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March I. 25
Practical Discourses
OF
SINGING
IN THE
Worship of GOD:
Preach'd at the Friday Lecture in EASTCHEAP.

By Several MINISTERS.

Isa. LII. 8. Thy Watchmen shall lift up the Voice, with the Voice together shall they sing.

LONDON;
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THE

PREFACE.

THE Duty of Singing in the Worship of God had been very much neglected and unskilfully performed among our selves, in comparison of the greater Knowledge and better Care of the foreign Churches; till some late Attempts were set on foot to teach the Art, and encourage the Practice.
The Preface.

Among other Designs of this Nature, the Week-day Lecture, at which the following Sermons were preach'd, and that has been continu'd several Years for the Service of Religion, and particularly the Encouragement of Singing, has not been the least considerable, nor the least serviceable and successful.

And as we thought fit at some time or other to consider a Subject, as much neglected as the Practice, and as rarely handled as it was generally ill perform'd; so we thought it could be no where more proper than at such a Place. And tho' they were first undertaken, and now publish'd at the De-
fire of the Gentlemen that encourage and support it, and for their particular Use; yet we think our selves concern'd to declare, That as we profess to follow the Guidance of no other Spirit but that of God, nor to be of any Party but that of all serious Christians; so they are sincerely directed to the common Benefit, and have no lower or more confin'd an Aim, than the Satisfaction and Assistance of all the Serious and Sincere.

Many of our Reverend Fathers imployn'd excellent Pains in the several Volumes of the Morning-Lectures that were devoted to the Service of Practical Religion, instead of medling with the angry Dis-
The Preface.

putes, and the hurtful Quarrels of the Times; and have been very useful to the World: and we thought it no way improper or unsuitable to the Character and Circumstance of younger Ministers, to be willing to serve so excellent an Interest; and hope we may move in this lower Sphere without any just Censure.

It will be necessary to observe, That tho the present Discourses may not be so uniform and of a Piece, or wrought off with so even a Thread, as if compos'd by a single Hand; like the different Colourings of several Hands in a Picture: yet they have upon that Account their Advantage and
and Convenience too. For tho the same things happen sometimes to be said by several, yet they are always directed to a different Purpose, and expressed in a different Manner. And it may be some Gratification to the innocent Curiosity, as well as some Help to the real Benefit of the Serious Reader, to see the same things held in a different Light, and cloth'd in a different Dress; and may give the greater Advantage to the Evidence and Beauty of Divine Truth. So that what is wanting in the Symmetry of Parts, or Equality of Stile, is made up in the Pleasure of Variety; like the grateful Confusion of different Flowers.
Flowers in a pleasant Field, or the pleasing Harmony arising from the Composition of several Sounds.

We shall only add, That if we had known any thing so distinctly writ upon the Subject, form'd out of the Scripture, and fitted for common Use, we should have thought the present Undertaking the less necessary. And we are willing to hope it may not be wholly fruitless, and without Success, as we earnestly desire it may be attended with the Divine Blessing.


1704
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C. *Julius Cæsar’s Commentary on his Wars in Gaul, and Civil Wars with Pompey.* To which is added, *Aulus Hirtius,* or Appius’s Supplement of the Alexandrian, African and Spanish Wars: With the Author’s Life. Adorn’d with Sculptures, from the Designs of the famous Palladio.

An Epistolary Discourse, proving from the Scriptures and the first Fathers, that the Soul is a Principle naturally mortal, but immortaliz’d actually by the Pleasure of God to Punishment, or to Reward by its Union with the Divine Baptismal Spirit; wherein is prov’d, that none have the Power of giving this Divine immortalizing Spirit since the Apostles, but only Bishops: With an Hypothesis concerning Sacerdotal Absolution. The second Edition with large Editions, and corrected from great Erratas by the Author’s own hand.

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Books Sold by J. Phillips.

Some Letters, containing an account of what seem'd most remarkable in travelling thro Switzerland, Italy, and some parts of Germany. Written by G. Burnet, D.D. now Lord Bishop of Sarum, to the honourable Robert Boyle Esq; To which is added an Appendix, containing Some Remarks on Switzerland and Italy, writ by a Person of Quality, and communicated to the Author. The 3d Edition.

The Compleat History of the Affairs of Spain, from the first Treaty of Partition to this present Time. Containing a particular Account of the different Measures taken since the Peace of Rastick to recover Spain to the House of Austria, by K. William of Glorious Memory, and the Great Actions perform'd by Q. Ann and her Allies in Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, &c. Represented in a new Method, by all the authentick Memorials, Letters, Declarations, Manifestos, Treatys, &c. relating to that grand Affair. To which is prefix'd an Introduction, giving a short View of the first Rise and various Resolutions of that Empire, its Grandure and Designs to the attaining to the Universal Monarchy, and the true Causes of its most surprizing Declension since the Reign of K. Philip II. By J. C. M. D. Fellow of the Royal Society, &c.

Sacramental Exercises. or the Christian's Employment, before, at, and after the Lord's Supper. To which is added a Discourse of Hearing, being a Farewel-Sermon, preach'd in Lime-street, Septemb. 29. 1706. By Jabez Earle.
THE NATURE Of the Duty of SINGING.

SERMON I.

COL. III. 16. — Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs; singing with Grace in your Hearts to the Lord.

Designing to give some Account of the Nature of Singing, consider'd as a Branch of Christian Worship, by way of Introduction.
The Nature of

Serm. 1. 1. tion to the following Discourses, I have chosen these Words as the Foundation of what I have to offer upon that Matter, and shall in a few words shew their Relation to the Context.

In the foregoing Chapters the Apostle asserts the great Truths of the Gospel, and in this begins a practical Exhortation, grounded upon what he had been there establishing: From the Consideration of what he had there said, pressing Heavenly-mindedness and Mortification, from Verse 1. to 12. from whence to the 16th, he urges to the particular Dutys of Charity, Peace and Thankfulness; and as a Means in order hereto directs the diligent Study of the Scriptures, which duly entertain'd are able to make us wise unto Salvation; and particularly enjoins the Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, as tending to promote the Interest of Holiness in our Hearts and Lives.

In the Words we have the Act, the Object, the Manner, and the End of the mention'd Duty; from the joint
the Duty of Singing.

I. The Act is Singing; the general Notion of which is speaking musically: and I should but abuse your Patience in detaining you, while I insisted more largely upon a matter which is so obvious to the meanest Understanding.

II. The Object is Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs. How these are distinguished I cannot tell, and shall not trouble you with the Opinions of others. In this they all agree, That they are Words so compos'd, as to be fit for Singing; which is the proper Notion of what we call Verse or Metre.

But tho' the Object of Singing in general be Poetical Composures, or Words set to Tunes, I need not tell you that the Object of Singing, as it is an Act of Religious Worship, is Divine and Spiritual Songs, i.e. Composures which contain a Divine or Spiritual Sense, whose subject Matter is God, his Nature,
The Nature of

Serm. I. Perfections, and wonderful Works, according to the Discovery which he has made of himself in his Word, which we call the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

And I conceive that whatever Songs are Scriptural are the proper Object of Singing, as it is under present Consideration; especially those which treat of Christ and the Benefits of his Redemption. For I can by no means be of their mind, who in the public Congregations would confine us to that Collection of the Jewish Psalmody, which is call'd the Psalms of David, for Reasons which I must not give, because I am not allow'd to invade another's Province. I come next,

III. To the Manner of Singing; and tho what I have here to propose will fall under the Consideration of him whose business it is to give Directions, yet I am necessarily oblig'd to mention some things under this Head, because in all Moral and Religious Actions the
the Duty of Singing.

the Manner of Performance is an essential Part, and the Neglect of it will, in the sight of God, denominate that Trifling and Hypocrisy, which Men would have pass for Divine Service or Worship. Therefore,

§. 1. It must be with Grace in the Heart. There must be a Concurrence of Heart and Voice. God does indeed require the Calves of Hof. XIV. the Lips, but mere Praises will not. be an acceptable Sacrifice. Therefore David calls upon his Soul to bless the Lord, and all that was within him to bless God's holy Name. Agreeably to which the Apostle directs, that we should make melody Eph.V.19. in our Hearts to the Lord. And indeed it is a ruled Case, that bo- 1Tim.IV. dily Exercise profiteth little. Now 8. Singing with Grace in the Heart may imply as follows:

(1.) That he that sings be a gracious Person, or a good Man. We know that God heareth not Sinners, is a Maxim applicable to the present Case. The Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination, and his Praises can't be acceptable. Yea,
Serm. I. It must needs be a provoking thing to a holy and jealous God, for those to sing his Praises that despise his Government, and hate his Laws. Such People do but lye unto him with their Mouths, and flatter him with their Lips. And even a Man of common Discretion would least resent the Curses of an Enemy, than open and notorious Flattery. It is mocking and insulting the great God, for Men at once to praise his Name, and live in an habitual Defiance of him. It is a holy God that inhabits the Praises of Israel: and therefore we should resolve as David did, I will wash my hands in Innocence, and so will I compass thine Altar, O Lord: That I may publish with the Voice of Thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous Works.

(2.) It must be in the lively Exercise of particular Graces; as,

Ps. XXVI. 6, 7. Knowledg. A Man must understand and actually consider what he says, when he sings the Praises of God: Sing ye Praises with Understanding. Otherwise what he does is no more an Act of
the Duty of Singing.

of Worship or Devotion, than Serm. I. the Noise of a musical Instrument.

He is properly but as sounding 1 Cor. XIII Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal.

[2.] Faith. For without Faith it is impossible to please God. And he Heb. XI. 6. that comes to him must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of all them that diligently seek him.

[3.] Love. This is the first and great Commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, &c. Accordingly it is to be regarded as the Spring of all acceptable Obedience: and surely Praise must be a cold and nauseous thing, if it don’t flow from a Heart fill’d with Gratitude and sincere Affection. If there be’n’t inward Desire, Delight, and Admiration, Songs of Praise are empty and insignificant Things; especially considering that God is not to be impos’d upon: but all things are Heb. IV. naked and open in his sight with whom we have to do.

[4.] Humility. Tho Custom has not made it usual to kneel in Singing as in Praying, yet an equal Prostration of Soul becomes
The Nature of

Serm. I. us in both, considering what an infinite Distance there is between us and the Object of our Songs, and how he is exalted far above all Blessing and Praise, the Hallelujahs of the Angels as well as the Hosannahs of the Saints: Especially remembering that we are Sinners, and so deserve to be in that place where the Circumstances of the miserable Inhabitants extort weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, instead of Praise and joyful Acclamations.

§. 2. It must be in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ; ver. 17. Giving thanks unto the Father by him. Parallel to this is that of the Apostle, Unto him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus. The Import of this Expression is, that our Praises must be offer’d up to God thro the Mediation of Christ, whose Intercession procures Acceptance for our Praises as well as Prayers. The same Hand must present, and the same Incense perfume both.

Eph. III. 21.

IV. The
IV. The *End* of Singing is two-fold: The Glory of God, and mutual Edification.

§. 1. The *Glory* of God. This is the ultimate End of a Christian in all his Actions, and especially Religious; *Who so offereth Praise,* Ps. L. ult. glorifies me. I need not tell you, that we can’t make God more glorious than he is necessarily, essentially, and eternally; but by praising God, we acknowledge and proclaim his Glory.

§. 2. Mutual *Edification*; and particularly,

(1.) *Instruction* and *Admonition*: Teaching and admonishing one another, &c. Now this End is admirably answer’d by Psalms, Hymns, and Songs, in which important Truths are many times most agreeably propos’d, more easily impress’d, and better remember’d than otherwise. Upon which account it has been usual in all Ages, even those most remote from the present time, and in all places where there has been any *Religion* profess’d, or publick *Worship*
Serm. I. Worship paid to a Superior Being, to deliver what they counted sacred Mysteries in Verse, and to set that Verse to Tunes. But this needs not be insisted on.


But as all these things will fall in under other Heads, I am allow'd only to mention 'em; and that seems sufficient to answer my Design, which was to show the Nature of the Ordinance.

From what has been said, I might draw several useful Inferences; but considering that my Discourse is but introductory to the rest, I shall only mention two or three things, to which the General Heads fairly lead me: As,

1. That our Singing should be as musical as may be: For tho' where God has deny'd a Voice or an Ear, he will not require what he has not given, yet surely we should serve him with the best we have, and improve every Talent to the best advantage, seeing we must
the Duty of Singing.

must account for it: and we may Serm. I. imagine what the Consequences of our Neglect will be, if we consider that awful Text, Cursed be the De-Mal. I. 14. ceiver which hath in his Flock a Male, and vowed and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing. Indeed our best shall be accepted, be it ever so mean; but nothing less shall be regarded, be it ever so good. And the Reason is obvious; because to put off God with any thing short of the best, must needs be a high Affront to him, who is infinitely exalted above all Blessing and Praise, and deserves infinitely better from us than our best can be. It's true, the Musick of our Voice is a matter of less importance than the Melody of our Heart, but not therefore to be neglected; because a very minute Circumstance may be expressive of a great deal of Duty or Disobedience, as sufficiently appears in the Case of our first Parents. In a word, I may apply to the present Case that of our Lord in another; These ought ye to have done, Luke XI. and not left the other undone: and 42. lay
The Nature of

Serm. I. lay the Stress of what I have said
upon that of the Apostle, Glorify
God in your Body, and in your Spi-

rits, which are his.

2. If the Object of Singing is
Scriptural Songs, then undoubtedly we must not mingle our own
Inventions, Fancys, and private
Opinions, with the great and ob-
vious Truths of the Gospel, in
those Composures which we sing
in the Worship of God. And I
think this sufficiently intimated in
the Text; Let the Word of Christ
dwell in you richly, teaching and ad-
monishing one another in Psalms,
Hymns, and Spiritual Songs. If men
don't in every Ordinance keep to
this Rule, to the Law and to the
Testimony, their Sacrifices cannot
be acceptable, but must fall under

Mat. XV. 9. that Censure, In vain do they wor-
ship me. And this is one Abomi-
nation in the Church of Rome, that
they sing not only what is un-
scriptural, but antiscriptural too,
yea infinitely absurd and ridicu-
lous; as I might shew by Instances
enough to enlarge this Discourse
into a Volume.

3. If
Duty of Singing. 13

3. If the Manner of Performance be with Grace in our Hearts, then we must see to it that we be sincerely devoted to that God whose Praises we sing, and not sing the Lord's Songs with unhallow'd Lips. We must also endeavour to have every Grace (as before mention'd) in its proper and lively Exercise, and tune our Hearts as well as Voices. We must offer a reasonable Service, understand and attend to the Sense of what we sing, lest we be no wiser than the Fowls of the Heaven, who sing they know not what. We must set our selves as in the Presence of the All-seeing God, that a Sense of his Inspection may awe us into a decent Reverence, and make us watch against every thing unsuitable to the Solemnity of Worship, and impertinent to the Business before us: Believing and being firmly persuaded, that as we must account for every Action in general, whether good or bad, so in a very particular manner for every Act of Worship; and that of every idle Word we must give an account.
Serm. I. in the Day of Judgment to him who taketh no pleasure in Fools. Let us have an eye to the Recompence of Reward, as those who believe that the Care and Pains we take in the lowest Instance of Duty, shall in no wise lose its Reward. Let us think with our selves, that while we are conscientiously singing the Praises of God in his Church below, we are training up for that better World, where everlasting Joy shall be upon our Heads, and our Mouths eternally fill'd with the high Praises of our God; and not forget to consider what a dreadful thing it will be, to have our Crys and Wailings in Hell receive a higher Accent from our Hypocritical Songs of Praise on Earth. Let us also see to it, that we sing the Praises of God in the Exercise of Holy Love, that every Breath be warm'd with that holy Flame, and a devout Aspiration attend every Word we utter. Thus David begins that lofty Song of Praise, Psal. XVIII. I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength: and so should every Psalm of Praise we sing, deserve the
the Title of a Song of Loves. Thus Serm. I. will the Employment be delightful to our selves, and grateful to God; 
Psal. XLV. Title. 
Chear the Heart both of God and Man.

