing of Davids Psalmes to be a Duty.

Secondly, Such as neglect that Duty very much, specially in private.

To the Reader.

Thirdly, Such as do it both in publique and private, yet know not how to carry themselves in it as becometh Christians.

Now it is earnestly desired, that all, and every of these will be pleased to reade them over, and when they have so done, if they finde nothing either to convince them of the Duty, or quicken them to it, or direct them in it, I shall willingly yield they have lost their labour for once, hoping they will as freely acknowledge that it is not the first time they have done so. I say again, search and see, and when you have prov'd all, hold fast that which is good; and I do the rather presse and perswade to it, because (as I conceive) Singing of Psalmes is of greater concernment then most men are aware of. We use it as a part of that Religious worship which we owe and yield to the only living and true God, and therefore had need, as of a good Warrant for doing it,
so

To the Reader.

So of a good understanding and frame of spirit so to do it, as therein to please God, and benefit our own souls. If there be no Ordinance of God for it, we cannot in reason expect a blessing from God in it; nay we had need be humbled for our former using it. If it appear to be a Duty (which I hope these plain Sermons do in some sort demonstrate) let us be humbled for our former carelesnesse, and endeavour hence forward to reap more benefit by it. For this I dare say, That of all Religious exercises, there is none wherein God hath been lesse honoured, or men lesse edified then in this of Singing Davids Psalmes. If that which is here presented may be of any use, either to perswade such as are otherwise minded, or to confirm such as are already perswaded, and direct them how to wait upon God as they ought, for a blessing in this duty, Let the God of all grace

A 4

have

To the Reader.

have the glory ; Which is the joint desire of him that Preacht , and them that publisth these Sermons. Farewell.

Singing




Singing of P S A L M E S the Duty of Christians under the New Testament.

The first S E R M O N.

Ephes. 5.19.

*Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and
Hymnes and spirituall Songs, sing-
ing and making melody in your hearts
to the Lord.*

 He subject matter of this
Text is *singing of Psalmes*;
a dutie which many con-
tinue to do, but few un-
derstand the nature, end, and use of
it. Others (not a few) do not sing
at all; yea, deny it to be a duty. For
conviction of the one, and direction
of the other, I shall so handle the
words

words read as attending these two things especially, *viz.*

the {lawfulness} of singing *Dauids*
 {usefulness} Psalmes.

The Doctrinall part of this Epistle you have in the three first Chapters : The use begins with the fourth Chapter, where the Apostle applies the Doctrine of the rich and free Grace of God, exhorting them to walk worthy of that Vocation wherewith they were called, doing all duties, both such as concern them as Christians in common, and such as belong to them respectively in particular relations, as Husbands, Wives, Parents, &c. Not to hold you long about the Order and Connexion of these generall Precepts, *verse 18.* the Apostle admonishes them, *not to be drunk with wine* ; as being most contrary to that accurate and circumspect walking required and expected of Christians: *ver. 15.* and then enforces his admonition by

an argument drawn from the inconvenience or mischief of so foule and beastly a sin, *there's excess* in it, *excess* in expences, opposite to frugality; and excess in delights, opposite to temperance; or (as some understand it) *meres dissoluti*, all manner of looseness and wicked lewdness follow it, or all kinde of riot and lasciviousness go along with it. It follows ver. 19. [*But be filled with the Spirit.*] As if he should say, I will shew you another, and a better way of good fellowship, wherein you may drink your fill, health it, and pledge one another in that which is wholesome and usefull, and delightful too. [*Be ye filled with the Spirit*] The Spirit is opposed to wine, and filling with the Spirit, to excessive pouring in of wine or strong drink. The Spirit is not onely water to cleanse and wash, but wine to chear and refresh; labour you to be filled with the Spirit, or to be full of goodness, Rom. 15. 14.

In

In this nineteenth verse he shews what are the effects of the Spirit when men are fill'd with it, and that in way of allusion to the manner of men when they are in their cups; then their tongues walk, they talk, and sing, and say they know not what. Now (saith the Apostle) *Be ye but filled with the spirit*, and that will make you merry and wise too. Merry in a good and godly sort, it will make you talk and sing, and rejoyce in a spirituall manner, so as to glorifie God, edifie your selves and one another. In a word, the Apostle here teaches Christians how to be merry in the Lord, and how to expresse their rejoycing in God, and that is in singing of Psalmes.

Particulars in the words observable are these:

1. He exhorts to singing of Psalmes.

2. He advises what Psalmes are to be sung.

3. He

3. He directs how to sing those Psalmes.

Or these { That
 { What
 { How
 { Why } we must sing.

1. For the Duty it self, We must sing.

2. For the Matter, we must sing Psalmes and spirituall Songs.

3. For the Manner, we must sing, in, or with the heart.

4. For the End, we must sing unto the Lord.

I shall lay down onely one generall Doctrin, in handling of which I shall take into consideration all the aforesaid particulars.

That singing of Psalmes is a duty of Doct. Christians under the New Testament.

That it was the duty of Gods people under the old Testament, and that they did well in it, having a warrant for it; I presume no sober man will question. All the doubt is con-

concerning the times of the New Testament, and yet not so much whether Psalmes are now to be sung, as what Psalmes we are to sing, and what manner of singing there ought to be,

That which I intend, and shall endeavour to prove, is, That it is the duty of Christians under the new Testament to sing *David's Psalmes*; and to this end I shall first make use of, and urge the strength and force of my Text, and that other parallel place, *Col. 3. 16.* clearing them from the exceptions which lie against them, and then answer other objections made against the Psalmes which we sing, and our manner of singing them.

First, 'Tis clear and unquestionable, that the Apostle in both places calls for singing of Psalmes as a Duty to be done by all Christians. In this Chapter, *v. 4.* He allows no foolish talking, or jesting, *ver. 18.* He al-

lows

lows no excessive drinking, or tippling, which prophane men account and call merry-making ; yet he requires and calls for singing of Psalmes, and such like spirituall rejoycing in God.

Secondly, There is no more reason to exclude singing of Psalmes from being part of a Christians duty, then redeeming the time, or being wise to know the will of God, or teaching and admonishing one another, since the Apostle enjoynes them all alike. He that saies, *Walk circumspectly*, saith also, *Sing, and make melodie in your hearts to the Lord.*

Thirdly, In the Epistle to the *Colossians*, he cries down all legall Ceremonies, and yet notwithstanding calls for singing of Psalmes. Whence 'tis clear and undeniable, that there must be singing of Psalmes, there being as expresse and peremptory Scripture-commands for this, as for Prayer, or any other Duty. This I thought

thought good to clear in the first place, because I fear there are some who may look upon singing as a legall Ceremony, and so expir'd with the rest of the Jewish Worship.

I proceed to prove that there must be audible singing with the voyce, and that of Christians together; though I deny not, but if a man have no company, he may (being disposed as *James* saith, *Jam. 5. 13.*) *Sing*, as well as *pray alone*.

Object. 'Tis objected by some, that the

- I. Apostle here calls for speaking in Psalmes, and *Col. 3. 16.* for teaching and admonishing one another in Psalmes, and for singing in the heart, but not for singing with the voice.

Sol. This is to wrest and rack the Scripture, that so it may speak what men have a minde to. And this will appear if we consider

- I. That though the Apostle exhorts to speaking in Psalmes, &c. yet he explains himself in the following

following words [*singing and making melodie, &c.*]

2. There was this reason why the Apostle exhorteth them to speak to themselves in Psalmes, &c. He would not have them walk as other Gentiles, who in their cups, and merry meetings, talk they know not what, or else after their heathenish custome, sang Songs to the praise of their Idols. Now (saith the Apostle) it must not be so with you Christians: But when you meet, and will be merry, speake to one another in Psalmes, &c.

3. Some (and those very learned *Davenant.* and judicious) think there is no necessity of carrying these words, *viz.* [*teaching, and admonishing, and speaking,*] to that which follows, and the Originall seems much to favour their conceit; besides, the drift and scope of the Apostle, if it be considered, seems also to make much for them, for he exhorts Christians

Col. 3. 16.

to let the Word of Christ dwell richly or plentifully in them, *i. e.* to be thoroughly furnished with a sound and saving knowledge of the doctrine of the Gospel; and then shews them the use and benefit of Scripture so studied and understood. The first use is, that Christians may thereby instruct one another in the doctrine of Faith. The second is to admonish one another concerning a godly life. The third is to rejoyce together, and refresh one another by singing such spirituall Songs as are recorded in Scripture for that end.

4. But if this satisfie not, I say further, That these words [*Speaking to your selves and teaching one another*] cannot admit of such a sense as some put upon them, *vi z.* Teaching one another out of the Psalmes, since teaching in Psalmes is one thing, and teaching out of the Psalmes is another. *Dauids*
 Psalmes

Psalmes are a part, and a choice part of Scripture, and Christians may and must teach one another out of them, as well as out of other Scriptures, since they are all written for our learning, Rom. 15. 4. So *Act.* 28. 23. *Paul* perswaded the Jews that Jesus was the Christ * *out of the law of Moses, and out of the Prophets.* ἀπὸ τῆς νό-
μου καὶ προφη-
τειῶν. Had the Apostle intended the same thing in these places, why had he not used the same expression, viz. *Speaking to your selves out of the Psalmes*, which yet, we see, he doth not; and therefore I conclude that he intends somewhat else then these men would have him. And that which he intends is this, that Christians in singing of Psalmes together, should teach and admonish one another, and speak to one another for mutual edifying as they do by joyning in praier, or the like duties. So when *Paul* and *Silas* sung together, *Act.* 16. 25. they thereby spake

to themselves, or amongst themselves for their mutuall encouragement and comfort, methinks it is an excellent way of speaking to themselves, or one another, when Christians sing a Psalme together.

5. 'Tis clear to any that reades the Texts without prejudice, that speaking in Psalmes must be by singing of them. If he had said only [*speaking, teaching and admonishing*] then those mens glosse might have had some colour of truth in it: But since the Apostle adds [*singing and making melody*] 'tis clear he requires the singing of Psalmes which is the thing we contend for.

As to the latter part of the objection (*viſ.*) That the Apostle calls for singing in the heart, but not for singing with the voice, I answer, That though we must sing with the heart, it will never follow That therefore we must not sing with the voice,

voice, for then it would follow to, that we must not pray with the voice, because we are to pray with the heart. Now what an argument is this? I must hear the word with my heart and receive it into my heart, therefore I must not hear it with my ears. I grant we must sing with the heart, and with grace in the heart, *i. e.* with a holy and gracious frame of spirit suitable to the matter that we sing, or with thankfulness, as some interpret, or in sincerity, and uprightness of heart from our very souls, as *David* said, *With my whole heart will I praise thee, Psal. 9. 7. and Psal. 103. Bless the Lord, O my soul, &c.* For if our singing, or any other Religious service be not with and from the heart, God will have no regard to it, and therefore 'tis no marvell that the Apostle calls for singing in and with the heart. Nature, Art, Parts, and common gifts may enable a man to

the outside form, or bodily exercise either in singing or praying, &c. but the bodily exercise profiteth little. God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in Spirit, and therefore requires us to sing, and pray and perform all religious services in, and with the heart, *i.e.* sincerely, and from our very souls.

Besides let it be considered that the Apostle here speaks in opposition to the prophane guise of Heathens singing to the praise of their Idols, or of drunkards in their cups singing, and saying they know not what, and only making a noise that they may be heard. Now he would have Christians sing praises to the living God after another manner, *viz. With grace in their hearts*, understanding what, and considering how they sing. Besides the Apostle considered how apt men are (as *Austin* saith of himself) to be taken more with musicall accents then the heavenly

τι ὅτι ἐν
ταῖς ἡχοῖς
αἰς ὑμῶν
τῷ κυρίῳ
τετέστι ὑπὸ
σωτήριος
ωρεῶν
Chryl.
ad Eph. 5.
19.

venly matter; and therefore gives a special caution for singing with the heart, it being a matter more then ordinary for men to keep their hearts in order when they are singing of Psalmes, but never intended we should not sing with the voice, but only he would have men with their mindes, as well as with their mouths to glorifie God.

Having thus cleared it from the text, That we must sing with an audible voice, I come in the second place to shew What we must sing; and this also is in the Text [*Speaking to your selves in Psalms, &c.*] We must sing nothing but spiritual songs to the Lord; But what these Psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs are, is another question.

The greatest difference I finde amongst Interpreters, is the difference between these, it being a matter of some difficulty to distinguish them so as to determine precisely what

are Psalmes, what Hymnes, and what Spiritual Songs.

Many and various conceits of men I meet with, which I shall not trouble you withall, being the most of them very groundlesse. I know nothing more probable then this, viz. That Psalmes, and Hymnes, and Spirituall Songs, do answer to

מִזְמוֹרִים Mizmorim, Tehillim, and Shirim,
תְּהִלִּים which are the Hebrew names of
שִׁירִים David's Psalmes. All the Psalmes

together are called *Tehillim*, i.e. Praises, or songs of praise. *Mizmor* and *Shir* are in the Titles of many Psalmes, sometimes one, and sometimes the other, and sometimes both joyn'd together, as they know well who can read the Originall. Now the Apostle calling them by the same names by which the Greek Translation (which the New Testament so much follows) renders the Hebrew, is an argument that he means no other then *David's Psalmes*.

Besides,

Ψαλμοί
ὑμνοί
ὠδαί.

Besides, when ever the New Testament quotes the Psalmes, it means those of *David*, and so the Apostle speaks as taking it for granted, that they to whom he wrote, knew what Psalmes he meant. Sure I am that *David's* Psalmes are spiritual Songs, if ever there were any spiritual Songs in the world.

Yea, but some will object, that the Apostle means not *David's* Psalmes, but such spiritual Songs as shall be upon occasion composed by some Officer or Member of the Church; for as in the primitive times there were some who had a gift of Psalmes, so now also there are that have, if not the same; yet the like gift, and such new Songs, they grant may be sung, but not any other.

obj.
1 Cor. 14.
26.

1. In answer to this I say first, *Sol.* That in the primitive Churches some had a Psalm or spiritual Song dictated and inspired by the *holy Ghost*,

Ghost, though I dare not determine any thing peremptorily concerning their manner of singing those Psalmes in the Church.

2. I say, If any have the same gift now, they may do well to shew and use it for the benefit and edification of themselves and others. But I suppose no sober man will now pretend to any such extraordinary gift, which ceast in the Church long since, as the gift of Tongues, and other effects of the Spirit extraordinary.

If any shall pretend to such an extraordinary Spirit, I desire to know of them how others shall sing with them? for if they sing only their sudden raptures, 'tis impossible others should joyn, because their meditations will differ, and so will their meeter too, and such singing will be nothing but a sacrifice of fools, and the confusion at *Babel*.