Finally, Let us join Humility to the other Graces, remembering what a Majesty we approach, what unworthy Creatures we are, and how sorry things our Offerings be. Herein imitating those glorious Creatures, with whom we one day hope to join in eternal Hallelujahs; who cover their Faces and Feet, Isa. VI. 2, 3. when they cry, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God, &c.

And this Humility will make us come in the Name of Jesus, under a sense of our own Unworthines, and a Persuasion that the Holy God can accept of nothing from the hands of such abominable Wretches as we are, but thro the Merits and Intercession of him, whom the Father heareth always.

4. From what has been said of the End, we may infer our Obligation to aim at the Glory of God in this Duty; that we do it to the Lord: That we despise and abhor
Serm. I. abhor the Thoughts of driving on any base or mean Designs under the cover of the choicest Devotion: That we don't for a pretence multiply our Songs of Praise, as the Pharisees lengthen'd out their Prayers, lest we receive, as they, greater Damnation.

And seeing mutual Edification is another End we are to aim at, I shall here take leave to advise that our Singing be with a distinct and audible Voice, without which it should seem that End can't be answer'd. How can Men be affected with an indistinct Murmur, or how shall they know we do really join in praising God, while we speak only to our selves? Indeed the Heart may be right, and God principally regards its Melody: but unless we sing (as far as the Nature of the thing will bear) so as to be understood by others, or to have them satisfy'd that we go along with them; I may justly apply what the Apostle speaks against praying in an unknown Tongue, We speak into the
the Duty of Singing.

the Air: Our Spirit indeed sings, Serm. 1.

but our Understanding is unfruitful. We should therefore sing with the Spirit, and sing with Understanding; i.e. so as to be understood by others. And therefore as we should be cautious not to confound others by an unseemly Noisiness, so we should extend our Voice to the most convenient degree we are able; and not under a Pretence of Modesty baulk the great End of the Institution. The Levites praised the Lord, the God of Israel, with a loud Voice on high; and Paul and Silas sung so loud, that the Priests heard 'em.

5. To conclude: If God in this, as well as other Ordinances, looks so much to the Heart, and expects to be worship'd in Spirit and in Truth, what need have we to watch our own Spirits, and pray for his? We had need take all the Pains, and use all the Application possible; and finding all that insufficient, we must have recourse to a better Strength than our own, praying that our Hearts may
The Nature, &c.

Serm. I. may be set in Tune by the Finger of God; and joining with the Psalmist, say, *Open thou my Lips, and my Mouth shall shew forth thy Praise.*
ARGUMENTS FOR THE DUTY OF SINGING.

SERMON II.

PSAL. CV. 2.

Sing unto him, sing Psalms unto him.

THE Occasion of this Psalm may be gather'd from 1 Chron. XVI. 7. there we find it was put into the hands of Asaph and his Brethren by David: They had brought the Ark of God into its Refting-place, and then gave out themselves to the view of a long and quiet Settlement. We may observe this, that it was first admitted as a Part of Worship with
Serm.II. with the nearest regard to their own Felicity, and afterwards em-
body'd in the Collection of Psalms, that it might be of universal Ser-
vice. This, I think, is very clear under the Protection of this one Argument, viz. That the Song which we read entire in the Book of Chronicles, is broke and divi-
ded to make up several Parts of Psalms, that seem to be more un-
confined and popular. The be-


ginning of it we meet with in this CVth Psalm, what follows is dis-
pos'd of into the XCVth; one Verse lies often in our way, par-
ticularly in the CXVilth and CXXXVIth, and well it may, for it is the Summary of Praise; Give Thanks to God, for he is Good, for his Mercy endures for ever. The concluding Petition is the same with what you find in the CVIth Psalm; and the Doxology, the close of Joy, we meet with both here and in another Psalm that is compos'd with a direct view of that Mediator, who took upon him the Seed of Abraham. The same devotional Language which they us'd
The Duty of Singing.

us'd at bringing home the Ark, Serm. II.

serves an higher purpose, and is

the breathing of Faith and Joy to

him who was greater than the Temple. This will appear if you unite

Psal. LXXII. 18, 19. in the same view with Psal. CVI. 48. These things will vindicate our Application of an Old Testament Advice to these last days, in which God is speaking to us by his Son. 'Tis true, there's the distance of a great many Ages between the Time of such Exhortation and ours, upon whom the ends of the Earth are come; but it reaches us without any Decay or Waft of Argument, and I will dare to deliver it in those Terms to every one that's Partaker of the Heavenly Calling; Arise, for the matter belongs unto thee.

This is the Design that I have in the choice of this Text, and that you had in directing me to a part of Service among you; I'm to establish the Truth and Obligation of a great Ordinance, and show what a rightful Claim it has upon those who would walk worthy of God unto all pleasing. Singing his
I. It may be prov'd from that natural and common knowledge of things which God has bestow'd upon Mankind at large. Revelation produces it in a better Light, and strikes deeper into the Conscience; but yet the Duty itself is of a more diffusive kind, and takes the same Compass with human Reason. I will mention three things under this Head, which will fill up the Argument.

§. 1. 'Tis promoted by those Works of Greatness and Mercy that lie open to an universal Remark. David calls in the Heathen World to bear a Part in this great Consequence; Praise him all ye Nations, praise him all ye People. 'Tis a common Duty, and includes the whole rational Nature: Let the Nations be glad and sing for Joy.
the Duty of **Singing**.

—Let the People praise thee *O* God, Ser. II. let all the People praise thee. Tho' the Mysteries of Redemption are unknown among 'em, so that they cannot think of God's loving kindness in the midst of his Temple; yet Creation and Providence give 'em the Memorials of a Deity, and those may touch their Joys in a fainter way: for according to God's Name, so is his Praise to the Ends of the Earth, and his right Hand is full of Righteousness. What may be known of him is manifest in them, for he has shown it to 'em; and the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen by the things that do appear, even his Eternal Power and Godhead. This is so noble an Argument to the Work of Praise, that their Silence falls under a severe Correction; they are said to be without Excuse, because that when they knew God, they glorify'd him not as God.

Nature taught the Heathens to sing the Praises of their Gods:

Δεῦτε ὁ ἐννέπετε σφέτερον πατέρι Ἑβρ. 11. μείκται.

ε'ργα—

γυμνό—Θεογονία.
Plutarch says, That Singing and Musick among the antient Greeks were wholly employ'd in the Worship of their Gods; and laments their Profanation and Abuse in later times when they brought 'em into the Theater.

Ei ὑπὲρ εἰσεξέμεν ἄλλα τι ἐσχήματα ποιεῖν ἄποινη γὰρ ἔν τῷ ἱείῳ, ἦ γὰρ νεῖν τὸ θεῖον, οὐκέτι ἐπίσκεψιν ἐπετείμησε Αρρίαν.  

Epist. l. i.  

De Musica.
The Duty of Singing.

of fine Hymns consecrated to the Gods, and advises them to be learn'd and remembered.

Many of the Scripture-Songs are rais'd upon a view of what God has done in Nature, things expos'd to an universal Admiration. David considers the Heavens as the Work of his Fingers, the Moon and the Stars that he had ordain'd; and then says, Lord, what is Man? 'Tis true, these are only part of his ways, and we cannot see the Glory of God to any saving advantage, but in the face of Jesus Christ: however there are some Beams of Perfection shining out to them, who are Aliens from the Covenant of Promise. For the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament shows his handy-work. Day unto Day uttereth Speech, and Night unto Night showeth Knowledge. There is no Speech or Language where their Voice is not heard; for their Line is gone thro all the Earth, and their Words unto the end of the World. These are not fo limited as the Statutes that he gave to Jacob, and
ARGUMENTS for

Serm. II. and the Commandments that were only made known to Israel. Indeed they are a People most oblig'd and prepar'd to the Service; but the Duty reaches further, and David owns this when he was solemnizing the peculiar Relation that God bore to the Jews. The XCVIth Psalm is a part of the Song that he gave out at the settling of the Ark, and yet then he looks beyond their own Nation: Fear before him all the Earth; say among the Heathen, that the Lord reigneth: the World also shall be establish'd, that it be not mov'd. They understand, tho it be not by the clearer views of Faith, that the Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God; so that the things that are seen were not made of things that do appear. And further, They behold that part of his wonderful Works, which is most affecting to themselves. The Apostle comes down upon the Heathens Level, when he tells 'em of the Times in which God suffer'd all Nations to walk in their own ways, and yet even then left not himself without *
the Duty of Singing.

without witness, but gave 'em Rain Serm. II.
and fruitful Seasons, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness. So that if we had no express Voice of Law or Gospel to make this our Duty, 'tis as much establish'd in the Rules of Nature as Prayer and Dependence upon God can be; and this is the Work of all Nations Act. XVII. of Men, who dwell on all the Face 26, 27, 28.
of the Earth, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, tho he be not far from every one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our Being. For this the Apostle brings in one of their own Poets, who said, We are his Offspring.

Necessity has this Virtue in it, to set us a crying after him, tho we should always have bin at a loss for the true Method of doing it, if Life and Immortality had not come to Light by the Gospel; yet every Admonition of Misery is a push to the thing it self. The Mariners who had got Jonah aboard were as loose and wild in their Notions of Worship as People could be, when they cry'd every
Arguments for Szxm.W.ManthisGod, but yet they have

\[ Jon. 1. 5. \]

\[ Rom. II. 14, 15. \]

some unpolish'd Thoughts of their Duty: They had an Opinion of Prayer as a way to escape. Thus the Gentiles, who have not the Law, do by nature the things contain'd in the Law; and these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves, which show the Work of the Law to be written in their Hearts. 'Tis the Parallel between one Ordinance and another, that I wou'd argue from: If mere Nature that surveys the Beauty of Creation and Providence, can show a God to our Hope in the time of need, it does equally oblige us to praise him for Mercys receiv'd. The Materials of the Service lie abroad, and may be fetch'd in from the common Favours of Life; for as God our Maker he gives Songs in the Night.

\[ Job XXXV.10. \]

§. 2. This Duty is distinguish'd from those that were Ceremonial, and only a shadow of good things to come. The Jews had their Law in Tables, but their Gospel in Figures. Many parts of their Service were to declare and nourish the hopes of a
The Duty of Singing.

a Messiah. The Adoption that pertained to them, the Glory, the Covenants, the giving of the Law, and the Promises, was because they were a People, of whom as concerning the Flesh Christ came. These had no further value in them than as they were establish'd by a temporary Command, and pointed to that ripper Glory, those better things that God had reserve'd for us. But the ultimate Works that are purely moral are oftentimes mention'd apart from them; and when these two are put into the Ballance, the Character always weighs on one side: The Lord has not so great Delight in Burnt-Offering and Sacrifice, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord: behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the Fat of Rams. When he supposes an awaken'd Conscience lamenting how insufficient Thousands of Rams, and Ten Thousand Rivers of Oil would be, he puts a new credit upon those parts of Obedience that are everlasting and moral: He has shown thee, O Man, what is good, and what the Lord thy God requires of thee.

C 3

Of
Arguments for Serm.II. Of this kind are those Praisesthat we offer to him in the Ordinance of Singing. This is the plain sense of David, tho he liv'd in an Age when the Ceremonial Commands had all their Force: I will praise the Name of God with a Song; I will magnify him with Thanksgiving; this also shall please the Lord better than an Ox or Bullock that has Horns and Hoofs.

'Tis not my Province to answer Objections, that's a Service better plac'd; but I cannot be passive to one that usually assaulted this Argument. Some tell us, that we may as fairly conclude for the use of Instrumental Musick in the Worship of God, because the Jews often brought it in thither. I shall give a very easy and general Answer, which I hope may both break this Difficulty, and lead us into the true Nature of that Service we are now oblige'd to. 'Tis certain, most of their moral Dutys had a Tincture of Ceremony in 'em, because something further was requir'd of 'em besides an Obedience to the Law: There was the hope
hope of the Promise made unto the Father; unto which Promise the twelve Tribes instantly serving God, Day and Night hop'd to come. That this expectation might be kept alive, they had the Figures and Shadows of the great Blessing united to their Services. I will show you this in a parallel Case: Prayer to God is undoubtedly establish'd upon another foot than that of the Types and Ceremonys; and yet they are so interwoven, that the Duty has a great deal peculiar in it, as it comes from them. There must be an Offering, their Faces are directed to the House which God had chosen to place his Name there. They had Seasons of doing it: The multitudes stood praying without at the time of Incense. We read of the Hours of Prayer: Acts III.1. They were to guard against all ceremonial Impuritys; and if any thing of this external Part was neglected, we sometimes find there's a frown of Providence to cloud the Work. God made a Breach upon David's Design, by striking Ozza dead (tho it's probable there
Serm. II. was a religious Temper among the People because they sought him not after a due Order. So that, to bring up the Argument, if a Duty ceases to be moral, because their way of discharging it was peculiar, we shall have the whole Character destroy'd: no part of our Obedience can possibly come under that name. The distinction is very plain between this Ordinance we are now defending, and those that are called carnal ones, imposed on the Jews till the time of the Reformation. When the Apostle writes to the Church at Colosse, he makes it one great part of his Advice to them, that they be not entangled with Meats and Drinks, or in respect of Holidays, or New Moons, or Sabbath-Days, which took up a mighty room in the Jewish Worship; but they were only a shadow of good things to come, for the Body was Christ, and they ought to be dead from the Rudiments of the World. And yet, after he had thus demolish'd the whole Mass of Cerimony, in the very next Chapter he directs 'em to Psalms, and Hymns, and
the Duty of Singing.

and spiritual Songs: which shows Serm. II. they are not to be thrown into the number of those Services that are purely Typical.

§. 3. Human Nature is fitted to this Work with an especial Design. The Facultys of Enquiry, Meditation, Delight and Wonder, are to relish the Perfection and Bountys of a God, what he is in himself, and what he has done for us; and the Tongue is our Glory, that Pr. XXX. we may sing Praise. We have a Capacity to the Service above what other Creatures can pretend to: Our Voices are pliable to Melody; and how can that Beauty in the frame of them be better turn'd than to a decent and regular Performance of this Work? And when any will be at Pains to have this Ordinance carry'd on with a becoming Sweetness, 'tis indeed a devoting the best Instrument of Nature to the best Employment of Grace. Our Glory is exerted, and God's admir'd. Satan's Artifice against this Duty shows it self two ways: On the one hand, he persuades a loose and careless
Arguments for Serm. II. World, that there's nothing of Harmony or Entertainment in it; and therefore if they would be pleas'd in the sense of Hearing, they must go for it to those things that are a long step from Religion.

On the other hand, he attacks the Ordinance with the Prejudice and Sourness of those who condemn what they don't understand: and it's no wonder that a Service so useful to the Christian is thus oppos'd. But certainly, our having Voices, that are capable of doing their Work with pleasure this way, is both an Argument founded in Nature, and obliges to some Diligence for Qualification. We are expressly told of those, that taught to sing Praise. Why is it that God has ennobled us at such a Cost of Love, but that our Adorations may be distinguish'd from the more silent ones that other Creatures are giving? The Sun, Moon, and Stars, Dragons, Deep's, Fire, Hail, Snow, Wind and Vapours, Mountains, Hills and Trees, Cattle, creeping things and Fowl, praise the Name of the Lord, and his Glory, which
the Duty of SINGING.  

is above the Heavens. But we are Serm. II. to do it in another manner; as we have Souls to digest the Materials, and peculiar Organs to give it vent: *With one Mind and one* Rom. XV. Mouth we glorify God, even the Fa-6. *ther of our Lord Jesus Christ.* There's something in our Make that's equivalent to an Institution; these Capacities of Preparation and Utterance are given us to carry on the Design: *My Lips shall greatly Pr. [XXI. rejoice when I sing unto thee,* and my 23. *Soul which thou hast redeem'd.*

II. This Duty is still more evident from the positive Institutions of God's Word. I shall consider this Argument in two Parts, as it stands upon the Foundation of the Prophets and Apostles. In the Old Testament we find it commanded, us'd and endear'd to our imitation from several Persons, but especially him who is call'd the sweet Psalmist of Israel. In the New we have the same Exhortations, to let us see that it's a continuing Ordinance; and our Lord, when he comes, expects to find us so doing.
ARGUMENTS for

Serm. II. § 1. I begin with that part of

the Argument that is grounded on

the Old Testament; and what De-

mand returns so often as of our

Service to God this way? No Call
to any Duty is more repeated, es-

pecially in the Book of Psalms.

But because there's an Objection al-

ways ready against those Exhorta-
tions to Singing which we find

in the Old Testament, I will only
turn you to such Passages as are

Prophetick of our Worship under

the Gospel. This is universally

own'd, that many things in those
times were written in a view of

this last Dispensation. The Spirit

in the Prophets testify'd, that not un-
to themselves, but unto us they did

minister the things that are now re-

ported. From several of these

Scriptures, it appears with the

best Conviction to me, that God
design'd to have Singing of Psalms

a part in his Worship now.

The XLVIIth Psalm has a great
deal in it that looks at these last
days, wherein God has spoken to us

by his Son. He is said to go up with

a Shout; this was true of our Medi-

ator,
the Duty of Singing.

ator, when the Father rais'd him up Serm. II.
Again, we there read that God reigns over the Heathen, and the
Princes of the People are gather'd,
even (or as it is in the Margin unto) the People of the God of Abra-
ham. And the reason he gives for it leads us into such a sense of the
words, because the Shields of the Earth belong unto God, and he is
greatly exalted. What a beautiful account is this of the Success the
Gospel had, and the Blessing of A-Gal. III. 4:
braham that came on the Gentiles thro Christ? Now, in this Psalm,
we are commanded to shout unto God, to sing Praises, to do it with
Understanding: The Call is repeated several times, which lets us
see what our Work shou'd be when these glorious things took place.
The LXVIIIth Psalm so plainly re-
fers to Christ, that the Apostle Eph. IV.
gives us the very words of it, in
telling us, that he ascended up on
high, &c. And this Exhortation
is mingled in the several parts of
that account, that we sing unto ver. 4.

hims that rides on the Heavens; and
particu-
Arguments for Serm. II. particularly the Heathen, who were once rebellious, are charg'd to do V. 32, 33. it, because he receiv'd Gifts for them. Sing unto God, ye Kingdoms of the Earth.

The XCVth Psalm is almost repeated in the IIId and IVth Chapters to the Hebrews: From thence the Apostle fetches his Exhortations, to hear God's Voice, and believe his Word; which shows that it contains those Rules of Duty that we are to be guided by in the days of the Son of Man; and there we are call'd to come before his Presence with Thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with Psalms.

We have a cloud of Witnesses from the Prophets, who foretold the Grace that should come unto us. The Conversion of the Gentiles is express'd in this Language, That

If. XXXV. they shou'd come to Sion with Songs, &c. They shall sing for the Majesty of the Lord. Songs shall be heard

IIa. LI. I1. from the uttermost parts of the Earth, even Glory to the Righteous. And in

Ch. XLII. another place, The Ends of the Earth, the Inhabitants of the Rock are
are to give Glory to the Lord, and Serm. II. they must declare his Praise in the Islands. The Preaching and Conquest of the Gospel is meant by publishing glad Tydings, and saying Rom. x.

They break forth into Joy, and sing together, when the Lord has made bare his holy Arm in the Eyes of all Nations, and all the Ends of the Earth come to see the Salvation of God. Time would fail me to bring in all that we meet with to this purpose; I will only sum up the Argument, That if God design'd to abolish this Ordinance, and raise it out of his Worship, we can scarce think that he would have put the Duty and Joys of a Gospel-day into such Language.

§ 2. I proceed to those Commands that we have in the New Testament; and these are plain enough to carry their own Evidence. The first I shall mention you have Eph. V. 19. Speaking, eas'lois, to your selves (or to one another) in Psalms, and
Arguments for Serm. II. and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. 'Tis apparent by this Scripture, that a secret Joy in God doth not come up to the Design of the Exhortation. A devout and warm Repentance of his Goodness to us is the Soul of all Duty, but this is not speaking in Psalms: The Phrase of the Advice lets us see that it must be different from Meditation, where the Soul is purely retir'd into itself, and shuts out the whole Creation. The Melody in the Heart is no Censure of the Voice: It only tells us, that besides the Pleasure of regular Sounds, we must have our Affections rais'd with the Substance and Matter of what is sung:

Psalms CIII. 1. That our Souls and all that is within us may praise the Lord; lest we fall under the Misery of those who honour him with their Lips, but remove their Hearts far from him.

Another Scripture, which is much to the same purpose, you have, Col. III. 16. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in all Wisdom,
dom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with Grace in your Hearts unto the Lord. The Word that was translated your selves in the other place, is here produc'd in its true and genuine Sense. The Context to each of these Scriptures is fill'd with Directions for general Service; the Advice in both of 'em is almost the same, only here we are bid to let the Word of God dwell richly in us, which answers the Design of this Ordinance two ways: First, as we are thereby the readier at accommodating the Psalms to our own or others occasions: and, Secondly, as it enlarges the Mind to understand and apply what we meet with in that great Bank of Experience. My Lips shall praise thee, says David, when thou hast taught me thy Statutes. This will help us to find our own case in those Psalms, that look as if they were either personal, or wrapt up in Judaisms. When the Word of God dwells thus richly in us, it will form the Thoughts
Serm. II. Thoughts to a greater compass; and teach us to compare spiritual things with spiritual: for whatsoever was written aforetime is for our Admonition. We shall be Partners with David in his Afflictions, and taste his Comforts as if they had been our own at the first hand.

Rom. XV. 3. And indeed the Everlasting Covenant that God makes with us, is no other than the sure Mercies of David. This will lead us within the Vail of Ceremony: By knowing the Fitness of the Types to their Substance, we shall not have our Thoughts shackled with the Phrase; but know that those Passages which seem to be of the narrowest meaning, and most confined to that Age, have a Gospel-Sense and Beauty in 'em.

Another Command you find: Jam. V. 13. Is any afflicted? let him pray: Is any merry? let him sing Psalms. Perhaps the Word in our Translation is a little too light for the Frame of Spirit here design'd. It expresses a Temper that's very becoming those who are Heirs of the Grace of Life, and shoud rejoice.
The Duty of Singing.

Joyce evermore, being not appointed Serm. II.

unto Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ. So that the usual Answer to this is frivolous, that it's a Duty only for those who are joyful: They may as well affirm, that Prayer obliges no further than when Affliction has gone before. The latter part of the Verse is no more limited than the former. Several Psalms are the Breathings of David's Spirit under his Distress. The CII is call'd A Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelm'd, and pours out his Complaint before the Lord. There was in those Believers a Love to God and a Hope in him, to gild the Darkness of Providence; and should not the Christian be acquainted with these in all his Adversities? The Exhortation therefore stands unshaken; Sing unto the P. XXX.

Lord, ye Saints of his, for his Aner 4, 5.

endures but for a moment; in his Favour is Life: Weeping may be for a night, but Joy comes in the morning. Who's to blame that we are not in a Temper for the Duty? Is our Sadness so irregular and vio-

lent,
Arguments for

Serm. II. lent, that we refuse to be comforted? Had we rather allow an Unruliness of Grief, and charge God foolishly, than take the Methods of Composure that he has directed us to? Never let that be an Excuse, which in most cases is itself a Crime; but beg rather, that God

Ps. II. 15. would put you into Tune: Open thou my Lips, and my Mouth shall shew forth thy Praise. Perhaps there's a Cloud upon your Comforts at present; but have you no Hope towards God, or Delight in his Promises? Look forwards, and

Ps. XCVI. rejoice before him, because he will 23. come to judge the Earth with Righteousness, and his People with Truth. Afflictions don't deserve to hinder

Phil. IV. 6. you: Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer, and Supplication, and (this Method of) Thanksgiving, make your Requests known unto God.

III. We are directed by Example to this Duty. These things are recorded for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the Earth are come. The Historys of God's People
People are not a dry Entertain-Serm.II. ment; they don't tell us matters remote and foreign: but they are either a Test to show us what we are, or a Rule to tell us what we should be. I'll begin with the original Pattern: We find our blessed Lord imployst'd in singing the Praifes of the Father. 'Tis true, a great part of his Duty is recorded for our Hope and Wonder, and engages to no Imitation; such as his working Miracles, suffering the Wrath of God, satisfying the Law, by which he brought in an Everlasting Righteousness. These are not our Rule, but the Refuge we must flee to, the Hope that is set before us. He trod the Wine-press alone, and of the People there was none with him. But as to the Purity and Devotion of his Life, we should be Followers of him as dear Children. Now when he was to part with his Disciples, and took leave in an Ordinance that should continue till they met again, he sung an Hymn with 'em. This could not be merely in compliance with the Jewish Custom at the Pas-
sover;
Arguments for
Serm. II. for that Solemnity expir'd then, and he had appointed another in remembrance of himself and his second Coming. His Soul was full of holy Reverence and Love to the Father. He knew the Work of Redemption was now almost finish'd; and as this would engage the Songs of Heaven, so he employs his Voice in the Service of his Heart: He glorifies God both in Spirit and Body, as was Ps. LXV. 2. becoming one who had Grace pour'd into his Lips. Those words of David were eminently design'd for Ps. XL. 3. him; *The Lord has put a new Song into my mouth, even Praise to our God.* This, I say, was his Language, who said afterwards, *Lo, I come; in the Volume of thy Book it is written of me.* This is the Example that he has left for us to follow his steps.

David's Practice in this Duty makes a whole Book. I know how quick some People are with their Objection, That our Case is not his; but I don't see how that's any bar to the concurrence of Faith and Hope with his Meditations. Nothing could be more per-
the Duty of Singing: personal than the changing his Be-Serm.II.
baviour before Abimelech; and yet upon that occasion he desires others to magnify the Lord with him, and that they might exalt his Name togeth er. And we find his Psalms us'd by People who were remov'd the length of several Ages from him. Hezekiah, and such as join'd in the Passover with him, praise'd 2Chron. the Lord with the Words of David, xxix. 30. and Asaph the Seer: and they sung Praises with gladness, and bow'd their Heads and worship'd. We find the same upon another eminent Turn of Providence; They Ezr.III. 10 praise'd God after the Ordinance of David King of Israel. The Apo stles and holy Men of God in later times were thus employ'd. Paul and Silas sung Praises to God in the Stocks: The Multitude of the Disciples, and others, did it, when Christ made his publick Entry into Jerusalem. And when the Apostle is giving Directions about the Conduct of our publick Worship, he speaks of himself, I will sing with 1Cor.XIV the Spirit, and with Understanding 15. also. Nay, methinks, we may look
Arguments for Serm. II. look much higher for Examples:

Job XXXVIII 7.

This was the Work of the Angels;

When the Foundations of the Earth were laid, the Morning-Stars sung together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.

IV. There's something in our Frame and Composition as Christians, that may endear this Ordinance to us. Fornication, uncleanness, Covetousness, Filthiness, and foolish Talking are not to be nam'd among us, as becometh Saints; but rather giving of thanks.

§. 1. 'Tis a means of further Instruction. Moses writ a Song, which must not depart from the mouths of the Children of Israel, lest they should forget the wonderful Works of God. We speak to our selves, and admonish one another in Psalms and Hymns. This gives the Mind an advantage to dwell upon the things of God with a pleasing Meditation; and, in this sense,

Prov. XVI. the Sweetness of the Lips increaseth Learning.

§. 2. 'Tis a proper Effect of the Ps. LXIII, Believer's Joy. Because thy Loving-kindness
kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee. My Soul shall be satisfy'd with Marrow and Fattness; and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips. 'Tis the early Voice of the Convert, The Kings of the Earth shall praise thee, when they hear the words of my mouth; yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord. Men will show their pleasure abroad. Such as are govern'd by a sensual Taste of things, feel a Delight that cannot be pent up. They declare themselves in Roaring and Folly, and. an Excess of Riot. Now 'tis this Ordinance that fixes the distinction between profane and sacred Mirth: Be not drunk with Wine, but be ye fill'd with the Spirit, speaking to your selves in Psalms. I need but remind you of the Example we have newly parted with. When Paul and Silas were in the Stocks, confin'd with Scandal and Danger, they sung so loud, that the Prisoners heard them. This was the Fruit of that Redemption they felt in themselves, and preach'd to others; and it made good that Promise, That
Arguments for

Serm. II. That the Wilderness should be as Eden, and the Desert as the Garden of the Lord; Joy and Gladness being found therein, Thanksgiving and the Voice of Melody. This becomes the Triumph we have in God more than Boasting and Wrangling: It's a Duty to the praise of his Grace, who has made us accepted in the Beloved. Thus we should begin to enjoy a Mercy. When God was about to open a Spring in the Wilderness, Israel sung a Song. Providence has testify'd to the Value of a Joy that shows it self this way. When Jehosaphat had appointed Singers to the Lord, who went out before the Army, and they begun to sing and praise; God set Ambushments against the Children of Moab and Ammon, and they were smitten down before Judah.

§. 3. 'Tis a good means of declaring our Religion to the World. These two are: made the same thing, Praising God and Teaching others; I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy Name. Nay, Christ himself is brought in as making known his Doc-
the Duty of Singing.

Doctrine by this method: Saying, Serm. II.
I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren; in the midst of the Congregation I will sing praise unto thee. And well then may it be said of his People; It is good to sing Praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely. Thus we render unto him the Calves of our Lips. Hof. XIV. 2

It may be, there's no one Ordinance in either Publick or Family Worship so fitted to this Design.

I could show you from the Learned Bishop of Salisbury's History, how the Reformation in England prosper'd by the mighty Zeal of People in this Work; and God own'd it with the same Blessing in France: but these things will have a more natural place among the Exhortations to this Duty. I'll therefore leave this Subject to the last part of this Design; and thither I refer you.

§. 4. It promotes and sweetens other Ordinances. 'Tis good to begin with it; to serve the Lord with Gladness, and come before his presence with Singing. The Services of God's House are so far from clashing,
Serm. II. clasifying, that they are a mutual Advantage to one another. Thus we find Neh. IX. One fourth part of the Day they read in the Law of God, and another fourth was taken up in worshipping; and when they had cry’d unto him, the Levites call’d upon ’em, to praise his glorious Name, which is exalted above all Blessing and Praise. ’Twas thus that our Lord concluded his Feast of Love with the Disciples; After Supper they sung an Hymn. This Variety in publick Worship makes it more easy and beautiful. The Apostle blames the Corinthians for the Confusion of their Assemblies, That every one of ’em had a Psalm, a Doctrine, &c. but he allows the Parts themselves. It seems the most natural Close of our Devotions. When we have been receiving the Good Tidings of Salvation, and have heard it said unto Sion, Thy God reigneth; ’tis the very Letter of the Prophecy, that with the Voice together we should sing. The Lord doth therefore take pleasure in his People, and beautify the Meek with Salvation: That the Saints may be joyful.
the Duty of Singing.

joyful in Glory, and sing aloud upon Serm. II.

their Beds; that the high Praises of God may be in their mouths.