If it be said, Not so; But one to sing

sing in the spirit, and the rest to say *Amen*. I say (as before) no man now hath such a Spirit as some had then. There are indeed some that pretend much to the Spirit in these daies, who if they would be pleased to shew their raptures in singing, as they do many times in speaking, no question there would be as good rythme in the one as there is reason in the other. If we must not sing but what's indited by an extraordinary Spirit, and no man have such a Spirit, it will follow that there must be no singing at all, and then how do Christians fulfill this law of Christ, commanding them to speak to one another in *Psalmes*, &c. which I have formerly proved to be a duty as much as *redeeming the time*, *walking circumspectly*, &c. I beleeve that they who had a *Psalm* in the Church of *Corinth*, had it by an extraordinary gift. How that *Psalm* was sang I cannot say, but this is clear

clear and certain that *David's* Psalmes, which were ordinarily used in the Temple, though they were compos'd, yet they were not sung by an extraordinary Spirit. For when the Levites, Christ and his Disciples, *Paul* and *Silas* sung, those Psalmes must be such as were well known beforehand to the companies that sang them, else how could they sing together?

Obj.

But here I meet with an objection that must be answered before I proceed, and 'tis this, *viZ.* That Christ and his Disciples did not sing, but only gave thanks, and that the Originall word imports no more, but as it were saying Grace after meat.

Sol.

We deny not but the Originall notes praise, but let all that understand the Originall speak whither it doth not signifie to praise with singing. *Austin* on Psalm 52. *Hymni sunt laudes Dei cum cantico: etsi sit laus,*

laus, & non sit Dei, non est Hymnus: si sit laus, & Dei laus, & non cante- tur, non est Hymnus, oportet ergo ut, si sit Hymnus, habeat hæc tria, & laudem, & Dei, & can'tico. Hymns are the praises of God with a song; If it be praise, and not the praise of God, 'tis not a Hymn; if it be the praise of God, and not with a song, neither is it a Hymne, which must have these three in it, *viç.* Praise, the praising of God, and that with a song, or in singing. Questionless the Originall signifies to praise, whe- ther God or men in songs.

But what need we go any further then my Text, the word here put in the middle between Psalmes and Songs, sufficiently shews what man- ner of praising God that was. Be- sides the constant vote of all the Learned that Christ did sing after his last Supper, according to the custom of the Jews, whose practice it was after the Cup of Salvation or Thank-

Thanksgiving to sing some of *David's* Psalmes, which solemn Hymn they call to this day the Great *Hallelujah*.

That Christ praied and praised God otherwise then in singing, we grant: But that he also sang, is clear, and if he had sung a new song compos'd on the sudden, probably one of the Evangelists would have recorded that Song, as well as *John* hath set down our Saviours praier, *John* 17. So *Paul* and *Silas*, *Act.* 16. 25. praied and sung praises aloud, so as the prisoners heard them, which argues more then probably, a more then ordinary lifting up of their voices. But if we yield that neither Christ and his Disciples did sing, nor *Paul* and *Silas*, yet my Text with *Col.* 3. 16. & *James* 5. 13. do clearly evince that Christians must sing, which is the thing we plead for.

But I return to answer the former objection

objection concerning singing of Psalmes compos'd by an ordinary and common gift, as God in his providence gives occasion. And to this I say that I am not so much against composing, as imposing; when men set up their own new songs, and shut out *David's* Psalmes. Suppose it lawfull for men of spiritual mindes to endite a Psalm, and then commend it to others, and sing it; yet it will not follow that therefore we must not sing the Psalmes of *David*.

But here again 'tis objected, That *Obj.* we conceive Praiers, and therefore may as well conceive Psalmes too, for praising God upon occasion.

I will not say it is unlawfull to *Sol.* conceive and compose a Psalm upon occasion. But I say again there is no reason that our conceived Psalmes should shut out *David's*; and I desire it may be considered, First, That a man may conceive a prayer

Prayer on the sudden, and put it up to God, so as others may joyn with him : But a man cannot so conceive and sing a Psalm, it being impossible at once to contrive the Matter and Meeter, and be devout too.

obj. But here it will be replied, That such a conceiving of Psalmes is not intended, but that some one first compose, and bring a spirituall Song, and then commend it to be sung by others.

Sol. But why should any man prefer his Composures before *Dauids* Psalmes, is it because they are more excellent ?

obj. No, it will be said, We do not compare with *David*. Onely our composed Psalmes are more sutable to the present occasions of Gods people ; we conceive Prayers as occasion is offered, and so we would have Psalmes conceived, and composed too.

Sol. 1. God himself hath made and given

given us a Psalm-book, but I know of no such Prayer-book that he hath left us.

2. There can be no Composures of men, that will suite the occasions, necessities, afflictions, or affections of Gods people, as the Psalmes of *David*, concerning which we may say what the *Jewes* said of Manna, They have a taste and relish according to every ones palate. Let it once be granted that we must sing Psalms, I'll warrant you *Davids* Psalmes shall carry it; there being no art or spirit of man now, that can come near that of *David*. What though they were penn'd upon occasion, and according to the necessities of Gods people then? so were the other Scriptures, and yet they concern us as much now as they did the people of God then. Besides, we read that in *Hezekiahs* time the Levites were to praise God with the words of *David*, 2 *Chron.* 29. 30. which shews

C

that

that the Psalmes were for the use of Gods people in after ages upon all occasions. And I would fain know what occasions Gods people now, or at any time, either have, or can have, which *David's* Psalmes may not sute with as well, and better then any Songs composed by an ordinary gift. What glorious things are spoken of Christ his Kingdome, and the great work of Redemption by him? Who can admire and adore the infinite excellencies of God in better phrases and forms then the Spirit hath declared to us in *David's* Psalmes? If we would cheare our spirits, or compose them for hearing or other duties, what more heavenly Meditations? If we would commend and magnifie the Power, Wisdome, and Goodness of God in any mercy, how can we do it better then in the words of *David*? It would become these that quarrell at our singing of *David's* Psalmes, to
give

give us better in the room of them, or else to consider how they fulfill the Law of Christ, when they sing neither those, nor any other.

And whereas occasionall compositions are so much cried up by many, I ask them what poor soules shall do that cannot compose Psalmes, neither have any to do it for them? certainly it is a duty (as hath been proved) that lies upon all Gods people, and to whom shall many of them go for a Psalm, if not to *David*? They that pen Psalmes better, or at least fitter (as they think) do it for their particular respective Congregations: In the mean time, what shall others do, unless the same men will undertake to furnish all the Churches of God in the Land, and the world too, with a better Psalm-book then that of *David*? If it be said, that some Officer or Member in every Congregation may do as much upon occasion: I

answer, perhaps not; nay without all peradventure the gift will not be found at all, or in any tolerable measure amongst many Christians, and then when they meet and would be merry in the Lord, poor soules they shall have never a Psalm to sing as *James* requires, *Ja. 5. 13*. Nor shall we upon this account, have very much singing in private families, of which there are thousands in *England* that will not yeeld one who can endite to compose a Psalm fit for the occasions of Gods people. Therefore if these men will not give us another Psalm-book in stead of *David's*, we shall have little singing in Congregations, and less in private Families; but I shall argue this no further; onely I adde, that 'tis not enough for them to say that *David's* Psalmes must give place to their new Songs, especially since the former can plead prescription for so many ages, but they must prove it,
and

and that strongly too, that we must not sing *David's* Psalmes.

For the accommodation of *David's* Psalmes to the present particular occasions of Gods people, I shall speak more hereafter: all I shall say for present is this, That if we cannot accommodate them, or any passages in them, the fault is our own. There are many I fear, who cannot accommodate many passages in *David's* Psalmes: as when he professes his zeal for God, love to God his Word and Ordinances, and waies of Worship, his integrity, humility, heavenly-mindedness, &c. But that's because they have not such a heart as was in *David*; and it may be their consciences cannot well brook such a word of admonition and conviction as they meet withall in many places and passages of *David's* Psalmes.

But if we sing *David's* Psalmes, *obj.* let us sing them in *David's* tunes, and

not in such Meetre as men have devised.

This reasoning will prove as well that we shall not reade *David's* Psalmes; for may not a man as well say, Why should we reade them in any Language but that wherein they were written? and so farewell singing and reading-Psalmes too; and if you say but as much of all the other parts of Scripture, farewell all preaching of gifted men, for they will have never a Text nor Bible left them. But if we think our selves bound to reade the Psalmes in our own Tongue, why may we not as well sing them in our own Tunes? If you say there is a necessity of reading, I grant it, and say, There is a necessity of singing them also; there being as expresse precepts in Scripture for the one, as for the other. When any man shall give us a good reason against reading in our own Tongue, we will give over singing

singing Psalmes in our own Tunes ; till then, we believe there is the like necessity of the one and the other, or else we are come to a good pass indeed , that we must neither sing nor say. My answer then is in a word this, That there being a necessity of singing as well as of reading, we may do the one in our own Tunes, as well as the other in our own Tongue.

There is yet one Objection more against singing of *David's* Psalmes, which was not thought on at the preaching of these Sermons, and it is this :

As the Scripture commands us to pray, but prescribes us no set forms of Prayer, which we are bound to use, and no other: so, when it commands us to sing Psalmes, it doth not tie us to any form, but leaves us to our liberty. For if we are not tied to a form in praying, why should we be tied up to any form in singing?

Object.

I dare not say (as some do) that all formes of Prayer are forbidden by the second Commandment; nor yet that they wholly stint and quench the Spirit. But to let that pass, I answer:

1. The Apostle hath prescribed us what to sing, *viz. Psalmes, and Hymnes, and spirituall Songs*, which are the expresse Titles of *David's Psalmes*, as was shewed before.

2. There is a difference in this, that the Lord did not prescribe unto his people set Forms of Prayer, as he prescrib'd set forms of Psalmes, *2 Chron. 29. 30.* They were to sing in the words of *David* and *Asaph*, but we reade not that they were to pray in any such set form. God gave them a Psalm-book, but not a Prayer-book, as was said before.

3. When the Psalmes of *David* and *Asaph* were ordinarily sung in the Temple, dare any man say that the Spirit either in the Levites or others,

thers, was stinted or quenched? and why should it be stinted now, more then it was then? since we have the same formes which God himself appointed, why may we not expect the same enlargement of heart, as the people of God had then?

4. We must sing in a form or not at all, as I shewed formerly, though we may very well pray without it. Since therefore we must have a form, why should we not prefer such as God hath appointed before any other?

S E R -



S E R M O N I I.

Ephes. 5. 19.

*Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and
Hymnes, and spirituall Songs,
Singing, &c.*



He Apostle calls upon the people of God to edifie themselves in singing of Psalmes. This we have proved to be the duty of Christians, and answered some Objections made against it.

Object. But how can Christians do this in a mixt Congregation (will some say) where there is a multitude that joyn in the duty, who yet (God knows) are no way able to do it in such a manner, as may be either pleasing to God, or profitable to their own soules?

soules : they cannot sing in their heart, nor to the Lord. And hence some complain they are much scandalized, to hear profane and ungodly men in their singing of Psalmes profess their repentance, the integrity and uprightness of their hearts, when God knowes there is no such thing in them. Therefore (say they) What do such men in singing, but sound out so many lies : yea, and blaspheme the holy Name and Truths of God, in doing of that duty : and this so troubles and distracts them, that they cannot finde in their hearts to joyne in the duty with such profane people.

This is, I conceive, the main thing that troubles the most, and therefore though there is but little strength in the Argument, yet since it is that which swayes with so many, I shall be the larger in clearing it.

They say many profane wretches
sing

sing Psalmes and sing lies; and therefore they do not, they cannot sing.

Sol.

I wish that some of these who make this Objection do not say lies; for that many (who do not sing Psalmes, and give this for a reason) do lie, I shall make it appear thus:

They say they do not sing because of the mixt multitude, with whom they cannot joyne. Then how comes it to pass, that Psalmes are forborn, not onely in the Congregation, but in their own houses also? Therefore there is some deceit in this Argument. I do heartily wish such as these, before they charge lying upon others in singing, to forbear lying themselves: for they do not sing in their families, nor in their closets, neither alone nor with others. Therefore this is not the thing, there is somewhat else in their hearts. But I will answer the Argument otherwise: though I do premise this in the first place, That if they will
not

not sing in the Congregation because of the mixt multitude, yet let them sing in their own families. If they say, *There is a mixt company in their families also* : I ask, Whose fault is that ? I should be loth to keep them in my family, with whom I cannot pray, and praise God. But if so, yet why do they not sing by themselves ? for a man may as well sing alone as pray alone : if none other be good enough to sing with them, let them sing by themselves. But it seems they do not think themselves good enough to sing withall.

1. To gratifie them in what we can, I grant that there are too many such, who cannot sing with grace in their hearts ; and this we acknowledge to be both their sin and misery. But yet withall we think, though there be thousands that cannot sing a Psalme as they ought to do, with *grace in their hearts to the Lord* : yet it is the duty of those men to do it ;
and

and because they cannot do it as they should, it will never follow that therefore they are not bound to do it, or that they do not sin if they do neglect it.

It is certain a profane spirit is no more able to pray, then he is able to sing praises to God. But I hope you will not say, that therefore a profane person ought not to pray, or that it is not his duty to pray, or that he doth not sin if he neglect to pray. To pray without faith is a great sin, and I think not to pray at all, is (in some sense) a greater sin. He that prays without faith and grace is an hypocrite, and he that prays not at all is an Atheist. So to sing without grace in the heart is hypocrisie; and I think, not to sing at all, not to perform that duty and worship we owe unto the living God, is a kinde of Atheisme. A wicked man after a sort profanes and pollutes every Ordinance he takes in hand: but it
will

will not hence follow, therefore it is not his duty to wait upon God in Ordinances.

Secondly, It is true, a wicked man is not worthy to take the name of God in his mouth, and when he doth, he doth (in some sort) blaspheme God in abusing his word. But though he be not worthy, yet (as one saith) Gods Word is worthy to come into his minde, and into his mouth too, to convince him of his wickedness. And here is a very great mistake of these men that thus urge and argue, and they bewray a great deale of ignorance about the nature, end, and use of this duty; for one great and maine end of singing Psalmes is *Instruction*: *A Psalm of David for Instruction*, is the Title of many of the Psalmes, that is one end of singing of Psalmes. Therefore I say, though they be not worthy to take the Name of God into their mouthes, yet the Word of God

God is worthy to come into their mouthes and mindes for their instruction and admonition. *Deut. 32.* Moses penn'd a Psalm, and *Deut. 31.19.* there is a command of God that it should be penn'd ; and for what end was it? Namely, to convince the wicked *Israelites* of their apostacie from, and rebellion against the Lord. And certainly whenever a Psalm is sung, be they never so bad that sing it, there is a Word of God in it, to reprove and condemn their sin. And doth not the Apostle say (*Col. 3.16.*) *Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalmes?* In every Psalm of Instruction (I say) there is a word to convince the ungodly of their ungodliness. As for example: *Psal. 1.1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsell of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornfull: But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate*

meditate day and night; he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the winde driveth away; Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the Congregation of the righteous. The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: But the way of the ungodly shall perish. When this is said, there is a conviction, and when this is sung, there is a greater conviction, because there is more time and space to meditate on those holy truths of God. Doth not God here, as it were, judge him out of his own mouth? and he himself pronounce the sentence, *That he is one of those ungodly ones* of whom the Psalmist speaks by the Spirit in that Psalm?