§ 5. The Heavenly State which every upright Soul is breathing to, comes under this Description. When they that are in their Graves hear the Voice of the Son of Man and live, they’ll rise in Tune. Thy dead Men shall live, together with Isa.xxvi. my dead Body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the Dust. ’Tis the only Ordinance of this World, that we meet with in a better; Prophecies shall fail, Tongues 1 Cor. will cease, and the common means of Knowledge vanish away. But it’s the Blessedness of those that dwell Rev.xiv.3 in the Building of God, the House not made with hands, that they shall ever praise him. The 144000 sing a new Song before the Throne. Now surely we should not have had the Joys and Worship of a dear Eternity put into these Names, if there were not something in the present Sweets of Duty to guide our Conception of it. This is the Employment of Saints and Angels, a Meditation upon those Wonders that
Serm. II. that are recorded in Heaven, with everlasting Shouts of Praise to him that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb. 'Tis in these terms that God’s own Delight is expressed; He will rest in his Love, and rejoice over them with singing. 'Tis a good way to allure our Value for that better Church, when the most delightful part of Worship here is to give it a Title. The Faith and Hope, that are contending upwards, do never so well employ themselves, as in the Duty of admiring God; because it's so much the same with the Vision into which they shall expire.

I'll conclude the whole with the Apostle's Advice, grounded on this very Argument, We have here no continuing City, but we seek one to come; 'tis the desire of our Souls that it may be, and we have the Word of a Redeemer that it shall be: By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise unto God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving thanks unto his Name.
The Excellence of the Duty of Singing.

SERMON III.

PSAL. CXLVII. 1.

Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing Praise to our God; for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely.

This is the third Part of the Subject that has fallen to my share, and which I am to consider at this time; i.e. To represent the Excellence of this noble Duty, and recommend it to your Love and Esteem. I shall

D 4

confine
The Excellence of
Ser. III. confine my self strictly to this single Branch of the Subject, and endeavour to keep within the limits prescrib'd me.

EXCELLENCE, or the just Commendation that belongs to a thing, may be consider'd either as something real and inherent in the Subject; or as something relative, and in the respect it bears to other things. The former signifies the intrinsic Value of a thing, or what it has in it self to recommend it: The latter signifies its Preference to other things, or what there is in it that exceeds others of a like kind.

I shall proceed upon these general Measures in the present Case, and represent the Excellence or Value of this Duty, under this double Consideration of it.

I. Consider it more Absolutely, and as it is in it self.
II. More Relatively, and as it stands in comparison with others.
Under the former I shall shew Ser. III. wherein it agrees, and what it has more in common with others: Under the latter, wherein it excels, and what it has more appropriate and peculiar to it self.

I. I shall consider it more absolutely. And the Excellence of it will appear, if you view the whole Frame of it, and consider it in all its Parts; viz.

§. 1. Consider the Matter that is to be sung; in the general, The Praises of God: That I may shew Ps. IX. 14. forth all thy Praise. And the Apostle expresses it by Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs; which perhaps may be design'd to signify nothing more than the several Titles and Divisions of the Book of Psalms.

But then this must be understood in the fullest Latitude: Whatsoever tends to the Praise of the Almighty, every Representation of his Glory, and every Discovery of his Will. And if you consult the Sacred Psalmody, you shall find that the Psalms that are

D 5 upon
The Excellence upon record, are full of various Excellencys, and one of the most lofty and noble Parts of the Sacred Writings. Particularly,

We are to sing the Praises of Creating Power. To this purpose divers of the Psalms of David are particularly directed; that recount the Glorys of the great Creator, and celebrate his Praise, in the stately Fabrick of Heaven and Earth, in the rich Furniture and vast Variety of Beings, in all the Impresses of his Glory upon the Creation, and all the Instances of his eternal Power and Godhead.

Ps. XIX. The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work, &c. Thou art great, clothed with Majesty and Honour; coverest thy self with Light as with a Garment; stretchest out the Heavens as a Curtain: He layeth the Beams of his Chamber in the Water, maketh the Clouds his Chariot, and walketh upon the Wings of the Wind. Thou laiddst the Foundation of the Earth, that it should not be remov'd for ever, and cover'dst it with the Deep as with a Garment, &c.

And
the Duty of Singing

And so in the Frame of our own Nature; the curious and wonderful Workmanship of Body and Soul, that carry a lively Resemblance, and bear a strong Impression of the Divine Being and Perfection, in every Member and Faculty of each. Thou hast possessed my Reins: Thou hast cover'd me in my Mother's Womb. I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvellous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well. My Substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest Parts of the Earth. Thine Eye did see my Substance yet being imperfect, and in thy Book all my Members were written; which in time were fashion'd, when as yet there was none of them.

Again, We sing the Praises of Redeeming Love. To this several of the noblest Psalms of David expressly refer, that foretel the Coming of the Messiah, and describe the Glories of his Person, and the Fruits of his Death. The Psalmist sings of the Excellence and Glory of the King; and particularly describes.
Ser. III. in lofty Numbers, the Kingdom and Priesthood, the Sufferings and Triumphs of the Redeemer. So the great *Hallel* sung by the Jews at the Solemnity of the Passover, and is probably thought by Learned Men to be the Hymn sung by our Lord at the Institution of the Supper. I might mention the Penitential Psalms that describe his Mercy to humble Penitents, and abound in Expressions of the tenderest Kindness, as well as the lowest Abasement.

The Song of *Solomon* is a divine and rapturous, as well as a lofty and artful Piece of Poetry; describing at once the Beauty and Excellence of the Redeemer's Person, and the Tenderness of his Affection and Care; the Intercourses of divine Love in all the various Workings of Kindness and Respect between Christ and his Church.

And if you look into the New Testament, we have the Song of *Mary* upon the Message of the Angels, and the Salutation of *Elizabeth*: Where she celebrates the condescending Favour of the Almighty.
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mighty to her low and humble State, when he abased the Mighty and the Proud; and his Faithfulness and Mercy to his People Israel. There is the Song of Za-Luke i.67, charius; where he recounts at large his Faithfulness to his Promise in sending the Messiah, and the mighty Benefits to the World by his Appearance: And the rapturous Song of old Simeon at the Luke ii.24 sight of the Infant Redeemer.

Again, We sing the Praises of Providential Care: His regular Government and particular Notice of all his Creatures. He daily supports the Being, and supplies the Wants of innumerable Creatures, and exercises a wise and equal Care of every one. He directs the Course of publick Affairs by a sure and unerring Hand, and over-rules the Disorders of them by seasonable Interposures and powerful Influence. Many of the Psalms of David are dedicated to the Praise of his Providence. He describes his Omnipresence and particular Observance of every thing: Whither shall I flee from thy 7, 8, 9.
Ser. III. thy Presence? Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? If I ascend up into Heaven; if I make my bed in Hell; if I take the Wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Earth; behold thou art there, &c.

He describes his general Goodness and his tender Mercy over all his Works: The Earth is full of the Goodness of the Lord. The Eyes of all look unto thee, and thou givest them their Food in due season. He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the Desires of all the Living. He celebrates his own Deliverance out of the hands of all his Enemies, and out of the hands of Saul.

Particularly, The extraordinary Appearances of God in the World, both of Judgment and Mercy; in the unusual Displays of himself, as well as in the more stated and ordinary Course of things. This has been always Matter of Praise to the People of God, and the Subject of some of their noblest Songs. Such was the Song of Moses; Exod. XV. where he magnifies the Arm of the Lord in so miraculous Appearance, that at once carry'd with it sudden Deli-
Deliverance to his People, surprising Ruin to their Enemies, and Terrour and Amazement to all the World. Such was his dying Song; where he gives a lively and affecting Description of the distinguishing Favour and rich Bounty of God to Israel, and all the Terrours of Vengeance and Wrath that would come upon them for their Rebellion and Abuse. And so the Song of Deborah and Judg. V, Barak, who judg'd Israel when God subdu'd the Canaanites before them, is full of beautiful Figures and noble Flights; and is remarkable as well for its artful Contrivance, as its admirable Sense.

I shall close this Head with this one Reflection: That as the Sacred Poesy is one of the noblest Parts of all the Divine Writings, so it vastly exceeds, in the Sublimeness of Subject and Majesty of Expression, the finest Compositions of human Wit, and the most labour'd Productions of Art. And 'tis greatly to be lamented, that that noble Art, which sprung from God, and was devoted to his Praise,
The Excellence of Ser. III. Praise, is so sadly degenerated from its original Design and proper Use. The celebrated Poets of the present Age have debas’d the Majesty of Verse, and prostituted the Muses to the Service of their Lusts; and so the loftiest Numbers and the sweetest Verse have been employ’d in describing the fanciful Achievements and the fulsom Praise of some little Hero or lead Amour. The impure Mixtures of the finest Poems offend and shock a pious or a vertuous Mind, and render them full of Snare and Danger to others: like luscious Poison, that pleases and corrupts, easily insinuates and enters deep; and the higher a relish it gives, the more surely destroys.

§. 2. Let us consider the Subject that is to be employ’d in singing the Praises of God. ’Tis the Exercise of the whole Man. It employs the Facultys and Members of Soul and Body. It engages the full Strength of Nature. For instance,

There must be a Union and Harmony of all the Powers of the Soul. They
They must all concur, and be set Ser. III.
right to sing the Praisés of God. ()

I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole Heart. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name. The Heart is the Seat of Life and the Spring of Motion, that diffuses Life into every Part, and feeds the vital Pulse in every Vein. The Heart is the Life and Soul of every Duty, and we are expressly requir'd to make Melody in our Heart. The Eph.V.19.

Understanding is the noble and distinguishing Power of the Soul; and we must sing Praisés with Understanding: I will sing with the Spirit, XIV. 15. and with Understanding. Which, tho' it should be meant of the Understanding of others, i.e. that they may understand what is sung (as may be gather'd from v. 19.) yet does however clearly suppose, and more strongly infer his own. We must distinctly apprehend, and rightly conceive the Sense and Meaning of what we sing. It requires the proper Exercise of all the Affections, the suitable working of the natural Passions answerable to
The Excellence of Ser. III. to the various Matter and the different Subject of our Song.

Yea, Singing requires the Exercise of all the Graces, and the most heavenly and exalted Frame of Mind. 'Tis no low and common Temper of Soul, that is suitable to the high Praises of God.

We must sing with Grace in our Hearts. For instance, with an humble Reverence and holy Awe, under the sense of his infinite Distance and glorious Excellence, who is fearful in Praises, working Wonders. With Divine Love: An affectionate Sense of his Loveliness and Perfection; a Heart enflam'd with Love to God, as the most amiable Being and Fountain of all Perfection, and strongly aspiring and tending towards him. With heavenly Joy: An Exultation of Heart; the Risings and Overflowings of the Soul, from the Fulness of inward Sense, and Strength of inward Resentment. We must be glad and rejoice; and make a joyful noise, rejoice and sing Praise. With real Gratitude: A kindly Resentment of divine Favours; a Heart deeply
the Duty of Singing.

deeply affected with his various Ser. III. Goodness, and freely dispos’d to proper Acknowledgments and Returns, &c.

And then the Members of the Body must be employ’d too; and it engages all the noble and excellent Parts. The Tongue that is our Glory is the great Instrument of Praise, and constantly employ’d in singing to the Lord: My Glory Ps. XXX. shall sing Praise to thee, and not be silent. The Lips; Because thy Loving-kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee. The Mouth; My Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips. Then was our Mouth fill’d with Laughter and our Tongue with Songs. Our Breath and Voice must be employ’d; we must sing with the Voice of a Psalm, XC VIII.5, and with the Voice of Joy and Praise. And, Let every thing that hath Breath praise the Lord.

Not to mention, that under the Law they prais’d God with Dancing and clapping their hands; shouting for Joy, and playing upon the Viol and Harp, and all the Instruments of Musick.

§ 3
The Excellence of

Ser. Ill. § 3. Consider the Exercise itself. 'Tis a noble Exercise suitable to the glorious Object it's employed about, and the excellent Subject it employs. There are several Properties of singular Excellence. For instance;

'Tis a great Solemnity of Gospel-Worship. That it was practis'd under the Law, appears by the whole Book of Psalms; and is not, I suppose, call'd in question by any: That 'tis renew'd and continued under the Gospel, has been already prov'd. I am only to argue from thence.

'Tis not, I think, a merely natural Duty, much less an arbitrary one, that can be justly reckon'd among the Inventions of Men, or to draw its Original from the Wisdom of this World. 'Tis an Institution of Gospel-Worship, that bears the Impress of divine Authority, is consecrated by the Example of the Redeemer, and to be perform'd by the help of the Divine Spirit: Be fill'd with the Spirit, speaking to your selves in Psalms, &c. And, I will sing with the
the Duty of Singing.

the Spirit and with Understanding: Ser. III.
i.e. by the Assistance of the Spirit of God, as well as with the Exercise of my own.

It has been the constant Practice of the Church of God in every Age, and is a standing Part of our solemn Worship. And indeed it gives a Solemnity to Divine Worship, and adds a certain State to every other part. It carries a Sweetness and a Majesty in it, gives an Air and Delight to it, and is one of the principal Glories of the Gospel Worship.

Besides, 'tis a spiritual Service. Spirituality is the distinguishing Character of every Part of Gospel Worship; as we are to have a more direct eye to God who is a Spirit, and more especially to regard the Workings and Exercise of our own Spirit: To worship him in Spirit and in Truth.

Now tho the Ceremony and State of the legal Worship, and especially of the Temple-Service, requir'd many musical Instruments and great external Pomp; yet singing the Praises of God is very suitable
The Excellence of Ser. III. suitable to the Purity of Gospel-Worship, and a very great Exercise of Spirituality. 'Tis a spiritual Object we are wholly to attend; The Glory and Perfection of the Divine Being. We eye him and terminate on him in the most direct and immediate manner. And 'tis the proper Exercise of our own Spirit: I will sing with the Spirit and with Understanding. And tho there is a Concurrence of Soul and Body, and the one is employ'd as well as the other; yet the Soul is the proper Agent, the Body only the Instrument of the Soul, or the Organ thro which it sings the Praises of God.

Indeed it requires the best Exercise of the Soul, as 'tis proper to pure unbody'd Spirits: That we be fill'd with the Spirit, speaking to our selves in Psalms, &c. The Mind should be wholly abstracted from all sensible Objects, and deeply intent in the Contemplation of the Divine Glory; and 'tis never more spiritual, than in the right Performance of this heavenly Work.

Further;
Further; 'Tis a comely Exercise. Ser. III.

'Tis good to sing Praise to our God, and Praise is comely. Comeliness or Decency is the Sutableness of things one to another, and a certain Agreeableness between them; when there is a due Proportion, or at least a proper Sutableness between Persons or Things, as it may be respectively apply'd: as in a comely Face or regular Building.

Now there is a mighty Decency in this Case, and it well becomes us to sing the Praises of God. Nothing we can do is more worthy of God, or better agrees to our selves. Nothing is more sutable to the Distance and Relation between God and his Creatures. When the heavenly King is surrounded with loud Acclamations of joyful Subjects, his Excellence and Perfection proclaim'd and exalted by the highest Praise; his wonderful Works are magnify'd and admir'd in triumphant Acknowledgments, and his Bounty and Love celebrated and ador'd with Hallelujahs of Joy: When every Mouth is fill'd with his Praise, and every Place re-
The Excellence of Ser. III. resounds and echoes back his Name; nothing is more agreeable in itself, or has a more delightful lovely Appearance to the World.

Finally, 'Tis highly acceptable and pleasing to God. 'Tis an Honour to the Almighty (such as a Creature is capable of) to sing his Praise: And God is pleas'd with the Service, both as his own Appointment, and the highest Expression of our Esteem. He is the proper Object and the glorious Theme, and has sometimes given signal Marks of his Approbation.

Eph. V. 19. 'Tis making Melody in our Hearts to the Lord. 'Tis Melody to the Lord: 'Tis grateful in the Ears of the Almighty, as Melody and Musick is in ours. He delights in the Praises of his Saints, as he inhabits the Praises of Israel. The Voice of their sincere Praise is a pleasant Sound: The Breath of their Praise, like the Smoke of the Sacrifice, or the Cloud of Incense, ascends to God in a sweet Perfume. 'Tis an Odour of a sweet smell, and with such Sacrifices God is well pleas'd.
the Duty of SINGING.