So *Psalm. 2.* there is an admonition to those that do not *kiss the Son*, and submit to the Scepter of the Lord Jesus Christ.

D

But

Obj.

But they take no notice of it, they go on and sing a Psalm, and so think they have done God good service.

Sol.

It may be so, So it is in hearing of Sermons, no question many are little affected with what is delivered, though the Minister presse it home upon their consciences, and deal never so plainly and powerfully: yet I hope you will not say, but the Word of God Preached hath this end (*viç.*) *Conviction* or *Admonition*. So it is in singing of Psalmes, wicked men are made judges of their own wickednesse by the Word of God in their own mouths.

Obj.

Again, Whereas it is urged by some, That they are very much scandalized to hear prophane men professe a lie in singing the 119. Psalm. and the like, touching their *love to, and delight in the law of God*, and other such expressions which *David* uses in those Psalmes.

Sol.

We answer, True; It is a matter of
of

offscandall, but how farre forth we shall consider anon. He that sings *David's Psalmes*; and not with a sanctified heart; as *David* did, he lies in his heart and in his throat too. But suppose such a one should say *David's Psalmes*, or pray *David's Psalmes*, or reade them out of a Book, or joyn with the Minister in prayer where he is the mouth for the rest that do joyn with him; Doth he not professe the like then? When the Minister (who is the peoples mouth to speak to God) declares the experiences that he and others have had, of Gods goodnesse, and the work of grace upon their souls; when he professeth or expresseth godly sorrow for sin, laments their infirmities, indisposednesse, untowardnesse and forwardnesse of heart, and further blesteth God for spirituall graces, and the evidences of Gods love, &c. When (I say) the Minister doth

thus in the Congregation, and prophane men are there, and pretend to go along with him in this, do they not lie in prayer, since they never had experience of Gods goodnesse, and the work of God upon their souls, they never had any evidences of Gods love to them in all their lives? And why are we not as much scandalized at their praying as at their singing? For though they make not such a noise with their mouths in prayer, yet they do lie and prophane the Name of God as much in the one as they do in the other. Therefore if any be scandalized by them in the one, why not also in the other? Surely by this reason we must not only forbear singing, but praying with them; Nay by the same reason, we may not hear the Word of God with them, for a prophane wretch doth even in that also take the Name of God in vain, and if he be not powerfully

erfully convicted by the Word of God, he shall be one day made to know what a sad thing it is to take the Name of God in his mouth, when he hated to be reformed: *Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my Covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.* This Argument is that which is urged for Separation, and if it hold good for separating in one, it may as well hold (for ought I see) for separation in all duties whatsoever, and so *in hearing the Word of God also.* For hearing the Word is an act of spiritual communion, as well as *prayer or singing*: I say there is communion with God in *hearing* as well as in *praying*: In *prayer* we speak to God, and in *hearing* God speaks to us: In *prayer* we profess our selves to be the Lords people to have all our delight in him, and all

our expectations from him ; and in *hearing* we come to sit before him as his people, to ask Counsell of God, and to hear his will, and there profess Whatsoever the Lord shall command us, that we will do.

Thus there is spiritual communion with God in *hearing the Word*, as well as in *praying* and *singing of Psalmes*. So then, if we may not sing nor pray, neither may we hear with mixt company ; and if it be thus, the people of God are in a very sad condition. I say again, If the presence of wicked men shall hinder their acceptation and communion with God in those duties which they notwithstanding do in the sincerity and uprightnesse of their hearts, out of all question the people of God are in a very sad condition, because they can hardly assemble without great hazard of having one devil or other among them, what then will become of them ?

Nay,

Nay, I would fain know with whom they shall joyn? for our Saviour himself had a select company, but twelve in all, and one of them was a devil. And so when you have done what you can, and made choice of company, if there be not a black devil, a prophane wicked man; yet there may be a white devil, an hypocrite, which is as bad, and as abominable to God as the other. I have heard that some have forborn prayers in their families with their children and servants, because they thought them not good enough to pray withall. I desire these to consider what *Paul* did in the Ship before the company he sail'd with; He was not so scrupulous, but gave thanks to God even before profest Infidels and Heathens, *Acts 27:35.* *He took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all;* because he knew it was a duty which all men are bound to do, and though

they did not, nor could not do it as they should, yet it was their duty, and therefore *Paul* praises God even in the presence of those wicked men. So may we do the like, though wicked men be by, and joyn in the duty, what's that to us?

Obj. Oh ! But it much troubles and distracts them, when they see men of prophane spirits joyn with them, and blaspheme (as they say) the Name of God.

Sol. Alas for them, that they are so tender of Gods honour. But is it so indeed? or is not this another lie? 'Tis notoriously known, there are many great and horrid blasphemies against *Jesus Christ* and the *Holy Ghost*, and the *Scriptures*, &c. and yet I hear not much of their being scandalized at these: But they are mightily scandalized to hear wicked men sing *Psalmes*. But methinks, if they be indeed scandalized at this, they should be more scandalized

lized at those other blasphemies; and truly let me tell them, their not being scandalized at those horrid blasphemies indeed before spoken of, is a very great scandall to many that are truly godly. Oh that there were no other blasphemies in *England* then singing of Psalmes by wicked men, and that one day in a week. But doth not the Land mourn *because of oathes*? And are not many wicked ones all the week long *blaspheming the living God*? Yet some of these men (who make this objection) have not shewed at any time (that we have seen) so much dislike of these blasphemies. If you be troubled at blasphemies, be troubled at all blasphemies. If it be blasphemy for wicked men to sing Psalmes, sure there be other as great blasphemies in *England* as this; and I wish that some had not blasphemed the Name of God in another manner, that have given over *singing*

ing of Psalmes. We grant, That wicked men cannot do this or any duty as they should, they *lie, dishonour God, and take his Name in vain.* And it is a grief to every godly man, whose *righteous soul is sadden within him* when he hears or sees that God hath not that honour given him which is due unto his Name. Yea it grieves all godly men that others are not as they are; They are of *Moses his spirit, They would all the Lords people were Prophets;* They would that all could hear, and pray, and reade, and sing Psalmes, as they themselves can. But be it so that they cannot sing Psalmes as they should do it, and it is thy grief, yet why shouldst thou neglect thy duty, and not do that which God calls thee to? If he that sits next to thee lie unto God in professing his sincerity and integrity of heart when there is no such thing, yet let me tell thee, thou maiest be accepted of
God

God in what thou doest, if thou do that in sincerity which another doth in hypocrisie. And take this from me, you that are so scandalized at the hypocrisie and prophane-nesse of others, look well to your selves, sweep before your own doors, and see if your own hearts be right; and if they be, I will warrant you the wickednesse of another mans heart shall never hurt you, or hinder your acceptance with God. Thou praieest out of sincerity, thou praieest out of experience, thou praieest from thy heart; and another man that joyns with thee, doth none of these things, and doth not God therefore accept thee thinkest thou? Yes, God will hear the bleatings of one *sheep*, though he were in the midst of a thousand *wolves*. If it were not so, Gods people were in a sad condition, and for ought I know, must go out of this world, to finde those whom they may joyn
withall

withall in prayer or praise, or any other duty. Therefore I say, Is it thy duty to praise God in a Psalm, or is it not? If it be not thy duty, then do it no where; but if it be, then thou maist do it in any company that will joyn with thee.

But the truth is, many of those that do not sing, beleeeve it not to be a duty, and upon that ground wholly neglect it; If it be thy duty thou art bound to do it in the best manner thou canst, and thou art never the worse, though others that joyn with thee do it not as they ought, and so instead of a blessing bring a curse upon themselves, for God (I tell thee) doth not accept of thee according to thy company, but according to thy integrity. *If thou dost well (saies God to Cain) shalt thou not be accepted?* So, if thou seekest God in sincerity from thy very soul, shalt thou not be accepted? Questionlesse thou shalt. Can
God

God reject a sacrifice offered to him from a poor, contrite, broken heart, because that some wicked men are present ?

If *Cain* and *Abel* offered sacrifice at one and the same time and upon the same *Altar* (as for some reasons, and by some circumstances in the Text it is conjectur'd they might) did not God accept the sacrifice of *Abel*, because that *Cain* was present ? Sure we are that *Christ* offered in the *Temple*, when not only many of the people, but the Priests also were most ungodly wretches.

If singing of Psalmes be a duty, thou hast more need be troubled at thy sinfull neglect, then at anothers sinfull doing of it: and truly it is strange to me that for fear of participating in others sins, men should commit sins of their own as bad or worse. Here I might shew how the sins of some may lie upon others. But I shall not go so farre out of my way;

way; I shall only adde; When some will come to an Ordinance of God to which they have no right, and thou canst not hinder them: Or when they will do any duty which they ought, but cannot do, as it should be done, do thou blesse God that hath given thee an heart to do thy duty, and pity those poor souls who cannot do it as well as thou canst.

Singing of Psalmes is a duty, where- in there is a word of Admonition and Instruction to wicked men, and it is a morall duty which every man is bound to do, To praise the great God that made heaven and earth: That they cannot do it as they ought is their sin and misery, and will be our sin as much, or more, if we do it not at all.

And now I shall intreat all godly and sober-minded Christians, that they will not be frightened from doing that which is their duty by
such

such a *scar-crow* as this. If wicked men joyn with them, and multiply transgression by offering the *sacrifice of fools*; they are to be pitied and praied for. But 'tis a senselesse conceit, that therefore such as are godly shall neglect their duty.

Now I am sure, It is the duty of all men in the world to praise God: Wicked men are bound to praise God in a Psalm; it is their sin and misery they cannot do it as they ought, but they are bound to do it in a Psalm as much as they are bound to pray, to hear the word, or do any other duty. Nay I say more, it is some glory to God when prophane persons do sing *David's Psalmes* to their own conviction. The Minister glorifies God in the speaking of his Word, although many in the Church should laugh and scoff at it, because the Word of God hath its end either to convert or to confound. So when a Psalm

Psalm is sung, it is the Word of God although it be sung by a wicked man, and it is a word of conviction, and a word of instruction to him: It is the Word of God, I say, in his mouth, and herein God is glorified, that a wicked man is made with his own mouth to condemn himself, and his own wickednesse.

What scruples yet remain, I hope shall be resolved when I come to the directive part, which I promised. For the objections that are commonly made, arise from ignorance of the Nature, End and use of the duty. I shall now close all at this time with these Considerations. The Question is Whether we should sing Psalmes? Now to confirm us a little, That this practice of singing Psalmes in the Church of God, is not so groundlesse as some men imagine,

- I. First of all consider this Scripture-ground, That God calls his people

to spiritual rejoycing in him, *Rejoice in the Lord alwaies, and again I say rejoice.* Gods people have alwaies matter of rejoycing. Sometimes God calls to *mourning and girding with sackcloth*, to fasting and praier; but alwaies God calls his people to rejoyce, *Rejoice in the Lord alwaies,* Phil. 4. 4. *Rejoice evermore.* Gods people have alwaies matter of rejoycing. Though they have matter of *mourning* one way, yet they have matter of *rejoicing* another way: *Wherein ye greatly rejoice* (saith the Apostle) *though now for a season you be in heaviness through manifold tribulations:* Still they have matter of joy even in the midst of tribulations. 1 Thef. 5. 16.

Secondly, It is clear, That as God requires such a holy affection in his people, so he doth require some expressions futable to that affection. Therefore we must not only rejoice with our *hearts*, but with our *tongues* also, with *all that is with-* 1 Pet. 1. 6.

in us, with all that is without us, with all that is about us. As therefore it is a truth, That (in a sense) Gods people should be *praying alwaies* (to wit) in their hearts with ejaculatory prayers, lifting up their souls unto the Lord, wheresoever they go; and it is as true also, That God requires his people should pray unto him with their mouths at some times more especially: Even so it is here in the duty of praise, God requires us to *rejoyce alwaies*, and *alwaies*, as it were, to be praising of him in *our hearts*. But he requires us at some times to praise him with *our mouths* also, when God gives occasion of so doing. As Gods people of old did sing praises ordinarily on the Sabbath and other solemn times, and extraordinarily when God gave them occasion, by some deliverance, victory, or other mercy. In *Psalm 126. 2. Their mouths were filled with laughter and their tongues with singing.*

ing. And so *Judges 5. Deborah sung a song.* And so *Acts 16. Paul and Silas* having joy in God, exprest it in singing of a Psalm. So it is said of the people of God, *Rev. 15. 3. They shall sing the song of Moses*, that is, as *Moses* and the people of *Israel* sung that song *Exod. 15.* for their deliverance from *Pharaohs* tyranny and their slavery in *Egypt*, so shall the people of God sing a song for their deliverance from their slavery under Antichrist. So the Twenty four Elders fell down and worshipped and sung a new song unto the Lord God Almighty, *Rev. 5. 8, 9.* which is to be understood of all Gods worship, as some Learned men conceive: And *Rev. 14. 3.* It is said the people of God there should sing a song that no man else could sing: A Learned Interpreter upon that place conceives all Gospel-Worship to be meant.

Now if singing were such an abo-

mination (as some would have it) in the Church of Christ, I wonder why the holy Ghost should use that expression in that place, and set forth all Gospel worship under *singing a new song*. When Gods peoples hearts were enlarged with spirituall joy within, they did open their mouthes wide to shew forth the praises of the Lord. And if God give us more then ordinary joy, why should not we now make more then ordinary expression of it? There are many exhortations in the Psalms to *sing, and shout, and clap hands, and make a joyfull noise*. Now these signes of spirituall rejoycing in God were no *legall Ceremonies*, but such as godly Christians may use now as well as they did then; so *David sung and danced before the Ark with all his might*, being so transported with holy joy, that he could not forbear: And why are men so much against singing of Psalmes? When there

there is good news, and matter of great joy, we *ring out our bells*, and *shoot off the great guns*, shout and make a noise otherwayes; and why not as well make a joyfull noise in *singing of Psalmes*? I hear no man finde fault with the former (*viç.*) *Ring*ing, or *shoot*ing, and joyfull *acclamations*. And is not *singing of Psalmes* as fit and proper an expresseion of our rejoycing in God, as any of those?