§. 4. Consider the Ends and Uses Ser. III. of it. 'Tis not a mere Solemnity; a Piece of empty State; only to give Life and Airs to the more grave and solemn Parts of Worship, or a more sensible Relish of Pleasure to the Service of God. 'Tis a profitable Exercise, and is of admirable Benefit and Use. For instance,

'Tis very Instructing. There is a rich Variety of excellent Matter in the Sacred Psalms, suitable to all the Conditions of Life, and all the Workings of an holy Soul: Many rare Discoverys of divine Truth, and many rich Experiences. The Title of divers Psalms is Maschil, i.e. A Psalm giving Instruction.

- Now singing Praifes is very profitable for the improving of our Understanding and Knowledg of the Truth. Many a Beam of Divine Light darts into the Mind, and shines clear and strong. The Experiences of other holy Souls instruct us in the Knowledg of our own. And so of all the ways of Improvement by the Divine Word, as Reading, Hearing, &c.
Ser. III. this is none of the least consider-able, both as to the clearer Knowledge of the Divine Will, and the better Acquaintance with our Eph. V. 19. selves. Speaking to your selves in Psalms, &c. communing with one another about them: And, Teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns: Where Teaching may refer to Matters of Faith and Doctrine, and Admonishing to Rules of Life and Duty. And so we may considerably grow in the Knowledge of the Truth, and abound with practical Directions for the Government of Life. And whatsoever is the Subject of the Psalm we sing, may be profitably improv'd by wise Accommodation to our selves, or at least by proper Meditations upon it.

Again, 'Tis an Affecting Exercise, peculiarly fitted with special Advantage to raise holy Affections of Soul, and enliven every Grace. The Thoughts have more leisure to work, and are more intensely fix'd, while the Sound is dilated and drawn out to so great a length, and the Mind employ'd with so much
much Solemnity. And the same Ser. III.
thing will more powerfully move,
and more sensibly affect, when 'tis
devoutly sung, than when 'tis ever
so carefully read. Thus Singing
will affect the Soul with an inward
Grief and the deepest Sorrow in
Penitential Psalms, and with the
warmest Love and Joy in Psalms
of Praise. It will raise and di-
late the Mind, and give the best
advantage to the strongest Work-
ings of Affection. Thus the
Hearts of holy Men have been
sometimes quicken'd and drawn
forth in Raptures of Love and
Extasys of Delight. They have
been, as it were, fluttering upon
the Wing, and ready to rise, and
mount, and fly away. St. Austin
relates of himself at his first Con-
version; O how much have I wept, Confess.
how exceedingly moved and affected, lib. 9. c. 6.
at the Hymns and Songs and harmo-
nious Voices of the Church! Those
Voices pierc'd my Ears; thy Truth
ter'd my Soul, devout Affections
were rais'd, Tears flow'd, &c. To
this purpose the Tertimony and Ex-
perience of the famous Beza is very

E 2
Ser. III. remarkable, That when he came into the Assembly, while they were singing the Praises of God, he found himself suddenly inspir'd with a divine Warmth, and strangely affected with Love and Joy; so that the Assembly seem'd to him as the Gate of Heaven, or an Entrance into Glory.

Again; 'tis an Entertaining and pleasant Work: 'Tis good to sing Praise, for it is pleasant. 'Tis a religious Entertainment, a divine Repast to an holy Soul, by which it gives vent to its inward Resentments, and takes in an agreeable Pleasure. 'Tis a sweet Solace and Delight in Circumstances of Prosperity and Ease, to sing the Praises of God; and 'tis most peculiarly suitable and proper at such a time: If any be merry, let him sing Psalms. In the time of Prosperity rejoice.

This will take off the Mind from low Delights and carnal Mirth, that are apt to divert and defile; and take it up in the most proper Exercise, and be at the same time a noble Employment and
and Entertainment too. 'Twill Ser. III. enliven our Spirits, and refine our Joys; 'twill yield a Refreshment to the Mind, tir'd with other holy Exercises, and amidst all the other Delights of Life be constant Melody and Musick to the Soul: They Acts II. 47. continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness and Singleness of Heart, praising the Lord. And 'tis said of the Disciples, at the Ascension of our Lord, They worship'd him, and Luke returned to Jerusalem with great Joy, XXIV. 53. and were continually in the Temple blessing and praising God.

Lastly, 'Tis very comforting and supporting: 'Tis the great Refreshment of an afflicted State, as well as the Entertainment of a more prosperous one: 'Tis a mighty Relief to a Spirit oppress'd with Cares and Griefs; it exhilarates and revives a drooping and languishing Soul, and raises and enlarges the Heart when 'tis sunk down and contracted within itself, and has sometimes yielded Consolation and Support under the
The Excellence of

Scr. III. the closest Confinement and the severest Sufferings. Thus Paul and Silas in a close Prison, fastned in the Stocks, in the Darkness of the Night, reliev’d their Spirits, and delighted their Souls by singing the Praises of God. And the holy Psalmist tells us his Experience,

Ps. CXIX. Thy Statues have been my Songs in the House of my Pilgrimage. They have furnish’d me with matter of Praise in my Wilderness State, and in my Wandrings thro this World, and have refresh’d my Soul in all the wearisom Stages and Fatigues of Life.

To this purpose the primitive Christians, under the third Persecution by Trajan, met together very early on a stated day, to sing an Hymn to Christ their God, as is related by Pliny, an Heathen Writer, in his Account to the Emperor. And that Passage of the renowned and heroic Luthert is worthy Observation, who was wont to tell Melan{thon (a very wise and learned, but a more timorous and fearful Man) under the great Discouragements and dark Prospects of
of things at the beginning of the Ser. III. Reformation: Come, says he, let us sing the 46th Psalm, and let Earth and Hell do its worst.

I shall only further observe, with relation to each of these Advantages of Singing, that they extend to others as well as to our selves. We are to speak to our selves, or to one another, in Psalms; and to teach and admonish one another, exerts, the same word as before. 'Tis mutually beneficial, and of extensive Use. All concur together in this holy Exercise, and each one excites and assists the other. Every other Person, that sings the Praifes of God, helps to excite the Affection, and raise the Devotion of my Soul; and my Singing helps to raise and excite another's. The Breath of Praise mutually fans one another's Souls, kindles a divine Heat, and blows it up into a Flame; and so every one contributes something to another's Good, and receives some help from every other.
II. I shall consider it more relatively, and in comparison with other Dutys. This will not be any odious Comparison or invidious Preference, like those among Men, to sink the Character and darken the Reputation of one, to raise and brighten another. 'Tis usual, in the Scriptures, to make Comparisons of Graces and Dutys as well as Sins, and to give the Preference of one to another; and 'tis a proper measure, by which to take the value of things, to compare them with others of the same kind, and shew wherein they excel. Thus our Lord speaks of the First and Great Command, that which is chief and principal in Value as well as in Order; and so we read of the Least Command. And the Apostle makes a comparison among the principal Graces, and gives the just Preference of one to the rest: Now remaineth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three, but the greatest of these is Charity; i.e. it excels the other two. And he speaks of coveting the best Gifts,
and of shewing a more excellent way. Ser. III.

There is a real Difference in the Degrees of their Excellence, as there is in their Natures and Kinds. But then this must be understood to be in some certain Respects only, not in every Respect: for every Grace and Duty has its proper Excellence as well as its proper Place, and so every one exceeds another in some certain Respects and to some special Purposes; so that this is design'd only to give the true value, and assign the proper place of one, not to prejudice or disparage any.

To bring this down to the present Case; There are other Dutys of Religion that, for instance, are more absolutely necessary in our present State, and all things consider'd, than singing the Praises of God; such as Repentance towards God, and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ: These are indispensably necessary by the Gospel-Covenant, and such as we can't be sav'd without; and in this Respect they exceed all others. But then this Duty is preferable in some Respects.
82 The Excellence of Ser. III. spects, and has Characters of Excellence peculiar to it self: As now, for instance, to represent this matter a little distinctly.

§. i. In the respect it bears to its Object, it has a direct respect to God, and so has every other part of Worship; but it respects him under a higher Consideration, and in nobler Instances. He is to be consider'd as the proper Object of Praise; i.e. with respect to the most glorious Perfections of his Nature, and the most excellent Displays of himself: other Dutys and Graces respect him in lower Instances, and in a more confin'd Sense. So Prayer respects his All-sufficiency, that he can supply all my Wants; Repentance, his Mercy, that he is inclin'd to forgive; Faith, his Power and Word, that he is able and dispos'd to deliver and save, &c.

But Praise respects God, as he is in himself, in all the shining Perfections of his Nature, and in all his wonderful Works; in every Appearance of Love and Power, of Mercy and Judgment to the World.
the Duty of Singing.

World. We consider him as the Ser. III: most glorious and lovely Being, the most adorable Object, and worthy the highest Veneration. In a word, 'tis God in his highest Glory, and under the best Considerations of him, that is the proper Object of Praise.

Thus you shall find he is always spoken of in the present Case: We Pf. LXVI. sing forth the Honour of his Name; i.e. the Perfections of his Nature by which he makes himself known, and is distinguish'd from every other Being. We sing Praise to him according to his excellent Greatness. Pf. CL. 2. Sing Praises to our King, sing Ps. XLVII. Praises, for God is the King of all. The Earth. Sing to God, sing Praise, Psal. extol him that rideth upon the Hea...LXVIII.4. vens by his name Jah, and rejoice before him. And so of his great Appearances in the World: We sing of all his marvellous Works; and Psal. IX.1. praise him according to his mighty Ps. CL. 2. Acts. We show forth his Salvation, Ps. XCVI. declare his Glory among the Hea-...1. 2. thens, his Wonders among the People: He is great, and greatly to be fear'd, above all Gods.
Ser. III. §. 2. With respect to the proper Subjects, who are fit and qualify'd to perform it. I don't deny but a wicked Man may sing the Praises of God, and may receive Instruction and Admonition by what he sings; so all Men are call'd upon to sing to God their Maker. But 'tis the more proper Duty of the Upright, and such only can reach the full or the principal Ends of it: Rejoice in the Lord, ye Righ-teous, for Praise is comely for the Upright.

There are some Dutys of Religion that are more proper to wicked Men, and especially design'd for their good, such as the worst of Men ought to perform, and may hope to find Benefit by: as Prayer, for pardoning Mercy and renewing Grace; hearing the Word, for the Conviction of Con-science, and Instruction in the Truth; Repentance for Sin, &c. But now singing the Praises of the Lord, in its most direct and natural Signification and Use, supposes Conversion, and is the more proper Exercise of a regenerate Soul. They
They are only fit to sing the Praises of God, whose Souls are set right, and can make melody in their Hearts to the Lord; whereas the Praises of wicked Men, in the most artful Tunes, and with the sweetest Voice, is but jarring Discord, and a grating Noise in the Ears of God; like a fine Lecson play'd upon an Instrument unstrung and out of Tune.

Besides, that 'tis the proper Duty of the best Circumstances, and the best Frames of Mind. Every Duty has its special season, and is more suitable and proper at one time than another: So we humble our selves under the mighty hand of God; we cry to the Lord in Distress, &c. but now we are especially to sing the Praises of God in the most flourishing and prosperous Condition of Life, and the most exalted Frame of Mind: If Jam. V. 13. any be merry, let him sing Psalms. In the time of Prosperity rejoice. Eccl. VII. 'Tis then peculiarly suitable when a Man flows with Abundance, and lives at Ease; when he has the highest Relishes of the Divine Fa-
The Excellence of Ser. III. your, and his Heart is warm'd with Divine Love, and full of sweet Experience.

§. 3. With respect to the Kind of the Exercise itself. The Divine Authority enstamps a value upon every Duty, and challenges a distinct regard; but singing the Praises of God is the noblest part of Worship, as 'tis the most unselfish and disinterested Exercise of the Soul: It has not only the diretest respect to God, and that in the highest and most excellent Consideration of him; but it entirely respects him, and is wholly taken up in the Contemplation and Regard of him. 'Tis an Expression of pure Gratitude and Love, the most generous Service we perform to God, and carries in it the liveliest Signatures of a Divine and God-like Temper of Mind.

In other Duties there is a Mixture of Self and Interest: Some Necessity urges, some Advantage is propos'd by it. We expect something from God in other Services of Worship, in this we offer something to him. We make a Tender
the Duty of Singing.

Tender of our Praise, and seek Ser. III. only his Acceptance: In other things we propose our own good, in this the Glory of God; and of every other Duty this has the most entire regard to him.

In a word; to offer Praise to God is the most divine and perfect Action of the Soul, and most eminently glorifies him.

§. 4. With respect to the Place where 'tis perform’d. Heaven is a Region of Purity and Glory, the Seat of Perfection and Blessedness: In that State much of our present Work will wholly cease, and all will receive a considerable Change. There are many of the Dutys of Religion, and of the first Rank and Order, that seem calculated to our present State, and have no other use but in this World. Whatsoever supposes our Apostacy from God, or respects our Imperfection and Guilt, will cease to be our Duty, when we come to Heaven and are perfectly recover’d; whatsoever had a Tendency to our Recovery, and is not comprehended under the Duty of Praise.
Ser. III. Praise: We shall rest from the
Labour of present Service, and be deliver'd from every Weakness and Defect. Thus Prayer will cease when every Want will be perfectly supply'd, and every Desire fully satisfy'd. We shall not need to attend upon Gospel-Ordinations, the Instruments and Vehicles of the Divine Presence and Grace in the present distant and imperfect State, where we know in part, and see thro a Glass darkly; for we shall then see him as he is, and that which is perfect will be come. Repentance will cease, and all Tears be wip'd away; for there will be no more Sin nor Sorrow for ever. Faith will vanish at the Presence of its Object, and we shall walk by Sight, and not by Faith. Hope will be swallow'd up in Fruition: for Hope that is seen is not Hope; for what a Man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it? There will be a mighty Alteration in the whole Frame of our present Duty.

But now Singing the Praifes of God is the Work of Heaven: 'Twill remove with us out of this World,
World, and find Admittance in Ser. III.

Glory: Yea Heaven is the proper Seat of Praise, as 'tis of Perfection. The more perfect knowledge of the Glory of God, and fuller Enjoyment of his Love, that render other Means and Duties needless, and determine their Use, raise this to a higher Perfection, and give it the greater Advantage. The clearer Views of Divine Glory, and the livelier sense of Divine Love, will make our Praise the more in season as well as the more compleat. 'Twill enlarge the Subject of our Song, and raise and exalt our Minds; and we shall see greater reason, as well as be better capable of singing Hymns of Praise. So that 'tis not only very agreeable to the Heavenly State, but most proper to it: and perhaps we can form no truer Conception of the Work of Heaven than this.

For this reason very probably the Apostle prefers Love to Faith and Hope, as it has a nearer Alliance and Relation to the future World, and is not limited and

confined
The Excellence of
Ser. III. confin'd to this. 'Tis most proper

to the Heavenly State, and will
rise to its highest Perfection and
Glory, when Faith and Hope (at
least in their present Measures and
Kinds) will cease of themselves,
and be wholly laid aside. Here-
upon,

§. 5. With respect to the Partners and Companions of our Praise;
our Associates in this blessed Work.
Praise is sometimes spoken of as
the Duty of universal Nature, and
every Creature is call'd upon to
perform it; the Heavens and

Earth, the Sun, and Moon, and
Stars, the Dragons and Deer, Fire
and Hail, Mountains and Hills,
Beasts and Cattel.