If a company of godly Christians then will go by themselves, take some choice parts of *Dauids Psalmes* and sing them, I would know if this would not make as good a noise in the ears of the Lord, as shooting of guns or ringing of bells. The Apostle saies, upon this very account, *Is any merry? let him sing Psalmes.* Jam. 5. 13. Nay I had almost said, is not singing of Psalmes as good an exercise, and as becoming Christians, as playing at Cards or Tables? I wonder how

some that quarrell so much at *singing of Psalmes*, are yet so devout at these exercises. For my part I am of the minde, That *singing of Psalmes* (as much as some slight it now a-daies) is as innocent, and honest, and usefull an exercise as playing at Cards: And why may we not sing a Psalm as well as make vain and foolish pastimes, or use antick and apish toyings, which would offend any sober and grave man to behold? Surely if *singing of Psalmes* be once out of fashion, I hope none of the other will be used amongst us, for these certainly are as good as the other, if I should say no more of them. What, doth God never give us occasion to sing a Psalm of praise? or have we never any hearts to do it? If so, we are the saddest Christians that ever were, and I am confident God never had such servants in former ages, as we are. It is well known what *Plinius Secundus* wrote unto
Trajan

Trajan concerning Christians *singing of Psalmes* in those daies ; as also what *Tertullian* in his Apology saith of their frugall supper, and solacing themselves with Psalmes. We all know what *James* saith, *Is any merry ? let him sing Psalmes*. Therefore I pray let us *sing Psalmes* when we are *merry*, as well as when we are *afflicted* we do *Pray*. Sing somewhere at some times, by your selves, or with others ; perform the duty, except you will lay aside praying also. I shall leave that Text of *James* with you, and intreat you seriously to consider, whether if we must pray, we must not sing also.



S E R M O N I I I .

Ephes. 5. 19.

Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and Hymnes, and spirituall Songs, Singing, &c.



IN these words there are two main things considerable (*viz.*) the lawfulness and the usefulness of singing Psalmes. We have done with the former, and now come to the later (*viz.*) the usefulness of singing. This I call the directive part, or Directory, and in it we shall inquire into these two particulars (*viz.*) how we must sing, and why we must sing; the Apostle shews both: We must sing *with the heart*, or *with grace in the heart*; and we must sing *to the Lord*.

Lord. Singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; that is (say some) to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Lord Jehovab, i. e. to his praise and glory; as it is said of the Israelites, Psal. 106. 12. They sang his praises. Now this the Apostle calls for here, if we would sing a Psalm as we ought, to the praise of the Lord, to the glory of his great Name, we must do it, in or with the heart. God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit, John 4. 24. He calls for the heart, My Song give me thy heart. So Chrysostome upon this Text, Attending with understanding. The meaning of the Apostle is clear and unquestionable, That our singing of Psalmes must not be a lip-labour, an outward bodily exercise; it must not be the pleasing our selves or others with the tune of a Psalm: that is not it which God looks for at our hands, but we must sing as Mary did, Luke 1. 46. My soul doth magnifie the Lord,

my

my Spirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour. And as *David* in the 103 Psalm, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name.* This is that which the Apostle here calls for; and it implies these two particulars.

1. A sense and understanding of that which is sung, *I will sing with understanding*, saith the Apostle; that is, so as I would be understood by others, therefore by himself much more, *Sing ye praises with understanding*; a blinde Sacrifice was an abomination to the Lord.

1 Corin.
14.15.

Psal. 47. 7.

2. It must be with an inward feeling, and affection of the heart and spirit. So *David* in Psalm 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed: or, my heart is prepared: or, my heart is disposed.* When a mans heart is filled with the Spirit, as the Apostle speaks, when a mans heart is full of holy and heavenly thoughts, affections, and meditations, and so out
of

of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; when the frame of a mans heart is futable to the holy and spirituall matter that is sung, this is *singing in the heart*, or *with grace in the heart to the Lord*, who looks at the heart, and how a man is affected within. Certainly (as one saies) *grace in the heart* is the best tune to any Psalme; and without this, the sweetest best tun'd voyce is but howling and bawling in the eares of the Almighty. Yet do we not exclude the voyce in singing; *David* used it, *I will sing and give praise even* Psal. 57. 8. *with my glory*; *Awake Psaltery and* & 108. 2. *harp, I my self will awake early.* *Awake up my glory*, saies *David*; that was his tongue, called his glory, because his tongue in singing was an excellent instrument of glorifying God. Nor do we exclude all modulation or tuning of the voyce according to the Lawes of Musick, provided there be no affectation of it
so

so as our hearts be wholly taken up with it. Provided also there be no empty tautologies or chaunting over and over the same things, tossing of the Word of God like a tennis-ball from one to the other, like that Cathedrall Musick intended onely to please the eare, and no way ordered to the use of edifying in grace and knowledge. But for the voyce in singing we plead, and also for singing with tunes. All the Psalmes were penned in Hebrew Meeter, with the exactest Art that might be. They were penn'd (saith one) with *exactness and variety of Meeter*. 1. In such Verses as are futable to the Poetry of the Hebrew Language, and not in the stile of such other books of the old Testament as are not poetical. 2. Many verses together in severall of the Psalmes do also run in rhimes, as those know that understand the Hebrew; and as *Buxtorf* shews, *Thesau. p. 629*. But, though
we

we plead for singing with the voice, yet our chiefest respect in that *singing* must be unto the heart and spirit, to the understanding, and to the affection and inward feeling of what is sung; for this is to sing *with grace in the heart.*

Hence it follows, that none can sing a Psalm as he ought, but he that hath grace in his heart, and is renewed in the spirit of his minde. None could learn that Song, *Rev. 14.3.* but the *hundred forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth*; which was onely the people of God who stood in opposition to *Antichrist*; and by their singing there is meant all spirituall Worship performed by Gods people to him. It is said there, *No man could learn that Song, but those that were redeemed from the earth*; the Antichristian earthly generations had no skill on the spirituall Worship and Service offered to God in the true Christian Church.

Psal. 33. 1.

Church. Therefore the Psalmist saith (speaking of this duty) *Rejoyce in the Lord, O ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright*; it is impossible for others to rejoyce in the Lord. Onely Gods own people have an inward experimentall knowledge of the glorious Excellencies and Attributes of God, (*viz.*) his Power, Wisdome, Goodness, &c. they onely have *tasted how sweet the Lord is* in his promises and providences: They know, and none but they, what the Offices of Christ are, in the power, fruit, and benefit of them. They know what it is to be redeemed from the earth, and from death, and from the nethermost hell: They onely have experience of the mercy and loving kindness of the Lord, supporting, supplying them, and ordering all for good to them. And they alone have a lively feeling of their infirmities, sigh and groan under the burden of their corruptions;

are

are troubled for the indisposition and untowardness of their hearts. These and such as these, who are so inspired and affected, can sing *David's Psalmes with David's spirit*. Others may sing more pleasingly to the ear, but these alone make melodie in the eares of the Lord, who looks at the heart.

That's it we desire to be satisfied *Quest.*
in, *How we may sing Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit.*

It is commonly, traly, and piously *Answ.*
said, *We must sing Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit*, though there is no Text in the Bible, to my remembrance, that hath those very words; but some speak somewhat to this effect, as *Col. 3. 16.* we must sing *with grace in our hearts*, that is as much as if he should have said, *Sing Davids Psalmes with Davids spirit.*

2. We grant it is impossible for any to sing Psalmes so, but one that is a new creature, renewed in the spirit

spirit of his minde, as *David* was.

3. We say in the generall, to sing *Dauids Psalmes with Dauids spirit*, or to sing with grace in our hearts unto the Lord, there must be not onely an habituall, but an actuall disposedness: as when a man sets upon any duty, he must stir up the grace that is in him; so it is not enough in singing Psalmes, to have an habit of grace, but we must stir up, and act the gifts and graces of God within us. Here then this will be the great question, How our spirits ought to be disposed when we are to sing, that we may so do it, as to give God the glory, and gain benefit to our own soules? Or, (which is all one) how we may sing *David's Psalmes with David's spirit*? Or how we may sing with grace in our hearts unto the Lord? which is the Doctrine in the Text.

Now here I meet with that which is a very great scruple, and I beleeve hath

hath taken and kept off many from singing of Psalmes. They know not how to accommodate passages in them; either those passages are no way futable to their conditions, or their affections many times are not futable to those passages: and hence they conclude, they cannot sing them so as to praise or please God in them, and therefore resolve not to sing at all.

Further, when they say we must sing *Dauids Psalmes with David's spirit* (if I mistake not) their meaning is, we must be in every respect like *David*, and in the very same case that he was when he sung these Psalmes to the Lord. As for instance, The sixth Psalm was penned by *David* when he was or had been sick, therefore we cannot sing this Psalm when we are well and in good health. So we cannot sing the 51 Psalm, because (as we hope) many of us have not committed such

foul sins as *David* had, viz. *Adultery and murder*. So many of us have not had occasion to fly out of our Country as *David* had, upon which occasion he penned some of his Psalmes, as *Psalm*. 52. 54. 55. 56. 57. 120. &c. So many of us have not a house to dedicate or purifie, as *David* had when he penn'd the thirtieth Psalm, and therefore we may not sing that Psalm. To conclude, we must be in the same condition in every respect, as *David* was when he penn'd those Psalmes, or else it is impossible to sing them as *David* did; that is, to sing *Dauids Psalmes with Dauids spirit*.

This is that which many object, and scruple much at it; and yet it is nothing but a gross mistake of the Nature, Use, and End of this Duty of *singing Psalmes*; therefore to rectifie it, I shall not onely shew you what is the Nature, End, and Use of *singing Psalmes*, but I shall give you
some

some directions whereby you may see how all and every of those Psalmes, and the severall passages in them may be applied to us for our use; and how we may sing them so, as to glorifie God, and to edifie our own soules; alwaies provided, that we have *grace in our hearts*, and that we stir up the grace of God that is in us.

The Psalmes of *David, Asaph, &c.* were written, as far as I understand, for a threefold end or use, *viz.*

1. For Instruction.
2. For Admonition.
3. For Praise and Thanksgiving.

Which you may, if you please, reduce to these two, *viz.* Glorifying God, Edifying our selves.

First, Instruction or Teaching.

Secondly, Admonition or Re-
proof.

Thirdly, Thanksgiving and praising the Lord.

Look into *Col. 3. 16. Teaching and*

admonishing your selves in Psalmes, &c. there you have the ends of singing of Psalmes, and *speaking to your selves in Psalmes, &c.* as the words are here in the Text. And though these three ends be distinct, yet I would not have you understand me so, as if they were alwaies divided: For even those Psalmes that are for Instruction, Admonition, are also for Praises and Thanksgiving. Praising God, or giving thanks unto the Lord, and the glorifying of Gods great Name, is the end of all singing, as it is the end of all Duties. And though we distinguish praising of God from petitioning, yet I hope you think, that even our petitioning and begging of God those things we need, is a glorifying God, and a praising his Name; because therein we acknowledge God is the God of all our mercies and comforts, with whom is the well of life, and from whom is all our expectation. So
when

when we pray to God, we do praise him ; so when we hear the Word, we do praise and glorifie God, because therein we acknowledge God onely to be our King, our Judge, and Law-giver, profess our selves his servants, and whatsoever he commands us we will do : And thus in all duties we praise and glorifie God. For all the duties we do, are paying of our Homage, or acknowledging of our Fealty to God. And those that know not this, know not what they do when they go about any Duty. Therefore I say, if a Psalm be for Instruction or Admonition, yet notwithstanding it is to praise the Lord with. So we suppose there be some Psalmes that are Psalmes meerly for Instruction, Doctrinall Psalmes, yet we may sing them and others, not onely for our Admonition and Instruction, but to praise the Lord; as in *Psal. 106. 12. Israel* (it is said) *sang his praise.* These

things premised, we shall now resolve the Case in hand.

The first
End or
Use of
singing.

1. First then I say, one main end of singing Psalmes is our Instruction and Admonition, when we in singing have sweet meditations upon that heavenly matter that is sung. That is (I say again) one main end of singing Psalmes, *viz. Teaching and admonishing our selves in Psalmes, Col. 3. 16.* For when we are singing a Psalm of Instruction, we are thereby admonisht of our evils, and also taught what is our duty. Besides which place, I urge the Title of some of *David's Psalmes, Maschil of David, Psal. 142. 60, 32, 42, 45, 53, 55, 56, 74, &c.* That is, *A Psalm of David to give Instruction.* So *Furnius* and *Tremellius* do alwaies (if I do not wrong them) render it, *A Song to teach.* So they are Psalmes especially to teach, and to give instruction. But further, if there were nothing else, yet this also were an argument suffi-

sufficient to shew that teaching and admonishing is one end of our singing Psalmes ; namely , that some Psalmes are meerly Doctrinall, and you have not any formall expression of prayer or praise in them ; In many of the Psalmes indeed there be most heavenly patheticall formes of praise and prayer ; but some Psalmes are meerly Doctrinall, as the first Psalm ; there is no one form of Prayer, nor one form of praise in it ; but the whole Psalm, if you mark it, is nothing else but a Doctrinall description of the different and contrary estate of the godly and wicked in this life , and in the life to come ; as *ver. 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsell of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornfull ; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, &c. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters, his leaf shall not wither, and whatsoever he doth shall prosper*

ſper. But the ungodly are not ſo, but are like the chaff, &c. the ungodly ſhall not ſtand in the judgement, the way of the ungodly ſhall periſh, &c. Here is no formall expreſſion of praiſe or prayer, though the Prophet penn'd and ſung it to the praiſe of God. So the ſecond Psalm is a Psalm of Inſtruction and Admonition, but there are no formes of prayer or praiſe, unleſs you reckon that for one, *viſ.* *Ask of me, and I ſhall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* Now the Doctrin of that Psalm is briefly this, The peremptory decree and purpoſe of God to ſet up the kingdome of Chriſt in ſpite of the world, the vanity of all mens devices in oppoſition to it, the miſerable confuſion of all Chriſts enemies and oppoſers, and the bleſſed condition of ſuch as ſubmit themſelves to him. Now theſe Psalmes being meerly doctrinall,

and

and having nothing but Instruction and Admonition in them, and being sung as well as others to the praise of God; hence (I say) one end of our singing them, is to learn the Doctrine of them, that it may be imprinted upon our spirits, or a sweet meditation in our hearts upon that heavenly doctrine contained in those Psalmes, to imprint it upon our mindes and memories, that we may be the more affected with it. Some Psalmes are mixed, and but in part doctrinall, as *Psal. 33. & 34.* *The Angell of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. The Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, but those that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing, &c.* These are Doctrines of Gods providence and care over his people; and one main work of our hearts and spirits, in singing these and such like passages, is to meditate upon those Doctrines; and in so doing, we give glory to God,

teach-

teaching and admonishing our selves in a Psalm, *Col. 3. 16.*

Object. But we may as well reade them, and so meditate on them for our Instruction, Therefore there is no necessity that we should sing Psalmes for that reason.

Sol. I deny not but we ought to reade the Psalmes as any other Scriptures, and in and after our reading, to meditate upon them. In commending of singing I do not cry down reading; one good duty should not shut out another. So because we reade the Psalmes, and meditate on them, it doth not follow that therefore we should not sing the Psalmes and meditate on them.

2. In singing there is a more distinct, settled, and fixed meditation of the heart, then there can be in reading; therefore *David* in the 104 Psalme, insisting upon the providences of God in making and governing the world, he draws to a close

close of it in the 34 Verse, professing his joy in the Lord, from the consideration of Gods power and providence, *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise to my God while I have my being : Why ? Unto God that made me, that made all the world, that maintains my soul in life.* And then he adds, *My meditation of h.m shall be sweet, and I will be glad in the Lord.* David would not onely speak of the works of Gods Power and Providence, but he would sing of them, *that his meditations might be sweet.* Therefore though we reade the Psalmes, yet we ought also to sing them sometimes, because there is more sweetness of meditation in singing then in reading, and the bare pronouncing of them. In singing there is a dilating of the sound, and a drawing out of the voyce, which gives us more time for the fixing of our hearts upon that which is sung, in a more sweet meditation of the good-

goodness or power of God, or whatsoever the matter be.

Therefore the Mercies of the Lord, and the great things that God hath done in the world, have been commemorated with singing. The people of God did not think it enough to say what God had done for them, but they did sing it, that they might meditate the more upon the goodness of God, and be the more affected with it.

3. It is not enough for us to meditate, as *David* intimates in that place, but we must have sweet meditations of him, that we may be glad in the Lord, *I will be glad in the Lord*. When we sing, there is a more then ordinary raising or lifting up of our soules, and so far more sweetness in meditation on what is sang, then what is barely said. The soule (I say) in singing is as it were elevated and raised, and so comes to be more raviht with admiration
of

of what God hath done.

Let them who have had experience of communion with God in this duty, speak whether they have not found a great raising of their hearts in it? whether they have not been rapt, and ravished as it were, with the consideration of Gods goodness in his promises, and the works of his spirituall and gracious providences. I say not, that meditation is all the end of singing Psalmes, but this is one chief end.

Therefore if you say, Why may *object.* we not reade and meditate without more ado?

I answer, we may and must reade. *Sol.* But why not the other also? since it is more usefull, and helps to more sweetness in meditation. A man may pray in his heart without moving his lips, as *Hanna* did: but thou shalt finde it a quickning in prayer if thou use thy tongue also; the voyce is a great matter to quicken us in prayer,
and

and to keep our hearts in order. Therefore as I would have men pray in secret, so (were I to advise them) I would have them use their voyce too; provided alwayes it be not to be heard of men onely. So here also, whereas men say we may reade a Psalm as well as sing it. I answer, Singing will affect us more then reading, as praying with the voyce doth affect us more then when we pray and do not use our tongues; you shall finde your hearts will be more apt to wander if you do not use your voyce, then they will be if you do.

Therefore as we should use our voyce to help us in prayer, so why should we not lift up the voyce in singing, that we may be helped also in our meditation, even with enlargement and ravishment of spirit. Questionless the lifting up of the voyce is a great help to enlarge the heart when it is well affected.

Now

Now when people complain and say, their hearts are not futable to such and such passages in the Psalms, nor those passages to their hearts:

I say, That there is no passage in all *David's* Psalmes, but thou maist accommodate it, if no otherwise, yet in this way, *viz.* by a sweet meditation upon it. And I would fain know where that passage is, that a gracious spirit may not have sweet meditation upon it; surely thou hast a very ungracious heart if thou canst not do this. If there be such a Psalm or such a passage of a Psalm, as thou thinkest thou canst no way bring it to thy condition, yet (I say) thou maist bring thy heart to that Psalm, or to that passage, by a sweet meditation upon it. And I would fain know where that good Christian is, that will deny it to be his duty to have sweet meditations upon *David's* Psalmes, or any passage in them. Is there (think you) any passage in

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David's Psalmes, that a Christian may not meditate upon, and so take comfort in God, and his word?

And so you may be satisfied about the Historicall Psalmes, and those passages in them that have respect to other men, and other times.

As neer as I can I shall instance in some of all kindes; some Psalmes are onely Doctrinall, some are only Historicall, as the 78 Psalm, the 105 Psalm, the 106 Psalm, &c. For the 105 and 106 Psalmes, there are these passages in them, How God fed his people with Manna or bread from heaven, how He divided the sea, how He drowned *Pharaoh* and his host; also a relation of the severall plagues which God sent upon *Egypt*, and the like, which I need not repeat. Beloved, Is not this matter of meditation to us Christians? If thou hast a gracious frame of Spirit, suppose this is the Psalm that is to be sung, *Psal. 105. or 106.*

First

First, Thou maist apply this to thy case thus, to have sweet meditations on the matter of Fact, the great things that God did for the preservation of his people by the destruction of his enemies; and if thou canst sweetly meditate upon that, thou hast a word of Instruction, a word of Consolation, and a word of Admonition.

1. A word of Instruction, to teach thee the care that God hath had of his people in all Ages.

2. A word of Consolation, to shew how God will deliver his people, and provide for them in their greatest extremities.

3. A word of Admonition, to take heed how thou vex and persecute the people of God, as *Pharaoh* did, lest God bring destruction upon thee, as he did upon him.

Now is this nothing to thee? you reade these Psalmes, and you think you reade them with profit, and why

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may

may you not sing them with profit, by a sweet meditation upon the matter, for your Admonition, Consolation, Instruction, according as the matter is? We reade the History of the Bible for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope, not thinking that what is related concerned them onely who lived in those times. But what God did then he doth now, the people of God are as they were then, have the same afflictions and temptations, are in the same conditions, hated and persecuted in the world, and have the same experience of Gods Goodness. Therefore it is a wicked ignorance to say, that many passages in the Psalmes do not concern us; *All things that were written, were written for our learning, that we might have comfort and hope.* God said to *Josuah*, *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* And the Apostle applies it, *Hebr.*

13. 5. to every Christian. When God speaks to *Josuah*, *I will never leave thee*, God speaks it to thee and me, and every Christian in the world. And when God destroyed *Pharaoh*, it assures the people of God, that God will destroy all the *Pharaoh's* in the world as well as he did him. There is nothing therefore in Scripture but doth concern thee and me as much as it concerned the people of God in those times; and every Christian that hath wit and grace may accommodate them for the edification of their own soules. If God provided for them, and fed them with bread from heaven, God will provide also for thee, and feed thee with bread from heaven, if there be cause. So in *David's* time it was said, *The Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.* And doth not this concern us as much as *David*, and others of the people of God then?

It was so then, and it shall be so now; *The Lions shall lack and suffer hunger, but those that fear the Lord shall lack no good thing.* These things therefore were all recorded for our learning.

Suppose again you sing that 105 Psalm, all along there is work for thy faith; if thou have faith in thy heart (I say) there is matter for thy faith to work upon: All the providences of God there are as so many props to keep up thy heart in assurance that God will protect and defend thee, and provide for thee, as ever he did for his people in those times. What is that Scripture therefore that doth not concern any child of God? So in the 105 Psalm *Joseph* was put in the stocks, and *the iron entred into his soul, till the time that his word came, the word of the Lord tried him*: Doth this concern *Joseph* alone? certainly it concerns us as much as *Joseph*. It was penn'd many
yeers

yeers after *Joseph* was dead and gone, and it concerns us still to think and meditate of the wonderfull providences of God, how his children are brought down, as *Joseph* was, even into the prison, and into the stocks; and how by abusing them, God makes way to honour and advance them; and how by unlikely means he brings about great things. Are not these things worth meditation? how God doth try and exercise his people with heavie afflictions, and yet when he hath laid them low, he raises them up again, as he did *Joseph*?

You have the *Israelites* murmuring and repining against the Lord; and what doth this concern us, will you say? I say, very much, because we have the same spirit, lusting to evil as they had, the same spirit of pride, and hypocrisie, and infidelity, in us as was in them. Now then we may meditate upon these passages,

*Psal. 78. &
Psal. 106.*

and reflect upon our own hypocrisie and infidelity, and distrust of Gods providence ; and withall take notice how the infidelity of men doth not, cannot make void the faithfulness of God, but he is gracious to his people for his promise sake, notwithstanding their daily infirmities.

For the 137 Psalm, *By the waters of Babylon we sate down, &c.* It yeelds matter of sweet meditation to this purpose, how God many times exposes his people to be persecuted, afflicted, and then also to be mocked and flowted too. It is an Admonition to us, that we are no more affected with the calamities and sufferings of the Church of God, and that we must not rejoyce and make merry at such times as the people of God are afflicted. It instructs us also, that the peace and prosperity of the Church of God is to be preferred above all worldly comforts whatsoever. I could instance in other Psalmes,

Psalmes, but these may suffice. And now I would know what Psalm, or passage in any Psalm, doth not minister matter of sweet meditation for our admonition, instruction, or consolation. Therefore when some cry out, What is this or that to them? it doth not concern them, nor can they accommodate or apply it to themselves; I ask what's the matter they cannot? or where lies the fault? is it not in the deadness and barrenness of their own hearts, who can let pass such precious matter, without due meditation on it?

That meditation you speak of, *Object.* may be as well in reading as in singing the Psalmes.

I denied that before, and say further, That there is a great advantage to meditation in singing of a Psalm, more then there is in the reading it, both to affect the heart, and raise it up, and also to make an impression of what is sung upon our souls. All

Scripture is equall as to the Authority, and to the matter too, if it be absolutely considered, yet in respect to our consolation or direction, some parts of it may be preferr'd before others; so the Book of Psalmes is a little Bible, or (if I may so call it) the Bible of the Bible; as one star differeth from another in glory, so may we say of the Scriptures, some parts of it are more excellent, in respect to our necessities, then others; and yet all are excellent, and usefull, and of divine Authority: So I may say of singing and reading the Psalmes, both are usefull; yet it will not follow, but singing at some times may be more usefull for some purposes. As for instance; it is more usefull (as I have shewed) for sweet rejoycing in God and his word, with gladness of heart.

By this time somewhat (I hope) hath been said towards the satisfying of those that pretend they know
not

not how to apply many passages in *David's* Psalmes. I say again, if there were no other way of applying them, they may do it this way, *viz.* by a sweet meditation on them, or by exercising their hearts with holy delight and rejoycing in meditating on Gods word. I say not, this is the onely way of accomodating them, but this is one, and (I think) a good one too; there being no passage in any Psalme, but may be applied and made use of this way. I cannot but remember you what a reverend man now alive, saith in this case:

“ ’Tis ignorance of a mans self, Mr. Cotton
 “ and the waies of God, to think
 “ any Psalme is unsutable to any
 “ mans condition, if he be a good
 “ Christian especially. Some Psalms
 “ set forth the Attributes, Excellen-
 “ cies, and Works of God and his
 “ Christ. These minister occasion
 “ of reverence, blessing, praising,
 “ admiring and adoring God. Some
 “ set

“ set forth the estate and waies of the
 “ Church and people of God ; some
 “ their miseries, calamities, sorrows
 “ and sufferings ; these offer to us
 “ matter of compassion, instruction,
 “ imitation : some set forth the estate
 “ and waies of wicked men ; and in
 “ these we have a word of admoni-
 “ tion, some are excellent to express
 “ our own affections, afflictions, suf-
 “ ferings, comforts, and then a man
 “ is furnisht with matter and words
 “ to present his own condition be-
 “ fore the Lord.

It is a great mistake to think, I may
 not sing a Psalm, because it expres-
 seth not my condition or affection ;
 say it doth not, as for instance, Thou
 art not sick, or sensible of Gods
 wrath, as *David* was when he penn’d
 the sixth Psalm ; or thou hast not
 committed adultery and murder, as
David had done when he penn’d the
 51 Psalm ; or thou hast not a house
 to dedicate, as he had when he penn’d
 the

the thirtieth Psalm ; or thou art not put to it as he was when he changed his behaviour before *Abimelech*, and then afterwards penn'd the thirty fourth Psalm ; what then ? wilt thou not therefore sing these Psalms, or dost thou think they do not concern thee ? Thou maist as well forbear to reade them upon the same grounds ; yea , thou maist as well forbear to reade some parts of *Paul's* Epistles, because thou never travelledst in *Asia*, or hadst to do with *Alexander* the Coppersmith , or foughtst with Beasts at *Ephesus*, or leftst a cloak at *Troas*, as *Paul* did. There's no necessity when we reade those Scriptures, that we should be in every respect as *Paul* was that penn'd them ; we reade them to learn out of them what the Holy Ghost hath recorded for our learning ; and so we sing the Psalmes, that do not set forth our conditions in particular, for our instruction, admonition, consolation,

solation ; there being no Psalm, or part of a Psalm, that hath not somewhat for our learning.

This may serve to satisfie them who are afraid they lye in singing those passages of the Psalmes which do not expresse their condition in particular.

It is no lye in a godly mans mouth to sing this passage in the sixth Psalm, *I am weary with my groaning, all the night make I my bed to swim, &c.* If it be a lye to sing, it is as much a lye to say it, and then we must not reade that Psalm for fear of lying. But we sing it as we reade it, for the good Doctrine that may be learnt from it, *viz.* That when God rebukes and chastens in displeasure, no poor soul is able to abide it; That the sense of Gods wrath is more grievous to be born then any other burden whatsoever ; That in our repentance and turning to God, there ought to be very great sorrow, arising

sing from the sense of Gods wrath due to sin, and that our sorrow for sin ought to be the greatest of all other, &c. As for that place *Psal.* 6. 6. the expression is (as I take it) hyperbolicall, and intended to express what heat there is in the fire of Gods wrath, such and so great, as it even melted *David* into teares: He was exceedingly grieved, and wept abundantly, and so do many of Gods servants many times, and therefore may say as *David* did, We make our beds to swim, &c. Or say it was the greatness of his bodily affliction that made him to weep so abundantly and excessively, yet we may learn something from it, as I shewed even now. Sure *all Scripture is written* (as the Apostle saith, *Rom.* 15. 4.) *for our learning*. Thou canst not in every respect say as *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, &c.* And yet thou think'st it not a lye in thy mouth

mouth to recite those words when thou readst that Chapter. Few Christians (I fear) are come so far as to say with the Apostle, *Phil. 1. 23. I am willing to depart, and to be with Christ, &c.* yet any Christian may reade that passage without danger of lying (as I suppose) sure I am there's matter of consolation and instruction in it to every *Christian*. Say thy heart falls short of that ardent love to God and his Law, which *David* expresseth, *Psal. 119.* yet it is no more lye to sing then to reade that Psalm, specially if thou have a gracious heart, although thou hast not attained that measure and degree of love to Gods Law as *David* had. Nay, suppose thou hast no love to Gods Law at all, yet thou hast there a word of admonition and instruction teaching thee what thou shouldst do; and thou mayest take occasion to lament and bewaile the untowardlines of thine own heart, that when

David

David lov'd Gods Law so exceedingly, thou hast no love or liking to it.

I confess we must be in some respects as *David* was when he penn'd those Psalmes; that is, in the state of grace, if we will sing them right, and as we ought. But it is no lye to sing them however; for if it be, then it is a lye to say, and a lye to reade them; and so you must not reade the sixth Psalm, if you do not *water your couch with your teares*, as *David* did.