But 'tis the proper Work of the
Angels of God, the first Rank of
created Beings, and of the no-
blest Powers of Nature; the At-
tendants on his Throne, and Fa-
yourites of his Court, that per-
fectly do his Will, and are the
Patterns of our Obedience. The

Morning-Stars sung together, and all
the Sons of God shouted for Joy:
_ i. e. the Angels of God, the eldest

Offspring
Offspring of his Power, and the Ser. III.

the multitude of the heavenly Host
brought the welcome Tidings of a
Redeemer to the World, in an
Hymn of Praise: They sung Praise Luk. II. 13.
to God, saying, Glory to God in the
Highest, &c. and indeed that was
the greatest occasion, and the no-
bliest Theme for an Angel's Song.

Yea, this is represented as the
constant Employment of all the
Blessed above. The four * Beasts
had six Wings, and full of Eyes
within, and rest not Day and Night,
saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord
God Almighty, which was, and is,
and is to come. The twenty four El-
ders fell down before him that sitteth
upon the Throne, and worship him
that liveth for ever and ever, and
cast their Crowns before the Throne,
saying, Thou'ret worthy to receive
Glory, Honour, Power, for thou haft
made all things, &c. The glori-
fy'd Saints, and Spirits of the per-
fected Just, that are refin'd from
all Allays of Flesh, and advanc'd
to the brightest Glory, they join
in with the sacred Quire, and bear
their
Ser. III. their part in the Anthems of the Blessed: They strike up their Voices, and mingle Praises with the Seraphim above. The Praises and Triumphs of God, and of the Redeemer, are handed about from Throne to Throne; and the whole heavenly Region rings aloud with Acclamations of Joy. They sang the Song of Moses, the Servant of the Lord, and the Song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy Ways, thou King of Saints. 'Tis the Voice of all the heavenly Host: I heard a great Voice of much People in Heaven, saying, Hallelujah, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his Judgments, for he hath judg'd the great Whore, &c. And tho' these Expressions should be thought to have a more direct and immediate Reference to the glorious and triumphant State of the Church in this World, and to be a prophetick Description of its best and happiest Circumstance on Earth; it will equally serve the present
the Duty of Singing.

present purpose, and I suppose Ser. III. ought not to exclude a final and ul-
timate Reference to its perfect and glorify'd State above.

Particularly, the Sight of the Lamb of God in the midst of the Throne, with the Marks of his Sufferings and Glory about him, will be ravishing and transporting to a glorify'd Soul: 'Twill inspire his Heart with Flames of divine Love, and fill his Soul with Exta-
физ of heavenly Joy: 'Twill fur-
nish out the noblest Song of Praife, and give the greatest Enlivens-
ing and Elevation of Thought. Hence they are represented in their highest Glory, array'd with Light, bearing Palms of Victory in their Hands, and Crowns of Glory upon their Heads, while they sing his Glory, and celebrate his Praife: They sung a new Song, Rev. V. 9; saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and open the Seals, for thou wast slain and hast redeem'd us unto God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred and Tongue, and People and Nation, and made us to our God Kings and Priests. And, Worthy is the
The Excellence of Ser. III. the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory and Rev. VII. Blessing. So we read of a great Multitude, which no Man could number, stood before the Throne and before the Lamb, cloth'd with white Robes and Palms in their Hands, that cry'd with a loud Voice, Salvation, &c. and all the Angels stood round about the Throne, and the Elders, and the four Beasts.

In short, 'tis the proper Employment of the best of Creatures, of the whole Society of the Blest, the general Assembly and Church of the Firstborn. And methinks there is not a more lively Emblem, or affecting Representation of Heaven on Earth, than an Assembly of worshipping Christians, singing the Praises of God. This is just as they do in Heaven; so are the Angels employ'd above; not in Prayer to God, and mourning for Sin, but in Exercises of Love, and Songs of Praise: So the Poet,
For all we know
Of what the Blessed do Above,
Is that they Sing, and that they Love.

§. 6. With respect to its Duration and Continuance. Other Duties cease, as the Reason of them ceases; but singing Praise will last for ever, and be the Work of a whole Eternity. 'Tis the perpetual Exercise of the Blessed, as the Reason and Ground of it is perpetual; and after the Revolution of numberless Ages, will never decay or grow out of Date. There will be constant and growing occasion of Praise to all Eternity. The Subject of their Song will never be exhausted, and never fail; but the clearer and fuller Displays of Divine Perfection will open new Scenes of Glory, and furnish fresh variety of Matter for eternal Praise.

And their Souls will never be unstrung and out of tune; there will be nothing to disturb their Joys, or interrupt the Harmony of
The Excellence of Ser. III.

of their Praise. They shall never
hang their Harps upon the Willows, or fit disconsolate more:
They will wind up the Strings of their sacred Lyre, and raise their Notes to the highest Pitch of Praise:
They will sing the Songs of Sion, and the new Song, with fresh Vigour of Mind, and with perpetual Youth: I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing Praise to my God while I have any Being.

I shall close the whole with two practical Reflections, that will fitly respect the two parts of this Discourse.

1. How infinitely excellent must God be that is the Object of all our Praise, to whom all our Praise is directed, and who is the subject Matter of them all! Every Psalm of Praise is an Hymn to God, and Display of some or other of his Perfections. The Divine Glory gives the truest Beauty, and the brightest Lustre to every Song of Praise. A naked Relation of Divine Perfection, without the Aids of Eloquence and
and Art, will make a more illustrious Description than the finest Allusions, and the most exquisite Fictions of human Fancy and Wit. It receives a Nobleness and Dignity from its Subject; and abstract it from God, and it presently loses its Perfection and Glory.

Yea, the Divine Glory rises above the loftiest Praise; and we fall vastly short of his just Praise when we soar highest in our Acknowledgments, and are most enlarged. The Heathen Poets adorn'd the Praisethes of their Deitys and Heroes with all the Figures of Speech, and Fiction of the Mind, and sometimes with the borrow'd Glorys of the true God; but the divine Being far exceeds in great Reality the highest Flights and boldest Figures of even Poetick Licence and Rage. There are vast Reaches of unknown Perfection beyond the Discovery of an Eye of Sense, or Comprehension of a finite Mind, above all the Songs and Triumphs of Angels and Men.

And how infinitely excellent a Being must he needs be, who is the
The Excellence of Ser. III. Subject of our Songs, and the Glory of them too; who furnishes Matter of perpetual Praise to all the Saints below, and all the Blessed above, to the Hallelujahs of Heaven, and Hosannahs of Earth; whose Perfection inspires the Matter of our Song, and the devoutest Affections of Soul; that gives the greatest Glory to every one, and far exceeds them all? Contemplate the Divine Being as the Object of our Praise; adore the Divine Glory that is so illustriously great, that reaches wider than the Earth, rises higher than the Heavens, and shines with a surpassing and perpetual Brightness.

2. With what Frames of Soul should we perform this excellent Duty! If the Duty itself be so noble and high, the Frame of our Spirits should not be low and mean: If in so many respects it exceed other Dutys of Religion, how spiritual and rais'd should be the Temper of our Minds?

Keep a Guard upon the Senses as well as the Thoughts in singing the
the Duty of Singing.

the Praises of God, that the Heart be not diverted by sensible Pleasure, or too close Attendance to the Rules of Art, the Harmony and Proportion of Numbers, or the Melody and Sweetness of Sounds. Let the Soul be rais’d and futably mov’d; let the Heart and Voice join together, and the Affections keep pace with the Tongue.

If the Heart be absent or out of tune, ’twill spoil the Musick of the sweetest Song, and render the softest Voice, like tinkling Cymbal or sounding Brass, inharmonious and disagreeable in the Ears of God.

This will be the Work of Heaven; Labour after an heavenly Frame of Mind; ’Twill be the Work of a whole Eternity; let us begin the blessed Exercise now, and inure our selves beforehand. Let us so sing the Psalms of David here on Earth, that we may sing the Song of Moses, the Servant of the Lord, and the Song of the Lamb for ever. Amen.
Objections consider'd against the Duty of Singing.

PSAL. LXVII. 3, 4.

Let all the People praise thee, O God, let all the People praise thee: O let the Nations be glad, and sing for Joy.

I am to answer the Objections against Singing in the Worship of God. This is the only thing that can be thought unpleasant in our whole Undertaking; and 'twere pity to interrupt the Harmony
Objections consider'd, &c.  
Harmony of our Discourses with Ser. IV.

the ungrateful Jarrings and Dis-
cords of Controversy (the most
unsutable thing in the World to
our present Subject) did not the
Difficultys and Scruples of some
People require it.

That I may perform what is ex-
pected from me, I shall but just
mention the Argument in my
Text, and then reply to the most
considerable Objections that are pro-
duc'd against this Duty.

In the Verse foregoing the Psal-
Ver. 2.
mist prays for the Conversion of
the Gentiles, That God would
make known his way upon Earth, his
saving Health among all Nations;
then follow the words of my Text,
Let the People praise thee, O God,
let all the People praise thee: inti-
mating, that the knowledg of
Salvation would be such an in-
finte Mercy to the World, as not
only to invite, but oblige all Man-
kind to publish and refound the
Praises of God. And that we may
not be at a loss how this ought to
be perform'd, he expresseth himself
more clearly in the following

F 3  words:
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. words: O let the Nations be glad, and sing for joy; i. e. express their Praises in joyful Songs and Triumphs, as the word in the Original does plainly signify. So that to praise God by Singing is a Practice not only very suitable to the State of the Gospel, but a Duty now to be perform'd by all People; as being what was not only pray'd for, but foretold of antient time by the inspir'd Prophet.

And is it not then strange, that a Duty so reasonable and becoming, so clear and express, so noble and excellent, so pleasant and useful, as appears from the foregoing Discourses, should meet with opposition from any? When if we remain silent, or hold our Peace, it might be expected (if such a thing were possible) that as our Lord himself speaks, the Stones would immediately cry out. And had we such a sense of the adorable Majesty and Perfections of God, and those immense Benefits he hath bestow'd upon us, as they deserve, we should find the Practice
the Duty of Singing.

We are pleading for necessity, if it were only for the Relief of our Nature; nay, sometimes, for ought I know, for the Preservation of Life itself: for our Hearts might be ready to burst, and we might even die under our Joys, if in some special Cases we should not be allow'd giving them vent in the loftiest Strains, and loudest Shouts of Thanksgiving and Praise.

But blessed be God, among those who have formerly oppos'd this Practice of Singing, there are many now convinc'd of its being a Gospel-Duty; and they who in this particular dissent from us, are considerably lessen'd in their Numbers. This is owing to the successful Industry of several of Mr. Mai-

their worthy Ministers, whom God hath rais'd up from among them-selves, who have strenuously asser-
ted and vindicated this Practice, and hereby had occasion of giving proof not only of their Skill in Argument, but in the Art too they have defended, by those excellent Composures wherewith One of Mr. Sten-

them hath oblig'd the Christian Church. F 4 And
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. And therefore what hath been perform'd of late years might have superseded any further Attempt of this kind, were it not that in this Publication there is intended a more ample and compleat Treatise of Psalmody, than any we have seen extant; and 'tis fit that in this place we take notice of the Objections that are made against this Duty, in answering of which I shall offer some things that I do not find observ'd by those that have gone before me. And that this Discourse may not exceed in proportion those of my Brethren, it must not be expected I reply to every Objection, only to the most considerable; which if fairly answer'd, the others will fall of course; as when we lop off the main Boughs of a Tree, all the other little Branches and Twigs do fall along with them. I shall dispose them into the following Order, and consider,

I. Those Objections that are level'd against the Duty of Singing.

II. Against
II. Against the Matter to be sung.

III. Against the Persons to be imploy’d. And,

IV. Against the Manner of the Performance.

I. They that oppose the Duty, do assert, *It is antiquated with the Ceremonial Law;* that now it is needless under the Gospel; that it is without Prescription; and that it is very unsuitable to the present bewildered and afflicted State of the Church.

§. 1. They represent this Practice as antiquated, and object against it as a part of the Ceremonial Worship under the Law, which is abolish’d; and they imagine we are now to praise God only by making secret melody *in the Heart*, without any artificial *Tunes or Modulation of the Voice.*

That which hath led them into this *Mistake,* is the wrong Opinion they have conceiv’d of this Duty, as being *purely Ceremonial*; whereas among the Jews it was really of a *mixt nature*, *viz.* partly *Ceremonial,* and partly *Moral.*
Ser. IV. What was Ceremonial refer'd only to the manner of Performance under the Levitical Priesthood, which was in a very pompous manner, with a variety of musical Instruments, and Persons, who as Officers or Masters in Musick, did direct and preside in the management of it. This, I am of Opinion, did die and was bury'd with the Jewish Ceremonies; but the Practice of Singing still remains as a part of natural Religion, and is of standing and universal Obligation: This, if duly consider'd, would I hope remove the Difficultys about this Duty. The use of musical Instruments, &c. was only a ceremonial Appendage or external Solemnity, and of it self no rational part of Worship; but to sing forth the Praises of God with our Lips is of a different nature, and falls under another Consideration. And tho' the Jewish manner of performing this Duty be now ceas'd, it does not follow that therefore there must be no Singing at all; or that because the Harp and Cymbal are laid aside,
the Duty of SINGING.

our Mouths must be seal'd up too. Ser. IV.
None can be ignorant how strenuously the Apostle Paul does plead for the abolishing of the Jewish Ceremonies, and particularly in the second Chapter of his Epistle to the Colossians; and yet in the very next Chapter he recommends to them the Practice of singing Psalms, which certainly he would never have done were this to have been rank'd among the number of the former. His exhorting them to do this with Col. III. Grace in their Hearts, and to make 16. melody in their Hearts to the Lord, Eph.V.19. does no way forbid vocal Singing; any more than because it was their Duty also to pray with the Heart, they ought not to use their Voice in Prayer. It is evident this was only to direct them in Singing, that while they were employ'd in the outward Duty, they should take care it be with a suitable Disposition of Spirit, both being put together, Singing and making melody in the Heart.

To conclude, it should methinks tend to reconcile Persons to this Practice.
Objections consider'd against
Ser. IV. Practice, that we plead for no
more than what is necessary to the
decent and lively discharge of a
Duty which is written with the
Pen of Nature upon Mens Hearts;
letting all other pompous Observ-
vances remain where our Saviour
and his Apostles left them: and
if Singing in the Worship of God
be a part of natural Religion, it
answers
§. 2. The next Objection against
it as a needless thing: For what can
be more necessary than that which
our Reason dictates to be a piece
of Homage, indispensible due
from Creatures to their Maker
and Benefactor? To say that prai-
sing of God by Singing is needless
or superfluous, because it may be
done as well by Prayer, is a mistake;
which may be evinc'd from the
nature of the thing, as well as ex-
perience. Besides, we are not to
take the Measures of our Duty
from what we judg proper or
needful, but from the Will and
* Eph. V. Command of Christ *. It would
be, I confess, an expeditious way
to shrink Religion into a meagre
Skeleton,
Skeleton, a thin Shadow, if we Ser. IV. were oblig'd to do no more than what our corrupt and self-indulgent Nature should think necessary: Might we not then argue as strongly against the Lord's Supper? Can you not think of his dying Love when you pray or hear the Word preach'd? What need of going to the Table? But as this is an Ordinance, own'd to be instituted on purpose for the commemorating of Christ's Death and Sufferings; so why may not singing of Psalms be a distinct Ordinance, appointed for the celebrating in an especial manner the Praises of God? And can we be so disingenuous as to refuse exalting the Name of God in any way that is possible and lawful for us, who in such numberless ways hath been infinitely merciful and gracious to us?

§. 3. 'Tis objected that this is a Practice without New Testament Prescription; and would you have us sing without warrant from Christ? To make good this Objection, they endeavour to enervate the
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. the force of those Passages we produce from the New Testament for the establishing our Practice.

As to that which mentions our Saviour's singing an Hymn with the Disciples, they would make us believe the original word imports no more than simple giving of Thanks, without Singing; but all who understand Greek, and will be impartial, must confess that the word does in its primary and proper sense signify such a praising of God as is perform'd by Singing. To cite Authorities can be of no use to the Unlearn'd, and to those who are conversant in this Tongue it is notorious; besides, the sense of this word is so fully clear'd in some late Treatises, that I shall refer you to them*, where you have the Judgment of Austin, Constantine, Suidas, Calvin, Beza, and our Countrymen, Ainsworth, Leigh, and many more that might be added. But it may suffice to

* Singing of Psalms vindicated from the Charge of Novelty, printed by Mr. Parkhurst. Mr. Allen's Essay, and the Vindication of it, convince
the Duty of Singing.

convince the unskilful Reader of Ser. IV. the sense of the word Hymn (which is but an abbreviation of the Greek word ὕμνος, or Hymnos) that learned Men, by common Consent, have adopted it into the English Language to signify a grave Song of Praise. To conclude, we have reason to acquiesce in this sense of the word, inasmuch as it is generally acknowledg'd our Saviour did actually sing after his last Supper*, according to the custom of the Jews, who in the Paschal Night, after they had eaten the Lamb, did use to sing some of David's Psalms; which solemn Hymns they call the great Hallel, and which began at Psal. CXIII. and ended with Psal. CXVIII. Hence therefore the word ὕμνος must imply more than bare giving of Thanks, viz. such a giving of Thanks as hath Singing conjoin'd with it.

To those Places in St. Paul's Epistles which we alliegd for this

* See Lightfoot, Patrick, Jurieu, Whiby, &c.
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. Duty, they say the Apostle requires speaking only, and teaching and admonishing one another. They can't deny they are further directed to sing, and to make melody: but they evade this, by telling us, it is confin'd wholly to the Heart; singing with Grace in your Hearts, so singing and making melody in your Hearts to the Lord: and that these Expressions have no respect at all to vocal Singing. This we deny, and say, that those who dissent from us must acknowledge these Actions of speaking, teaching and admonishing, do undeniably imply the use of the Voice. This being granted, the Nature of the things, in which we are to use our Voice, do sufficiently determine the manner of doing it, viz. by Singing; the Duty requir'd being such as was to be perform'd in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, which all who are impartial and ingenuous must own were compos'd and form'd for Singing. But the Apostle says, Singing with Grace in your Hearts, and making melody in your Hearts: 'Tis granted,
the Duty of Singing. 113
ted, and no doubt 'tis a great Du-Ser. IV.
ty to do so; but then this was not to exclude singing with the Voice, but only to caution us that we rest not in the external part of the Duty. But how can we teach and admonish one another in Singing? I reply, it would be no wrong done to the Text, if we say that the word 
*

\textit{exultis, one another}, may be rendered [your selves] for so our Translators have rendered the same word, Eph. V. 19. And indeed while we are singing, we have a special Opportunity and Help to instruct and admonish our own Souls; as that by dilating the Sound, and prolonging the Voice, there is more time given for the fixing our Hearts upon that which is sung with more delightful Meditation. But as I do not deny the word may be and is translated to one another, so how our mutual Instruction and Edification is promoted in the practice of Singing, is plainly and fully set forth already by him who from this Text hath open'd the nature of the Duty. Thus I have with brevity vindi-
Objections consider'd against
Ser. IV. vindicated the principal Places of
the New Testament, that are
produced for this Duty of Singing, from the Exceptions that are
brought against them. There are
some other Scriptures which will
fall in our way to be spoken to in
their proper Places.

§. 4. The last Objection against
Singing in the Worship of God is,
That it is unsuitable to the present
bewildred and afflicted State of the
Church:

There is so little in this, that
there needs not much to be spoken to it: Besides, I do not find it urg'd in the Writings of our
modern Opposers, who seem to have dropt it, as being conscious,
I suppose, of the Weakness of it. The Church's Afflictions are so far
from being an Objection, that I
think them rather an Argument
for the performance of this Duty;
and because she is in a bewildred
State, she has the greater need of
something to recreate and refresh
her, which might be like giving

Prov. XXXI. 6. of Wine to him that is of a heavy
Heart. And it is worthy our no-
tice,
tice, that many of the Psalms are Ser. IV. wonderfully suited to the lowest Condition and most afflicted State of the Church, plainly enough signifying the end of their Composure, and when we ought to make use of them. And we do not find the Jews, tho often brought into a very low and bewildred Condition, did upon this account desist from this part of religious Worship. We read indeed that when they were under the Babylonish Captivity, they hung their Harps Psalm upon the Willows; but the following words give us reason to believe this was upon a very singular occasion; viz. when their Enemies did insult over them, and by way of Sorrow did require them to entertain ’em with some of their Musick, and let ’em hear one of those Songs which were wont to be sung in the Temple: otherwise ’tis more than probable they did now and then refresh themselves with this Divine Musick, and for this, when led into Captivity, they carry’d their Harps along with them from Jerusalem, or pro-
II. To the second Class of Objections, viz. such as are level'd against the Matter of the Duty. Those mention'd are against the Act of Singing; these against the Matter that is usually sung in our publick Assemblies, viz. the Psalms of David, Asaph and others. Here it is objected, That the Matter of them frequently does not suit our Case: That there are many Passages we cannot sing with Truth, nor others with Charity; and furthermore, to use these in the Worship of God is to introduce a Form, and to stint and limit the Gifts of the Spirit.

Before I reply to these Objections, I shall give you a brief Account of our Opinion concerning the Matter to be sung in publick Worship. And,
1. Tho' we approve and shall, presenty vindicate the Practice of our Churches in singing David's Psalms, yet we are not against other Compositions. However,

2. What of this kind may be allow'd to be sung, we should advise the Matter of them to be collected from the Holy Scriptures; in turning of which into Metre, a diligent regard ought to be had to the Text, and the Sense at least to be carefully retain'd: and it may not be amiss that we here caution against too great a liberty to the flights of a Poetical Fancy, left by being too profuse, it detract from the Sense and Beauty of the Scriptures, which always appear best in their own naked Simplicity.

3. We do not this out of any mean, irreverent and unbecoming Thoughts of David's Psalms, or that we would discard these from having their part in the Worship of God; but that adding others to them, we may still have a fuller Set of Psalms, and a more abundant variety of Spiritual Songs to promote
promote and further the celebrating of God's Praises in the Christian Church; and these being for the Matter of them collected from the Scriptures, there is no Addition made to the Word of God hereby, as many will be ready otherwise to object.

Having thus given our Opinion about the Matter to be sung, I shall now consider the Objections that are made against the use of David's Psalms, and give you in a narrow Compass the Heads only of those Replys which may be made unto them, referring the Reader to such Authors as inlist more largely upon them.

§. i. 'Tis objected, That the Matter of these Psalms does not correspond to the present Case and Occasions of God's People, as more Evangelical Compositions would do.

To this we shall only say, if it be impartially consider'd, we shall find a great many at least of the Psalms very well adapted to the Case and Circumstances both of the Church in general, and each particular Member of it; and pro-
vided there be due care taken of the wise and prudent choice of the Psalm to be sung (which is ordinarily done in our Assemblies) I think it will very much abate the force of this Objection. And even where the Matter is not so suitable to the present Case, yet it having been the Case of others, we may find Profit in our Meditations upon it, by learning Instruction, and being admonish'd and exhorted to our Duty from it; and this the Apostle represents as one main end of singing Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs.

§ 2. 'Tis objected there are many Passages in David's Psalms we cannot sing with Truth, nor others with Charity.

What is hinted under the foregoing Objection might serve to answer this, viz. if we cannot express them as our own Case, we may meet with Instruction, Conviction, Counsel and Comfort from them; and to sing the Case of others, with this view, is no more lying to God (as some pretend) than reading the same Passages with the
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. the like view. As to those which they say we cannot sing with Charity, such as are Imprecations and Curses upon wicked Men; whereas the Gospel teaches us to wish Evil to no Man, but to desire the Good of All; I shall only say, that we are not to wish the Judgments and Curses of God upon any as Enemies to our private Persons and Interests; however (tho the Imprecations in David's Psalms were immediate Inspirations, and perhaps often Predictions that are not to be drawn into Example) yet so far as it appears Men are implacable Enemies to Christ and his Kingdom, we may imprecate the Judgments of God upon them. But granting these Passages were unsuitable to an Evangelical Spirit, yet a good Improvement may be made of them in our Meditations, as has been already suggested.

§. 3. 'Tis further objected, that the use of Scripture-Psalms will introduce a Form, and to sing by a prelimited and prestinted Form is to lay a Restraint upon the Spirit of God.
This is no Restraint when the Ser. IV. Duty cannot be otherwise perform'd.

To urge this Objection is to say, that either we must not sing at all, or that what is sung be as to the Matter of it immediately indited, or an extempore Effusion: For if we must not sing by a Scripture-Form, neither ought we to sing by a form of human Composure. And if the Matter to be sung must be immediately indited, then either there can be but one sing at a time; or if every one be allow'd, then it must be by the other's penning or reciting what is in his Mind, and so it becomes a Form to all the rest. There is no way then of Singing left, but to suppose every Person to have the Gift of immediate composing; but then should these sing all together, what Disorder and Confusion may we imagine it must produce in the Church? For we cannot suppose (as not having any Instance of it) that every one should have the same Thoughts, express the same Words and Numbers too, and sing in the same G Tune
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. Tune at the same time. From whence it follows, that either there must be no Singing at all in the Church; or if it be done to Edification, it must be by a Form, the Nature of the Duty being such as to require it. The Case of Singing is not the same with that of Prayer: for Prayer may be perform'd without a Form, there being but one Person who is the mouth of all the rest; but Singing cannot, because there every one is to use his own Mouth: And therefore it is no stinting of the Spirit to do that by a Form, which cannot be otherwise done without a Miracle. And thus I have answer'd those Objections that are level'd against the Matter of the Duty. We proceed,

III. To those that are produc'd against the Persons to be employ'd in this Duty of Singing. If Singing in the Worship of God may be allow'd, some will tell us, That according to Primitive Practice but one Person ought to perform this Office in the Church: Others are for excluding
the Duty of Singing. 123

excluding Women from the benefit of Ser. IV. this Ordinance. But the last Objection, and which carries the greatest plausibleness with it, is against promiscuous Singing; that is, the concurrence of Good and Bad together in this Work: For wicked Men, they think, cannot sing God's Praises, and good People ought not to do it in their Company. I shall reply to what is objected under these Particulars.

§. 1. That one only as the Mouth ought to sing, and the rest to concur with their silent Consent; as in Prayer the Minister is the Mouth, and the rest join with their secret Amen. The ground they have for this Objection must be Scripture-Evidence, or Primitive Practice. To begin with the latter, I do not find they have any thing from Primitive Practice (after the ceasing of extraordinary Gifts) that gives them the least Countenance. A learned Author tells us, "That the Manner of the Primitive Singing was such as the People bore a part in it."

And Origen gives us this account of it, Church.
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. it, "That it was ἔμμελος ἔν συμφώνα, in good Tune and Concert; i.e. the People singing with their Voices all together. *Pliny* the younger tells us, "That in his time Chris-
tians us'd to meet together be-
fore day, Carmen Christo dicere secum invicem. Some quote this Passage to prove Antiphonal Singing, and tell you the words are to be thus rendred, "They " fung an Hymn by course, or one " against another; tho doubtless they are here more truly rendred, They fung a Hymn one with an-
other, or among themselves: and they who understand the Genius of the Latin Tongue will allow it.

And the learned Dr. *Cave* does thus translate that Passage. But this is not the Matter here in dispute; be this how it will, it is most plain from hence, that the People bore a part in this Work of Singing, and that it was not com-
mitted only to the performance of one Person. I shall say no more, but recommend to those who have an inclination to consult further a-
bout this Matter, the perusal of a little
little anonymous Treatise lately publifh'd, and entitled, Singing of Psalms vindicated from the charge of Novelty. You fee then there is no foundation for this Objection in Primitive Practice.

If there be any force in it, 'tis from Scripture-Evidence, and the chief they produce is in those words of the Apostle: *How is it* 1 Cor. then, Brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a Psalm, hath a Doctrine, hath a Tongue, &c. i.e. as Beza observes, one hath a Psalm, another hath a Doctrine, another hath a Tongue; not that every one had all these. Now, says the Apostle, *let all things be done unto edifying.* He speaks here of the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit: To one was given the Gift of Tongues, to another the Gift of Prophecy, to another the Gift of composing Psalms by the afflation of the Spirit, as Dr. Hammond observes upon the place; now let all things be done unto edifying. And how must this be? why not that all should exercise these Gifts at the same time, but one
Objections consider'd against

in the 31st Verse; Ye may all prophesy, says the Apostle, one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. He directs them to do it one by one; that is, one at a time; so he that had the Gift of Psalmody, he alone must sing for that time. And it being an extraordinary Gift confin'd to that Person, it requir'd this extraordinary way of performing it, and cou'd not be otherwise. The Inference which those that dissent from us draw from hence, is this, That only one Person ought to sing in the Church, and the rest, as in Prayer, to join with their secret Consent.

The Answer which may be given to this is, I think, very easy and plain; for tho' it be granted the Apostle speaks here of the extraordinary Gift of Psalmody, which some had in the times of the Apostle (And this seems to be one way of Prophefying, and a method which in those times the Holy Ghost did use to instruct and edify the People; and therefore when there were any, who were
were thus directed to exercise their Gift, the People ought to give their attendance to it) yet we challenge any Persons to prove that the Christian Church had no other way of singing Psalms than this. We do assert the contrary, and that besides this extraordinary Gift, it was the Practice of the Church to sing all together, or with consent of Voices. That this was their more ordinary and stated way of worshipping God, there are Examples already given of it by him who hath undertaken to prove the Duty. Besides, the Gentile Church, in thus singing the Praises of God, does but fulfil the Prophecy in my Text, and many others that are mention'd of her in the Old Testament. The exercise therefore of an extraordinary Gift, as it is no proof that the Church had no other way of singing the Praises of God; so that being now ceas'd, is much less an Argument against our present Practice; nay is rather an Argument to confirm it.
§. 2. Another Objection is rais'd against Women Singing.

As to this I do not find they have any thing to support it from ancient Practice: For if we consult Antiquity, we shall find Women were permitted to sing in the Church as well as Men. Of Women singing in the Primitive Church, we find Tertullian *, Socrates, Theodoret, and others make mention. That which our Opposers harp upon are those Places of the Apostle, 1 Cor. XIV. 34. and 1 Tim. II. 11. where he enjoineth Silence to Women, and that they be not permitted to speak or teach in the Churches. But to any who consult those Passages, and the Scope of the Apostle, it will appear his words are to be confin'd only to the Womens usurping an Authority to prophesy, and become publick Instructors in the Church. This upon many Ac-

* Quantam autem castigationem merebantur illæ, quæ inter Psalmos, vel in quacunque Dei mentione, reteftæ perseveraut? L. de Virgin. vel. 16.
counts would be very indecent; Ser. IV. and therefore in such a capacity, and in this way, he would not suffer a Woman to speak, but to be in Silence: Nay, if it were only to ask a Question, in order to be resolv'd, he would not have them propound it publickly, but to ask their Husbands at home: For it is a shame (says he) for Women to speak in the Church; i.e. to propound any thing publickly before the Assembly, either out of pretence to inform others, or tho it were only to be inform'd themselves. It will be evident to any who consult these Places, that the Apostle confines himself to this: And therefore here is nothing that should debar Women from bearing a part in Psalmody, and joining with the Church in praising God by singing, it being no Act of Authority, and the Reason of it common. Besides, it being, as I mention'd before, a part of natural Religion, Women are to reckon themselves oblig'd to the performance of it, who have as many Considerations to induce and engage
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. ingage them as the Men. And next to praying in secret, and in-structing their Children and young Ones at home, I know not in what they can so well imploy this noble and glorious Instrument the Tongue, than in singing the Praifes of God in his Church. And whether this may not be one, if not a principal Reason, why God, in his adorable Wisdom, has distinguish'd by its pleasant Soft-ness the Voice of the Woman from that of the Man, to temper the Sound, and render it more sweet and melodious when they are join'd together in singing his Praifes, is what I have thought not altogether unworthy of our Con- sideration. It has therefore, I must confes, been with some Concern and Offence that I have observ'd many Women sitting in the publick Assembly, as having nothing to do when the Praifes of God have been sung by others. They have taken no part in this heavenly Exercise, as tho it were not allow'd them; or if it be, they had no Inclination or Heart unto
the Duty of Singing.

unto it. I wish such as have in-Ser. IV. dulg’d themselves in this culpable Omission would henceforward reform. But,

§. 3. The last Objection I think worth mentioning at present is against promiscuous Singing, the Concurrence of Good and Bad in this Work: For wicked Men, they think, cannot sing the Praises of God, and good People ought not to do it in their Company.