Now I say for a conclusion, Suppose there be some passages we cannot make our own by using them for our selves, and in our own names, as *David* did, yet we may make them our own by a sweet meditation on them for our benefit and edification; and by using them also (as one saith well) for, and in the behalf of others that are of the same mystical body with our selves, that so
we

we may rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and weep with those that weep, as if their cases were our own; and so (saith he) there is scarce any passage of the Psalmes, but it either concerns our selves, or some other of the Church of God, who at this day are, or may be in the same, or in the like case and condition as *David* or the Church of God was then; whom we are to remember as if we were in bonds with them, or to bless God for, as if we were in like prosperity with them.

He that reades the Scriptures, or sings a Psalm, or doth any Duty without reverence, attention, good affection, and some good use made of the same, he takes Gods Name in vain.

This is granted. But to say, as some do, that others lye in singing such Psalmes as do not expresse their own conditions in every particular, is (as far as I understand) a belying
or

or flandering them ; and I wish they may well consider it, for (as I have said) a wicked man lies as much in reading as in singing of a Psalm, though indeed it be not lying, but reporting or reciting what God hath revealed in his Word for Admonition and instruction to all men. You have now seen one end and use of singing Psalmes ; and if there were no more, I conceive it is well worth the while.

H **SER**



S E R M O N IV.

Ephes. 5. 19.

*Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and
Hymnes, and spirituall Songs,
Singing, &c.*



Have shewed it to be a
Christians duty to sing
David's Psalmes, an-
swering many objecti-
ons by the way, and acquainting
you how a gracious spirit may apply
and make use of every passage in
them. I shall now proceed to shew
how Christians may apply some
passages in particular to their own
cases. Onely let me first answer a
scruple or two which some have, in
regard of some passages in *David's*
Psalmes.

I cannot sing the 131 Psalm, will *Obj.*
 some one say, for I finde much pride
 and haughtiness in my heart, how
 then should I sing, *My heart is not
 haughty, nor mine eyes lofty?*

1. By the same reason thou canst *Sol.*
 not reade it, and say, *My heart is
 not haughty, &c.*

2. If thou art a Christian indeed,
 thy heart is not haughty as the heart
 of a naturall man is haughty.

3. Say thine heart is more haugh-
 ty then becomes a Christians heart
 to be (I know no mans heart but is
 so) there is a word of admonition
 and instruction, to minde thee of that
 evil, and humble thee for the pride
 of thy heart.

But thou hast a proud heart still. *Obj.*

So thou hast perhaps, after much *Sol.*
 and earnest prayer to God against it,
 and many admonitions from the
 Word preacht. *David* himself shew-
 ed pride, or somewhat as bad, when
 upon a false suggestion, 2 *Sam.* 16.4.

he presently sequestred all *Mephebo-sheths* estate, before he heard what he had to say for himself. Besides, there's a sweet close of that Psalm, wherein *David* gives himself and others a seasonable admonition, particularly and quietly to wait upon God, *Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever.*

Object. But how can we sing such passages of the Psalmes as are nothing but exhortations to singing? This is giving to God his exhortations again (say some) and leaving the duty undone. Take Gods words he speaks to us, and speak them to God again.

Sol. 1. By the same reason *David* did not praise God in singing those exhortations to praise him. The 48 & 49 & 50th Psalmes are almost nothing else but exhortations to praise God; shall we say that *David*, or whosoever was the pen-man, did not praise God in those Psalmes? And yet I think the argument will hold

as

as well for the one as for the other.

2. There's somewhat in those exhortations to admonish us of our dullness, and what need we have to be stirred up to do that duty which all creatures owe, and in a sort yeeld unto the Lord their Maker.

3. As praying is the best preparation to prayer, for then (as *Luther* saith) we set upon it in Gods strength and not in our own: So singing these exhortations is an excellent mean to prepare and raise our hearts; and therefore *David* begins and concludes many Psalmes with such Exhortations, as *Psal.* 136. &c.

4. We may say of such exhortations, as one saith of the 136 Psalm, that it is *Solemnis celebratio nominis Dei sub exhortationis formâ*. 'Tis an excellent way of praising God, to provoke and call upon our selves to praise him. What if a man in prayer speak to his own heart, and call upon himself to rowze and raise up his

spirits, as *David*, Psal. 5.7,8. *Awake my glory*, &c. may he not be well said to pray when he doth so? And why may he not be as well said to praise God when he stirs up himself to that duty?

But to speak as the thing is, such forms are nothing but elegancies of expression, in the use of which we do indeed praise the Lord; and this if our opposites had understood, we had never been put to the trouble of answering such an objection.

A second
use of
singing
Psalmes.

And now I shall proceed to inform weak Christians how they may more especially improve some passages in *David's Psalmes*, as they are more suitable to their particular respective conditions or affections; and this is a second use to be made of singing, viz. the exercise and improvement of the graces of God in us.

For instance, perhaps thou art reported to say or do that which never
entred

entred into thy heart to conceive or think of, what comfort is there to thy soul in singing the former part of the seventh Psalm, and other like places, wherein *David* complains of the same abuse? Suppose all goes against thee, and thou hast no visible means of relief, how pertinently maist thou sing the eleventh Psalm? When there's no faith, nor truth, nor trust in men, then I hope it is no hurt to sing the twelfth Psalm, *Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, &c.* When wicked men flourish and the godly are afflicted, how proper is it to sing the 37 Psalm, and meditate and apply those precious promises to confirm thy faith, and comfort thy self in a patient waiting upon God? If thy afflictions and affections are the same as *David's* and other holy mens were, thou maist apply to thy self with much comfort such passages of the Psalmes as do particularly concern thee in thy condition, what-

soever it be, and so act the grace of God in thee.

If thou art a Christian, shouldst thou not admire and adore the Attributes and Excellencies of God and his Christ? and how canst thou do it better then in singing *David's Psalmes*? Wouldst thou (for instance) admire the Work of God in exalting Jesus Christ to be a Prince, and a Saviour? sing the 8 & 95, 96, 97, 98, & 99th Psalmes. Do the sufferings of Christ, and the fruits of them belong to thee? then thou maist well sing the 22 Psalm. Hast thou experience of Gods support, supply, protection, direction? then thou maist sing the 23 Psalm, with many others. Doth it not concern us to admire the Power, Wisdom, and goodness of God in the works of creation and providence? If it do, why should not we sing the first part of the 19 Psalm, and the 104 Psalm throughout? Hast thou
any

any affection to the Word of God, out of the experience thou hast had of the power of it on thy soul? why should thou not sing the later part of the 19 Psalm, and any part of the 119 Psalm? Hast thou any sense of sin, and wrath due to it? why maist thou not sing the sixth & 38 Psalms? Psal. 3. *Lord, how are they increased that trouble me, &c.* So may all Gods people for the most part say. If thou art one of them, then there's thy condition. *David*, when he was straitned by his enemies, goes to God, and so takes courage. Go thou and do likewise, and then there's thy affection too the same as his was.

But how can we sing such passages as are imprecations against wicked men? *Object.*

Even these may be sung to good purpose if our hearts be in a good tune. *Sol.*

1. We may meditate on them with fear and trembling at the wrath of

of God that hangs over the heads of all impenitent sinners.

2. We may work our hearts to patience and contentation, notwithstanding the present prosperity of wicked men, in assured confidence that God will destroy them, and their foot shall slide in due time.

3. We may use them as prayers, not against our particular enemies, but against all the implacable and incurable enemies of Christ and his kingdome.

Now I cannot enough wonder, that any Christian should be so much wanting to themselves in that heavenly exercise of singing Psalmes, which gives them so much advantage of acquainting themselves more and more with God, in sweet meditations on his infinite and most glorious Excellencies. Indeed I do not wonder if some men care not for singing of Psalmes, when I consider the course of their conversations.

of *David's* Psalmes were many of them
penn'd for the use of Gods people
when they are persecuted, how shall
they that are more like *David's* ene-
mies, violent, deceitfull, threatning,
vexing, persecuting and mocking,
sing those Psalmes? They may well
forbear to sing them, seeing there
are such testimonies and evidences
against their ungodly practices in
them. We have some now a daies
that will have no repentance, no hu-
miliation, or sorrow for sin; others
that slight the Scriptures or written
Word; and 'tis no wonder these
men should not care to sing *David's*
Psalmes, being not able to abide the
test of them, whilest their affections,
actions, and opinions, are so con-
trary to them. *David* in the 84 Psalm
laments the want of publick Ordi-
nances. I marvail not that they who
slight all Ordinances, under a pre-
tence of living above them, care not
to sing that, or other Psalms. What-
ever

ever some men may dream, I make no question but others have found God graciously revealing himself unto their soules in this Exercise: yea, I beleevethat godly men (who are such indeed) have scarcely seen more of God in any Exercise then in this. To my thinking, there is not a more lively resemblance of heaven upon earth, then a company of godly Christians singing a Psalm together.

But that which is most strange (and 'tis a hard case indeed) is this, that never a passage can be found in all the Psalmes which will sute with some mens affections or occasions. If some do not, yet methinks others might; and yet they that except against some (if I mistake not) refuse all; so that it seems there is nothing in them that will serve their turn, or suit with their conditions.

obj.

Yes, it will be said, there are some Psalmes, or parts of Psalmes,
that

that suit well enough with our conditions, affections, and occasions, but that which fits us well enough, is nothing so fit for others.

1. There are severall uses of the *Sol.* Psalmes, as there are of other Scriptures; why may we not in singing as well as in hearing, apply to our selves that which is most pertinent to our proper cases? And so those that are not in the same condition, may yet profitably sing the same Psalm, even as they may hear the same Sermon. Besides, all the Psalmes, and every part of them, are fitted to the occasions of all Gods people, so as there is nothing but ministers matter of sweet meditation, and praising God by a holy rejoicing in him.

I know not how well some Psalms will sute with some mens affections or conditions. Once I am sure that Gods people from the beginning of the world to this day, have had cause
as

as to complain and pray, so to bless and praise the Lord in the very same manner, and upon the same grounds as *David* did. Wherefore I beseech all those that fear God, to do what becomes them, *viz.* now and then to comfort, and chear, and encourage themselves and one another in Psalmes, *Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually: seek him in prayer, and seek him too in singing of Psalmes; say as Luther was wont upon occasion, Come, Sirs, lets sing the 46 Psalm, and fear nothing.*

There are that would deal by us, as he that first made his enemy blaspheme God, and then presently stabb'd him at the heart, that so he might kill both body and soul at once, and so take a brave revenge (as he call'd it.) So do these in a sort; they vex us sufficiently with seeing and hearing their ungodly and Atheisticall opinions and practices, and they

they would deprive us of our comfort in God, by singing Psalmes to his praise. Lets sing the 119. Psalm however, and say, *It is time for thee Lord to work, for men have destroyed thy Law.* And so lets sing the twelfth Psalm, and others, that thereby our hearts may be cheared, and we may be confirmed in faith to wait with patience upon our God, saying as it is *Psal. 48. 14. Thus God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death.*

I shall conclude this with what *Perkins* saith on the eleventh of the *Hebrews*; he asks the question, why we sing those Psalmes now, which were appointed for the use of the Church in former times? and answers thus: *That the Church in all ages consisted of a number of beleivers, and their faith is alwaies one and the same; and this makes all that apprehend Gods promises, to be like to one another in graces, meditations, dispositions,*

tions, affections, desires, spiritnall wants in the feeling and use of afflictions, in course of life and conversation, and in performance of duties to God and man, and therefore the same Psalmes, Prayers, and Meditations, are now as fit for the Church in these daies, and are said and sung with the same use and profit to the Church in these daies, as when they were made. Sure if it be a sufficient ground to reject singing of David's Psalmes, that they were penn'd for the use of Gods people in former ages, I know no reason but that we may for the same reason take no notice of the other Scriptures, and say, What do they concern us? But I rather think, that there is no estate or condition wherein the people of God either are, or can be, but the holy Ghost foreseeing the same, hath prepared and recorded some Scripture-Psalms futable thereunto. And those Psalmes being chosen out according to the new occasions of Gods people, and sung

sung by them with new hearts, will ever be found new Songs. Words of eternall truth (as one saith) are ever new, and ever old. Daily and hourly mercies are new mercies to renewed hearts (*Lam.3.23. His mercies are new every merning*) and when they praise the Lord for those mercies, there's a new Song of praise put into their mouthes. And when God hath furnisht us with Psalmes and Songs fram'd by his own Spirit to the purpose; nothing (for ought I know) but wretched ignorance and profaness will neglect to use them.

The objection of singing Psalmes composed by our selves and others, I have already answered, and shewed the absurdity of such a practice, unless we had any of an extraordinary spirit; which if there be, let us once see it, and I make no question but we shall willingly acknowledge the gift of God in them.

A third use of singing *David's*

I

Psalmes

A third
use of
singing
Psalmes.

Psalmes, is a joyfull praising of God, or expressing our joy in the Lord: when a man is merry, naturally, and of course (as we say) he will laugh, leap, sing and daunce; as when a man is sorry, contrariwise he is sullen, sits still, hangs the head and saith nothing, Psal. 126. 2. *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing.* Exod. 15. 1. *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel.* So Mary, and Zachary, and Simon, Luke 1. & 2. brake forth into Songs upon the apprehension of Gods wonderfull goodness.

Obj. That was because the Spirit of God came upon them in an extraordinary manner.

Sol. We deny not but the Spirit of God was upon some of them in a more then ordinary manner; but yet it was not so upon them all, all the children of *Israel* that sang with *Moses* had not an extraordinary spirit, onely they were for the time much affected

affected with the Work of God in their deliverance, and the destruction of the Egyptians, 2 Chron. 20. 27, 28. So *Jehoshaphat* and the men of *Judah* came to *Jerusalem* with Psalmes and Harps, and Trumpets unto the House of the Lord (no question but there was singing also) when the Lord had made them to rejoyce over their enemies; and yet no more extraordinary spirit on them, then on Gods people now upon the like occasion. Their practice was a precedent for Gods people in all ages to do the like, whenever their hearts are enlarged in the apprehension of Gods goodness, to break forth into singing, and an holy rejoycing before the Lord. How do we answer the goodness of God unto us, if there be not affections and expressions futable to his dispensations? We all allow shooting off great guns, ringing of bells, &c. and why not as well singing of Psalmes?

When we come to the Congregation, one end of our singing is to expresse our joy in the Lord, for such mercies as his Word and Sacraments, and Means of Grace; and that God hath given us his Sabbath and such solemn times; and therefore we come before him with singing, that so we may praise the Lord with gladness of heart. The 100 Psalm is called a Psalm of praise, and the 95 Psalm begins thus: *O come let us sing unto the Lord, &c.* If you read the 96, 97, & 98. you will finde many expressions to the same purpose. Whatever were the occasion of penning those Psalmes, it is clear that the holy Ghost in them had respect to the Gospel-times, *Psal. 98. 3* when all the ends of the earth should *see the salvation of God, Heb. 4.* The Apostle shews it plainly of the 95 Psalm, that the holy Ghost in it speaks of the times after Christ was come in the flesh. Now if the promise

mise, and their expectation of those glorious Gospel-dayes, did so rejoyce their hearts, how much more should we be affected, so as to sing and rejoyce at a higher rate then they did? How comely and pleasant a thing is it to sing a Psalm (as Christ and his Disciples did) after our receiving the Sacrament, when God hath honoured us so much, as to admit us unto his Table, and given in the tokens and pledges of his love to our soules? And after Sermon too, why should we not sing and rejoyce, when we have understood the good Word of God declared to us by his Messengers, *Neh. 8. 12.* *Nehemiah* and *Ezra* and the Levites willed the people to rejoyce upon such an occasion; and good reason, since the Word of God is sweet to every soul that favours it; and so our Sabbaths are speciall times of rejoycing in God, because the opportunities of publick Ordina-

nances are renewed upon us.

Obj. But you sing all daies alike, fasting and feasting daies, without any difference.

Sol. For answer to this question (which some think unanswerable) I acknowledge that singing is a most proper expression of joy, *Jam. 5. 13. Is any merry, let him sing.* But it will never follow from that place, that we must not sing when we are sorry: for then it will as well follow, that when we are not afflicted we must not pray. That place (I say) will infer the one as well as the other.

I do not say that all Psalmes are fit for all occasions, but there must be a choice made; and to make that choice, there is some understanding more then ordinary required in him that appoints the Psalmes to be sung.

3. As singing is proper in times of mirth, so it is not altogether improper in times of mourning; and though

though this may seem strange, yet it is most true, and I prove it thus. Because Gods people were wont to lament themselves and others in Songs; so *Jeremy* lamented the sad estate of *Judah*. *David's* Psalmes were penn'd in times of great distress and danger, as appears by the many dolefull complaints in them. The 102 Psalm is entituled, *A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, &c.* and 130 Psalm begins, *Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.* To clear it yet further, give me leave a little to discourse the nature of Musick, which is somewhat strange in this respect, That it will sute with different, yea contrary affections. Some Philosophers conceited the soul to be an Harmony, once the soul of the world is a symetrie of all the parts made in number, weight, and measure. Certainly of all sensible things, there is none so much affects the soul as melodious

sounds; I say, nothing affects the soul so much, be a man merry or sorry. If he be merry, it will provoke him to more mirth, raise and rouse his spirits more then they were before. Therefore singing is very proper when we are joyed, and would praise the Lord with gladness of heart. If a man be sad, Musick will set it on, and make him more melancholique then he was before, so some understand Prov. 25. 20. *As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that singeth Songs to an heavie heart.* I conceive the meaning to be this, If when a man is in heaviness, one should come to him in a light-some, game-some manner, (as if *Jobs* friends had brought Minstrels and Musick with them) he would vex and distemper, and increase his grief the more. Certainly Musick, as it may be ordered, will provoke mourning; hence the custome grew of so-

solemnizing Funerals with Musick. So when the Rulers daughter was dead, there were Minstrels among others; and if any say, That was to allay, and not to increase their grief, I desire them to look *Jer. 9. 17, 18.* and there they may see that there were cunning women, who profest an art of mourning, and were hir'd of purpose, by their mournfull Ditties to enhance affections of that kinde in others. So *2 Chron. 35. 25.* The singing-men and women spoke of *Josiah* in their lamentations. For certain, a dolefull sad Ditty sadly sung, will never make any laugh, unless it be an errant fool. So a fit Psalm (a penitentiall Psalm you may call it if you please) sung to a sad tune, is as apt to melt and move our hearts upon a day of humiliation, as any exercise we can use, and an apt expression also of such affections as should be in us upon such an occasion. Some have sung for sorrow, as

David

David penn'd and sang many Psalmes when his heart was as full of grief and anguish as it could hold, and so he eas'd and breath'd his heart by powring it out before the Lord in a dolefull Song, lamenting his sad condition. And why may not we as well lament our own and others sad conditions, in singing of *David's* Psalmes? some of which you know are sad complaints of his miseries and sufferings, mixt with earnest prayers for deliverance. Sure *David* was not very merry when he sang many of his Psalmes; whence I gather we may sing even when we are sorry, and so lament and bemoan our selves before the Lord.

Besides, if our hearts be very sad indeed, singing may revive them, since all utterance is an ease to any grief. So some conceive that Christ chose to sing a Psalm after supper, thereby to chear up his own heart, and his Disciples also. Musick cer-
tainly

certainly will allay passions, 1 Sam. 16.
 v. 14. *An evil spirit from the Lord*
troubled Saul, ver. 20. And when *Da-*
vid plaid on his harp, the evil Spirit
 departed from him. Not that there
 is any efficacy in Musick to drive a-
 way devils, but because in a naturall
 way it disposed and settled *Saul* for
 ease, by raising up his heart and spi-
 rit out of his melancholy dumps,
 tempering his rage, and moderating
 his griefs and discontents, by which
 the devil took advantage to drive
 him into phrenzie fits and furies. If
 by *spirit* in that place, we understand
 (as some) onely that which is called
Motus animorum, as a spirit of fear,
 a spirit of jealousy, &c. then questi-
 onless the Musick had a naturall ef-
 ficacy to recover *Saul* out of his me-
 lancholy moods. 2 Kin. 3. 15. The
 Prophet *Elisha* finding some distem-
 per in his spirit, occasioned by the
 presence of an idolatrous King, and
 the present distress of Gods people,
 call'd

call'd for a Musician to chear and compose his spirits, that he might be the better fitted for prophesie. Some have conceived and said, that the spirit of prophesie never came upon a sad soul. How true that is, I leave others to judge. Nor shall I contend if any say there was somewhat extraordinary and supernatural in those cases. However, this I think may be gathered from them, That Musick hath a vertue in it to compose, and quiet, and refresh, and chear the spirit of a man when he is over-gone with melancholy. So Gods people in times of distress and danger, when they feel themselves too much dejected and sadden'd, may chear themselves up by singing a Psalm together. As for our singing on fasting daies (which some are offended at) we say as before, 'tis not so much to make our selves merry, as to move and melt our hearts. 'Tis no absurdity; nor impossibility neither,

ther, for Christians to sing with teares in their eyes.

When a day of thanksgiving comes we sing to another tune, in way of rejoycing, exalting and triumphing in God our Saviour. On Sabbath and Lecture daies we sing partly to expresse our joy in God, for giving us such opportunities and seasons of spirituall edification, by the use of his Ordinances; and partly to compose our spirits, and so fit them for hearing the Word preacht. And this I conceive to be the reason why commonly we sing a Psalm before Sermon.

SER-



S E R M O N V.

Ephes. 5. 19.

*Speaking to your selves in Psalmes and
Hymnes, and spirituall Songs,
Singing, &c.*



Ne end (amongst others)
of our singing of Psalmis
is (as I shewed formerly)
a joyfull praising of God
or expressing of our joy in the Lord;
as Gods servants were wont to do
when God in his providence gave
them occasion and matter of rejoy-
cing by deliverances, victories, or
any other mercies. I shall now adde
to what hath been said, That it be-
comes Gods people when they come
before him in publick, to serve the
Lord with joy and an holy rejoy-
cing;

cing; and for this end they must sing
Psalmes; there being no exercise
more proper to expresse our joy in
the Lord. God calls his people to
rejoyce evermore, *1 Thess. 5. 16.* and
Phil. 4. 4. to rejoyce alway; but more
especially when they come before
him in the use of his Ordinances,
Psal. 105. 3. *Glory ye in his holy Name,*
let the heart of them rejoyce that seek
the Lord, *Deut. 12. 12.* *Ye shall rejoyce*
before the Lord, &c. *Deut. 14. 26.*
Thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God,
and thou shalt rejoyce, *Deut. 16. 10, 11.*
Thou shalt keep the feast of weeks, i.e.
Pentecost, with a tribute of a free-will
offering of thine hands, and thou shalt
rejoyce before the Lord thy God, &c.
And *Deut. 28. 47.* there is a threat-
ning of judgement for this, that they
served not the Lord with joyfulness
and gladness of heart, &c. Not a
filthy or fleshly rejoycing according
to the course of this world, but an
holy and heavenly, such as when the
very

very heart and soul is raviſht with a ſenſe of Gods goodneſs. And this, as it doth very much help us in the duties we have to do, ſo it is expreſſly required, *Pſal. 100. 2. Serve the Lord with gladneſs, come before his preſence with ſinging.* *Psalm 92.* which is (as the Title ſhews) a *Psalm* for the Sabbath, the Prophet gives this as a reaſon of that joyfull ſolemnity, *v. 4. For thou Lord haſt made me glad through thy work, I will triumph in the works of thy hands.* The great work and buſineſs of the Sabbath, is to magnifie God in regard of his great works, *viz.* Creation and Providence, but eſpecially the great work of reconciling the world, and redeeming ſinners from death and hell by Jeſus Chriſt. This great Work was compleated on the day of Chriſts reſurrection, which was the beginning of his exaltation, and then it becomes us to rejoyce in the Kingdome, Power, and coming of
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our Lord Jesus Christ, singing to the Lord, *because he hath done marvellous things*; and saying, *This is the day which the Lord hath made*, let us rejoyce and be glad in it.

I say, 'tis futable and feasonable to rejoyce and be merry on the Lords day, and therefore to sing, and so exprefs our joy in the Lord, who hath made us to rejoyce in his falvation. God loves not to fee us humpish and melancholy, but chearfull and joyfull in his service: Let us therefore sing and say, *The Lord reigneth*.

One gives this as one end and use of our singing of Psalmes, *viZ.* That the Spirit dwelling in us, may be as it were excited and stirred up to put forth his power more effectually and plentifully; and grounds it upon my Text, which (saith he) imports two things: First, that singing is an effect of the Spirit. And secondly, That the Spirit is stirred up in us by singing. That which he saith, to my
K thinking,

A fourth
use of
singing
Psalmes.
Zanch. in
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thinking, hath much reason in it: For why may not singing excite and stir up the spirit and the graces of it in Christians, as well as the performance of other duties? They that have grace therefore do duty, that by exercising their graces they may improve them. Now let such as have any grace of God in them, consider how in doing this duty as it ought to be done, the graces of God (specially faith and hope) may be set on work, whilst we seriously meditate on the promises, and other passages of *David's Psalmes*.

A fifth
use of
singing
Psalmes.

Once more, a Psalm is good sometimes to comfort our hearts when we are under affliction, as I hinted before, how *Paul* and *Silas* sang when they were under extreme sufferings; and *Luther* would encourage himself and others when he heard any bad news of any attempts against the Gospel and such as profest it, saying, *Let us sing the 46 Psalm,*
and

and let them do their worst. Indeed that's a Psalm will chear a mans spirits if he can sing it with understanding and grace in his heart. So did the Primitive Christians comfort themselves in prison by singing of Psalmes.

Lastly, singing of Psalmes is an excellent way to praise God, and speak good of his Name. Many Psalmes (you know) are full of Gods praises, and set forth the wondrous works that he hath done, so as he may have the glory of them. To praise God, and bleſs his Name, is the highest and most excellent service we can do on earth; it comes nearest to the exercise of the Saints in heaven, who are alwaies praising God in the admiration of his infinite and incomprehensible Glory. Now singing of Psalmes is an excellent way of praising God. One saith, that in singing there is a more copious and ample profession of piety.

A sixth
use of
singing
Psalmes.

Not as if God who is a Spirit, were delighted with any sensible thing, as Musick or melodious tunes. But yet God is (as I may say) more delighted when we are more ample and patheticall in pouring out our soules to him in praise. 2 Sam. 6. David (it is said) danced before the Lord with all his might, and then *Michol* scorn'd and flouted him, as some do us now a daies for our singing of Psalmes, which yet is but a praising the Lord with all our might. And indeed, to speak as the thing is, the glory of God is held forth more illustriously in singing of Psalmes (as one observes) because the praises of God are celebrated with greater attention and affection, then if they were barely recited with a lower voice. Wherefore the Levites upon all occasions sung the praises of the Lord, and so did all Gods people also. No Prince (as he saith) or great Commander but thinkes himself more

more honoured if the great things they have done be commemorated and set forth in Song, 1 *Sam.* 18. 6, 7. So the women went out to meet *Saul* with singing and with Instruments of Musick. Now our great Champion and Captain Generall hath conquered sin and Satan, and all our spirituall enemies, we give him not the glory due unto his Name, unless we celebrate the victory with Songs of deliverance.

That none of old sung, but such as had an extraordinary spirit, is false, as I shewed formerly, *Ex.* 15. All the children of *Israel* had not such a spirit, though *Moses* and *Miriam* had. In *Hezekiah's* time the Levites sung praises to the Lord with the words of *David* and *Asaph* the Seer; and so no question they did in *Jehoshaphat's* time also. As for the gift of Psalmes in the Primitive Churches, it went with the gift of tongues, and both are long since

ceased ; so as we may argue as well that we must not say, because we have not the gift of Tongues, as that we must not sing because we have not the gift of Psalmes. Besides, we finde no mention in Scripture of any Church-Officer for compiling of Psalmes, as for the ministry of the Word, and Prayer. Nor hath God inspired any with a gift of Psalmistry to sute the occasions of the Churches from Sabbath to Sabbath. We finde neither Ordinance appointing, nor Providence granting it, nor any reason to silence *David's* Psalmes that others may be attended. We know who endited them, and we know too (which I wish may be duly considered) that some of them are proper to Gospel times. If any question it, let them reade the 89 Psalm, and see whether it be not more proper for Gods people now then in the times of the old Testament.

But how may we sing *David's Quest.*
Psalmes so as to attain those ends?

First, We must have grace in our *Ans. 1.*
hearts, or a gracious frame of spirit, such as *David* had. Singing praise to God is an exercise becoming Saints, who alone can do it so as to please God, and profit themselves in it, as was shewed before.

2. Secondly, Sing none but spirituall Songs, such as *David's* Psalms are, and others composed by holy men of God, who spake as they were inspired by the holy Ghost. These are altogether spirituall for the Authour, for the Matter, and for the End and Use of them.

May we not sing any other Song *Quest.*
composed by a common gift, so long as it is spirituall for the Matter?

It may be of ill consequence many wayes, to shut out *David's* Psalms and take in our own; as *Ans.*

First, We may mistake even in

the Matter ; whereas we are sure there is no such mistake in *David's* Psalmes.

Secondly, Some perhaps may not like so well of others Composures, whereas none but an Atheist will finde fault with the Psalmes that were penn'd by the Spirit of God ; that I say not (what was said formerly) No mans Composures can be answerable to those of Gods Spirit. I rather think, that such Psalmes (if any have them) should be fitter for their own private use then for the Churches of God ; though for my part, I do not encourage any to the private use of them, with a neglect of *David's* Psalmes, but rather dissuade them from it. For other Songs (alwayes supposed that there be no vanity, nor filthiness, nor scurrility, nor reflectings upon other mens good name, which all Christians must be far from) they may be for honest delight and recreation,

for

for ought I know, even as a man may play a lesson on a Lute or other Instrument to refresh his Spirits.

Thirdly, Christians had need to watch their hearts exceedingly, more then ordinarily when they are singing a Psalm. It requires a good measure of the Word and Spirit, to pray in the Spirit, but more to sing in the Spirit, because (as one saith) our senses being delighted with the melody, are apt to steal away our hearts from spiritual fervency. For certainly we are exceeding apt to be taken with the Melody, and in the interim neglect our hearts, so as our spirits shall not work and be doing when our tongues are a singing. To remedy this, lets sing with understanding and attention of minde, in order to which it were a great happiness and help to devotion, if we knew the minde and meaning of the holy Ghost in all that we sing.

What if a man understand not the mean-

meaning of what he sings?

Sol. He cannot then sing in every respect as he should do. But yet I shall offer this to your consideration, not peremptorily asserting it to the prejudice of any that may be otherwise minded. We all grant reading of the Scriptures, and hearing them read, to be an holy exercise, and that which God hath enjoined us. Yet when we read the Scriptures, I suppose we many times meet with that which we do not so well understand, shall we not therefore read them at all? or may we not for all this read them with profit, whilst we understand many things which we read, and by reading them again and again come to more understanding of the minde of God in them? And why may we not sing Psalmes for instruction and admonition that we may understand them? If thou meditate seriously, God may enlighten thee in the very singing.
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We reade and hear to get more understanding, though sometimes we reade and hear what for the present we understand not, and so (for ought I know) we may sing also. Some, I am confident, have found by experience, that in singing of Psalmes they have come to more understanding of some passages then ever they had before. But what Psalm is there that any understanding Christian knows not the main scope and sense of it, though he understand not every particular passage and expression in it? Certainly he that hath a gracious heart cannot be ignorant of the main drift and scope of any of *David's* Psalmes. As we must sing with understanding, so must we sing with affection also, acting and exercising the grace of God that is in us, according as the matter that is sung gives us occasion. Sometimes we are to act faith and hope in God, sometimes holy desires after God, some-

sometimes holy rejoycing in God, and sometimes holy fear and trembling before God. 'Tis not enough that we have grace, but we must act it. As for instance, when we sing that passage Psalm 119.5. *O that my wayes were directed to keep thy statutes.* The desires of our soules should be such as *David's* were, to obey God in every thing to the utmost, when we sing, *O how I love thy Law, &c.* Our soules should be even ravish'd with holy affections towards the Word, and if we finde not such ardent motions in our spirits, there's a word of admonition to minde us what we should be. *Psal. 73. 1. Yet God is good to Israel, &c.* In singing this we learn to act faith as the Psalmist did, and stir up our selves to lay hold on God, especially when we have any temptation to distrust. As in prayer and praise we act faith and other graces, expresse and shew forth good desires, and other holy affections,

affections, so let us in singing of Psalmes. For questionless in this duty we have occasions enough of so doing, whilst such heavenly matter is suggested to us for sweet meditation, and solacing our selves in God and his Word.

Some may ask, Whether it be not *Quest.* good when we are at our work to sing a Psalm, and so to exercise our hearts in meditation on heavenly things.

Though I had rather men should *Answ.* sing a Psalm, then do worse, yet I dare not commend such a practice, nor advise to it, for this reason, *viz.* To sing a Psalm as it ought to be done, is work enough, so as a man need to do nothing else; and if it be said, That this will help us to meditate on something that is good. I answer, That if meditation on some good matter were all the end of singing, this were somewhat, but there is more in the matter; and to say

say truth, singing a Psalm is such a duty as will require the whole man, there being no good exercise wherein our hearts are more apt to miscarry then in this.

Again, thou must observe and watch in this duty, as in prayer, what answers God gives in to thee, and how thy spirit closes with the heavenly matter that is sung, so as thou art raised, comforted, cheared, confirmed, or humbled. As there is a return of prayers, so of praises too, and in every Duty and Ordinance there is marrow and fatness, if our souls are well disposed to relish and receive it.

In one word, This is an excellent service, and therefore the more difficult, so as thou hast need to keep thy heart with a bridle, as *David* resolved to keep his mouth, *Psal.* 39. 1. or otherwise thou wilt hardly rule it when thou art in this duty.

In order to singing with understanding

standing and good affection, I advise all you that can, to look on when you sing. Our practice is (you know) for one to reade a line, and then all to sing it, which some quarrell at, and I for my part wish we had no need so to do, for questionless it were far better if all had books, and could reade, or else had learnt the Psalmes by heart. But if singing be a duty, and we cannot do it without this help, I know no reason we have to reject it. They that cannot reade themselves, may, and ought to hear others reade. Nor is this reading the Psalm an unwarrantable invention of men brought into the Worship of God, as some have said, but onely a necessary help to it, as Pulpits are necessary helps unto the Minister in speaking, and so are Galleries and Scaffolds to the people in hearing. We must distinguish the immediate spirituall means of Worship from such helps as serve onely
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Some cautious directions in order to a right performance of this Duty.

more remotely to the sense of hearing. Now our reading the Psalm that is sung, is but onely a remote help to the sense of hearing, which we use onely for necessities sake, because many cannot read the Psalm themselves. Though I advise and intreat all that can read, to use their books, and so help their understandings; for when a line onely is read, the sense remains imperfect, whereupon some have thought it better (and I am not against it) that two lines be read together.

2. Again, I do heartily wish there were some amendment of our English Meetre in two or three particulars. First, that all the Psalms might run in such Meetre as all our people are able to sing. And secondly, That some uncouth expressions and obsolete words were altered; as for other faults in the Translation, they would be chiefly lookt after, though I must profess, I think the faults are not so many

many or so great as some men would make them. There are, no doubt, but too many things which I stand not to justifie, but wish with all my heart they were well amended; yet this must be considered, that nothing can be done by men, but it will be imperfect. Their arguing therefore is not so good to my thinking, who will not sing *David's* Psalmes because of some flaws in the Translation. For my part, I know no Translation of the Bible but hath its mistakes, and I suppose we all look upon Translations as imperfect, and yet we do not upon that ground refuse to reade the Scriptures. That there are faults I grant, but that they are such as should cause us to forbear singing till they be amended, I deny. Some have not stuck to say, there are lies in our singing Psalmes, but their word is no slander. Though there be mistakes, it will not follow there are lies. I beleieve there is no

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Translation of the Bible but there are some mistakes in it, and yet 'tis foule language to say there are lyes. For the mistakes, I heartily wish them amended; and though I do much approve of their excellent paines, who have altogether changed and altered our English Meetre, yet considering our people have been used to these, I conceive it far better for the present necessity, to let them alone with some alteration in some things, such as I spake of even now.

3. Again, there ought to be a choice of Psalmes according as occasion requires, for as they were penn'd upon occasion, and are some of them intended more especially for one use, and some for another, so there should be a wise choice made of Psalmes to be sung, according as our necessities and occasions respectively call for. The 92 Psalm is intituled a Psalm for the Sabbath; and if you consider the subject matter of it,

it, and many others that set forth the works of God, they will appear very fit to be sung on the Sabbath-day. As the second, and eighth and other Psalmes that speak of the Kingdome of Christ; the 33, 34, & 37, &c. that treat of the work of Creation and Providence; so the 119 Psalm, that shews what is the excellent use of Gods Word, and what affection we should bear towards it. At times of humiliation such Psalmes are to be sung, as may seem to express our sense of sin, our trembling at the wrath of God, or that set forth the calamities and sufferings of Gods people. At times of rejoycing choose such Psalmes as mention the marvelous works of God in Victories, Deliverances, and other mercies shewed unto his people.

If thus there be a wise choice made, I know not any occasion the people of God have at any time, but there may be a Psalm found to an-

swer it; and then if Gods people can with one minde and one mouth glorifie God, what a pleasant and comely thing is it? such a resemblance of heaven, as hardly a better can be found upon earth. Onely let our care be, that our hearts be well tun'd, for thats it that makes melody in the eares of the Lord. You know it is not so comely, when in the Congregation some sing out of tune: but the greatest absurdity of all is when our hearts are not in tune. Though (as I have shewed) the impiety and profaness of some doth not hinder the acceptance of others, yet 'tis more desirable, and that which we should heartily wish, that all could so do this duty, as therein to please God and profit their own soules. Surely if we sing as we ought, somewhat will stick by us. Many sing, and make a noise, and thats all, so they hear and pray to as little purpose, yet others do these duties to
their

their great advantage and edification in grace and gracious practice. If admiring God, speaking good of his Name, rejoycing in his goodness, and other his glorious infinite Excellencies, sweet meditation on the Promises, fervent expression of our good desires, humbling, comforting and chearing our hearts, be good exercises, let us not give over singing, since there is no one Psalm, or part of a Psalm, but will minister occasion of doing one of these. I do the rather perswade to it, because I observe many will not open their mouths to sing in the Congregation, and most neglect this duty in their families, are not so frequent in it as Christians were wont to be. And I observe withall, that few thrive well after they once neglect or scruple singing of Psalmes. They begin at this commonly, but seldome end here, but proceed from evil to worse, till they come at last to live above Ordinances

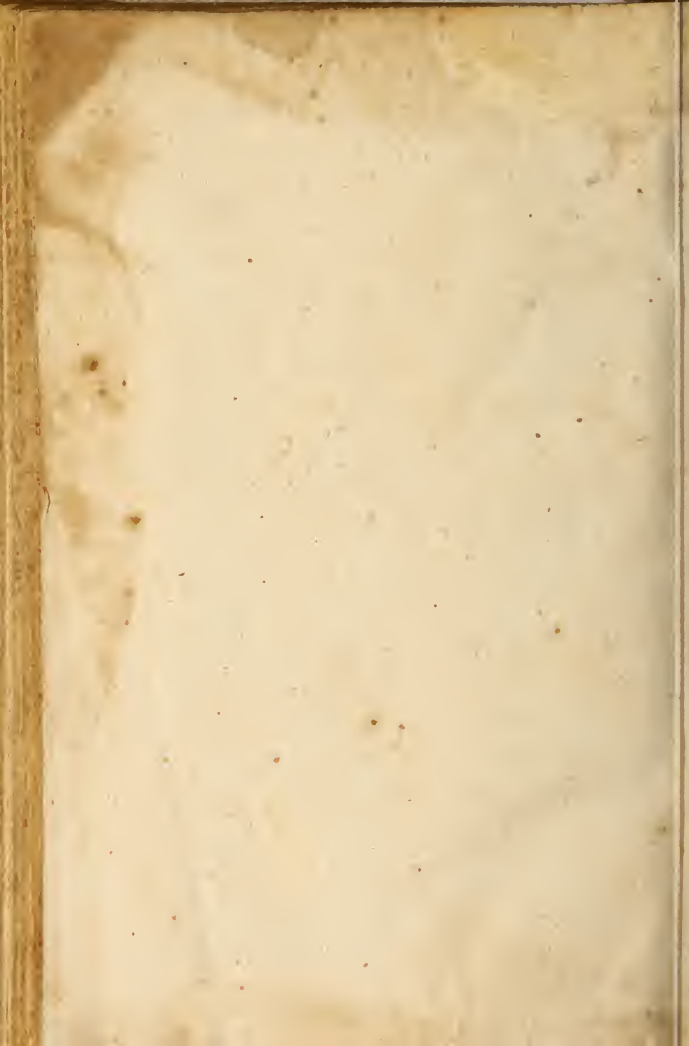
ces and Duties (as they call it) but indeed live without them, and so live like beasts in the shape of men. Let others think as they please, I never knew Christians thrive better in grace and knowledge, then when repeating of Sermons, singing of Psalmes and such like exercises were more in fashion then they have been of late. And let it be considered in what juncture of time singing of Psalmes hath been so much denied and spoken against, even when all the Ordinances of God, and all the Duties of his Worship have been as much slighted by too many amongst us. Here (as I said even now) men begin, but seldome or never stay, but go further to question and decry all Ordinances. They begin here (as I conceive) for this reason, because wrangling wits have some more specious and faire pretences, whereby they can more easily entangle simple and unstable souls, and so make them

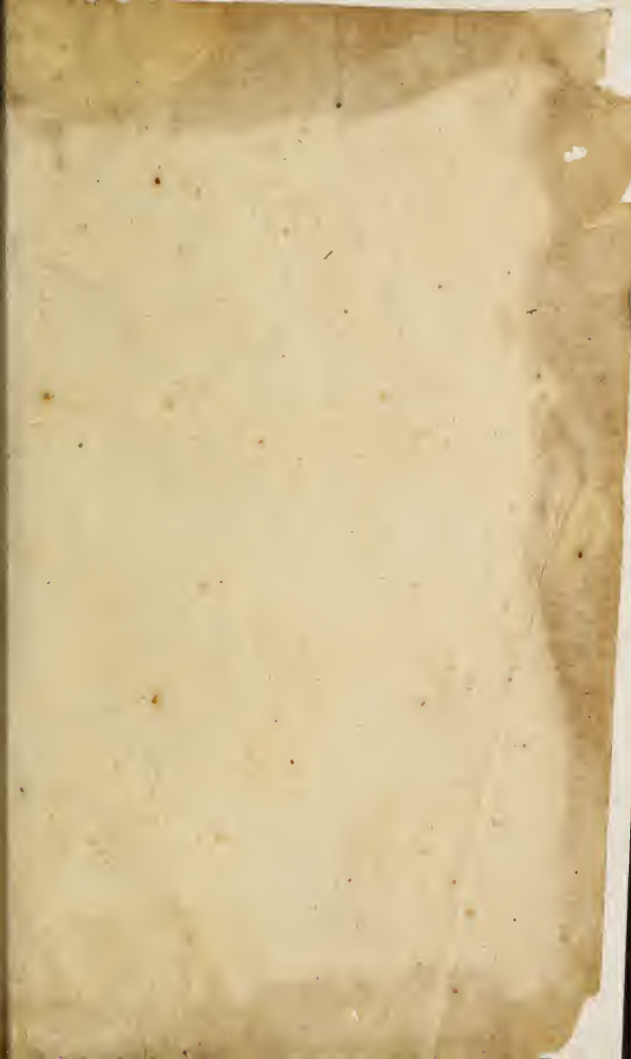
to scruple at this duty sooner then at any other. And to say as the thing is, The ignorance of most concerning the Nature, End, and Use of this Duty, hath given the greatest advantage unto others to seduce and draw them away from it. If that which hath been spoken upon this occasion, may convince, or confirm, or direct any, I have my end, and let God have the glory. Only hear what a reverend man saith in this case, *It is (saith he) the misery of this present* Mr. Cotton *age, that those Ordinances which men have used either without the knowledge of their true grounds, or without any sense of comfort in and by them, or without love to them, in the hour of temptation they have cast them aside, and so forsaken the holy Institutions of God, to please themselves in their own imaginations.*

Consider what I have said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

F I N I S.







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