In answer to this we readily confess, that no People have so much Cause, or have their Hearts so well qualify’d to sing the Praises of God as devout and holy Souls: Further, that the wicked or unregenerate cannot sing, nor indeed perform any other Duty as they ought: They cannot make Melody to the Lord, as the Apostle directs, by singing with Grace in their Hearts. All this is readily granted, but what will our Opposers infer from hence? That therefore ungracious Persons ought not to engage in this Duty? Or that good People ought to refrain from this part of the Worship of God, while they are
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. are present? I think neither. If the Reason be conclusive in this, it should be acknowledg'd so in a parallel Case: If unregenerate Persons may not praise God, neither ought they to pray to him (nor indeed perform any Act of religious Worship) for ungracious Prayer is as unacceptable to God as ungracious Psalmody, and the same may be said of other Dutys.

But we answer further, that Mens unfitness for Duty does not disannul their Obligation to the performance of it. It is their Duty to pray to God, and to praise him, this is of natural and necessary Obligation: And being their Duty, they ought to perform it with Grace in their Hearts. That they do not is their Sin, but then wholly to omit it would be a greater Sin: The one is Hypocrisy, the other Atheism.

Again, tho it be true that wicked People cannot praise God for those things which the Regenerate can, nor what they do of this kind can they do it in such a manner; yet they have many things
the Duty of Singing.

things to adore and bless God for, as the Excellency of his Nature, his wonderful Perfections, manifested and display'd in the Works of Creation and Providence. They have many temporal Blessings, Preservations and Deliverances, which yet lead to higher ones, to praise him for. They ought to bless him for the Mercies of his common Bounty, when they cannot praise him for the Blessings of his special Grace. Hence therefore we find there is a general Command upon all Men to sing and give Thanks unto the Lord: Sing unto the Lord all the Earth. So, Ps. XCVI. Make a joyful Noise all ye Lands. 

And, Sing unto God ye Kingdoms of the Earth. And it hath been well observ'd upon the CVIIth Psalm, That Travellers, Prisoners, sick People, Seamen being sav'd from several Distresses, they are all of them commanded to praise the Lord for his Goodness, and to declare his Wonders before the Sons of Men.

And as the Unregenerate may thus have many things to praise God.
Objections consider'd against
Ser. IV. God for, so they are capable of
retaining some sense of these Mercys upon their Hearts, and by the
Advantage of common Grace are capable of making some Returns of
Gratitude for the same; tho what they do of this kind falls short of
saving Sincerity.

After all, they are capable of receiving Instruction, Admonition, and Counsel, from singing
the Praises of God; which, as I have said, is one great End of
this Duty.

It being so then, that an indispensible Command is laid upon All, that nothing can disannul the Obligation, that the worst of Men have many Mercys to praise God for; that they are capable of retaining some Sense of these Mercys, and making some Returns of Gratitude, and of being admonish'd in the Performance of this Duty: Upon all these accounts they ought not to be depriv'd of the Privilege of singing the Praises of God.

That which concerns the other part of the Objection, That good Men ought not to do it in their Company,
pany, is no better than mere Ca-Ser. IV.

For the foregoing part of the Objection being answer'd, this must fall to the ground of course. For if unregenerate Men may, and it is their Duty, to sing the Praises of God; it is doubtless no sin in good Men to join with them in it, or to do it where they are present. How unfit soever the one are for the discharge of their Duty, it need not unfit nor ought it to hinder the other from performing theirs. That will never be imputed to us as our Sin, which it was not in our power to help or mend. If Hypocrites and wicked Men do join with us in Singing, we do not therefore join with them in their Sin. If they pretend to sing the Praises of God, but do it not with Grace in their Hearts, we cannot help that; and their Sin does not infect or pollute us. If they be not what they profess, 'tis not our Profession is false (to be our Hearts are right) but theirs that is so. Unto the Titus 1:15.

Pure all things are pure, but unto them that are desill'd and unbelieving,
Objections consider'd against
Ser. IV. nothing is pure. By which it is plain, that what's impure to them that are defil'd, is not made impure to them that are pure.
And thus I have answer'd the Objections that are offer'd under this Head, which relates to the Persons to be concern'd in this Gospel-Duty of Psalmody. I come to the

IVth and last Head of Objections, which concerns the Manner of Singing. And here several Questions are us'd to be put; as, Is it lawful to sing in Metre? So, What Warrant have we to sing with artificial Tunes? May we sing without reading? Is Antiphonal Singing lawful? Or, May we sing with musical Instruments?

As to the two former of these Objections, viz. Singing in Metre, and artificial Tunes; there is so little in them, that I shall say no more, than that it is as lawful to turn the Psalms, or other fit matter for Spiritual Songs, into Metre, in order to be sung, as it is to translate the Scriptures into English.
English Prose to be read; and being Ser. IV.
the aptest method to fit them for
singing, there is no doubt to be
made of the Lawfulness of it. As
to the Use of our Tunes, they
being compos'd in such Numbers
as do very well sute the Gravity
of the Matter to be sung, I see
not any thing that hath any force
against it. More need not be said
to this Objection.

As to the two last Querys, Whe-
ther Antiphonal Singing, and Singing
with musical Instruments be lawful?
I leave them to defend their own
Cause, who are for this way of
celebrating the Praises of God.
We reckon our selves no farther
concern'd in this Controversy,
than vindicating our way, as it is
us'd in our Congregations; and
therefore I dismiss that part of it
which concerns Cathedral Worship, See Difc.
and singing with Organs, to those of Cathed.
who being better satisfy'd with Worship,
that Practice, may be better able
to defend it.

There remains only one thing
we are concern'd to plead for,
and this is a Practice which hath
lately
Objections consider'd against
Ser. IV. lately obtain'd in some of our Congregations; and that is singing of Psalms without reading.

This has been matter of Scruple to some People. To remove an old Custom, tho' a bad one, is like removing the antient Landmarks. But if People did duly inquire into the first Reason of this Custom, they who are such Sticklers for it (if I am not mistaken) would not express such a Zeal for its continuance. This Practice was at first owing to the Ignorance of People, who living under the Darkness of Popery, vast multitudes of them could not read. For this reason our first Reformers thought it much better to practise this way of singing Psalms, by the Clerk's reading Line after Line, than that such great numbers (as then were) should be depriv'd of the Benefit of this Ordinance. But blessed be God, it is now a long time since we came out of Popery: And there are but few among us but can read, or who (if they would be at the pains) might soon attain
attain it. And therefore I think Ser. IV.
'tis high time to reform from a
Custom, which the People's Ignorance did at first necessitate them to, and which all who will use their Understanding must acknowledge does labour with many Inconveniences and Defects.

For the way of Singing by Reading does in the first place cause a very great interruption in the Musick; and thereby retrenching from the Sweetness and Harmony of the Action, makes the Exercise abundantly more flat and dull than otherwise: This every one's Experience must inform them.

Again, it is a very great hindrance to the understanding of what we sing. For the reading of the Line does frequently break the Sense, and till that be given whole and intire, we know not what we sing, but are left to uncertain Conjectures; and before the whole Sense be read out, we have frequently forgotten what we first sang. And as thus the Musick and Sense of the Psalm is and must oftentimes be interrupted, so likewise
Objections consider'd against
Ser. IV.-wise must it be a great check upon
our Affections, and a hindrance to
the Exercise of our Graces in this
Duty.

As these are manifest Inconveniences, so all these are effectually
provided against by that custom of
Singing which some of us have
brought into our Churches, viz.
of singing with Books in our
hands. For by this means every
one sees the whole Sense intire be-
fore him, and is thereby capable
of singing with Understanding;
which in the other case, when
People have no Books, it must be
difficult to do. And understand-
ing what we sing, having the
Sense whole and intire under our
eye, our Affections are more easily
excited, and assisted to make melody
to God in our Hearts.

Besides, By this uninterrupted
way of Singing there is a greater
Harmony and Life in the Musick,
and consequently a greater tenden-
cy therein to raise and exhilarate
the Spirits.

Again, By every one's having a
Book in his hand there is this Con-
veniency,
the Duty of Singing.

veniency, that it keeps us more serious before us, and prevents that wandering of the eye, and careless gazing, which is too often observ’d in the other way. And indeed this is a duty which requires so much spirituality, and so close an application of the heart, that we should be glad of anything that might be a means to prevent our distractions. 'Tis true, persons may gaze about, even tho they have this means to prevent it; but yet they cannot do it so much, nor so easily, unless they wholly neglect joining in this duty with the rest of the assembly.

I shall mention one considerable advantage more in the last place, and this is, that it will be a great means of fixing what we sing in our memories. Weighty matters deliver’d in metre are sooner learn’d, and more easily retain’d. And the frequent singing of them with books, will in time render them so familiar, as we may be able to sing without them. We have a notable proof of this in the French
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. French and Dutch Churches, where I have often seen Persons who had no Books join as readily in singing as those that had them. By frequent reading of the Psalms, they have so transcrib'd them into their Memorys, as at last to lay aside their Books. And O how excellent a Treasure would it be, to have a good number of divine and spiritual Songs reposited in our Memorys, ready to produce and use upon any occasion! that when we are by our selves, or with others, we can presently raise up our Hearts, and sing a Psalm and Hymn to the Lord.

Now after what has been said I may leave it to the Impartial and Unprejudiced to judg which is the most eligible way of Singing, and most adapted to answr the Design of the Ordinance, the other Practice, or that which is here recommended.

I know but one Objection, that is of any consideration, to be allledged against it: And it is, that this Custom must necessarily debar those from the Benefit of this
Ordinance, who cannot read. Ser. IV.

But first, these are but few, especially in London, and other Cities and Towns, where there are abundant Opportunitys, and ordinarily care taken to instruct the Poor to read. And of these the far greatest part in a very short time might learn to read, if they would but apply themselves to it. It is generally People's Sin they cannot read, and why should others suffer for their Sin?

Again, If for the sake of two or three in a Congregation we ought to omit a Custom so beneficial to the Generality, and so necessary to the right Performance of this Duty: For the same reason we ought wholly to omit Singing, for the benefit of a greater number, who for want of a Voice cannot sing with the Congregation; but who may say, it would be much more profitable to them, if the Psalm were gravely and slowly read, than if it were sung.

But lastly, where the Number of such illiterate Persons is considerable, as in some remote, ob-

sicure,
Objections consider'd against

Ser. IV. Secure, and Country Villages, it may not be amiss to continue the other way; but so as that now and then, for the sake of others who can read, our Method be observ'd. And in the mean time it were to be wish'd, that such as are charitably dispos'd would order some part of their Benevolence towards the erecting of Schools in such dark places, and procure that the Poor be taught to read. Herein they would doubtless do a Work highly acceptable in the sight of God.

As to other Objections, that may be rais'd against what we have recommended; a Pair of Spectacles would answer for the most part those of the Aged; for I am satisfy'd but very few attend our Assemblies, who have outliv'd the Use of these Helps: And a small Sum of Mony rais'd in the Congregation to buy a competent number of Books to be given away, will answer the Objections of the Poor.

But if after all this, People will cavil and be contentious, we must pity
pity their Weakness, and bless Ser. IV. God who hath shone upon us with so great Light, as to remove our most dangerous Prejudices against the pure Administrations of his Worship, when we see how difficult it is in lesser matters to wean People from a Custom they have been long wedded to.
Directions for the Duty of Singing.

Singing and making melody in your Heart to the Lord.

These Words contain an Exhortation to the Practice of that noble and delightful Duty, of Singing the Praises of God; and afford us some Advice and Direction for the right Performance of it. We must be inspir'd and acted, not by a vain and sensual Spirit, but by the divine; and being thus prepar'd, must
must singing, as to make melody in our Hearts to the Lord.

Here are several Words in this Verse relating to the Nature of this Duty, which I shall not stay to explain and open: This having been already done to my hand, I shall no further consider the Text, than it is serviceable to me in handling that part of the Subject, which is assign'd me in this Exercise; and that is to lay before you some Practical Rules and Directions for the acceptable Performance of the Duty. The Nature of it has been open'd, your Obligation as Christians to perform it fully prov'd, the Divine Excellency and Nobleness of it clearly manifested, the Cavils and Objections of those who are Enemies to it fully consider'd and answer'd; and now, I hope, what you have heard has so far convince'd your Judgment, and influence'd your Wills and Affections, that you are resolv'd either to begin or continue in the Practice of so unquestionable and excellent a Duty, and that you are very desirous to know how you may per-
Directions for
Ser. V. form it to God's acceptance, and the advantage of your own Souls.

This Part of the Subject is as necessary as any, for you to be instructed in; for after all that has been said, if you fail in the right manner of Performance, your labour will be lost: How excellent a Duty forever it be in itself, and how beneficial and pleasant forever it be to others, it will not be so to you; but God will be dishonour'd, and your Souls prejudic'd. I fear multitudes are very defective and faulty in this part of the Duty: There are many more who are Enemys to a holy Performance, than who are Enemys to the external Duty.

I shall divide the Directions into three parts,

I. Such as concern the Choice of proper and suitable Matter.

II. Such as relate to the external Manner of Performance. And,

III. Such as respect the internal and spiritual Frame and Temper of the Soul.

* I. 'Tis
I. 'Tis necessary something should be said on the first Head, because in the Choice of a Psalm, the Metre into which it is translated, and the Tune to which it is set, is too often more regarded, than the subject Matter of it, and its Suitableness to the present occasion.

§. 1. We should ordinarily choose such Matter as is best suited to the Spirituality of the Gospel-Dispensa- tion we live under. As now, for instance, such parts of David's Psalms should generally be sung, as give us the most great and worthy, the most sweet and endearing Apprehensions of the blessed and glorious God, and which tend to enkindle and stir up in us spiritual Affections, suitable to those Apprehensions.

Such Psalms as contain Matter of Prayer for divine and spiritual Blessings, and of Praise for the Reception of them. Such which hold forth precious Promises of the same nature, for our Faith and Hope to build upon. Such as
Directions for

Ser. V. have the most immediate reference to our Lord Jesus Christ, the then promis’d Messias; which foretell what he was to do and suffer at his Incarnation, the Blessings he was to procure, and the spiritual Glory and Privileges of that Gospel-Church he was to erect in the World.

There are many such Psalms, which the Christian Church can better understand now, than the Jewish Church could, when they were first pen’d, or, it may be, than the Penmen did themselves. Tho many of these Psalms seem dark and obscure, if we only regard the manner of Expression, yet we may be sure they were Prophecys of Christ, and of the State and Privileges of the Christian Church, if we take the Writers of the New Testament to be infallible Interpreters of the Prophecys of the Old. We can see further into the mysterious and spiritual Sense of these Passages, and so are capable of singing them with a much more Evangelical Spirit, than the Old Testament Believers could do.
I am far from thinking it unlawful to sing such Psalms as wholly relate to the Jewish Church, they may as lawfully and profitably be sung as read; but surely it is best becoming and most agreeable to Christians to be much taken up in Vocal Praising of God and the Redeemer, for the rich Discoveries of Love and Grace to Sinners. We make but an ill Improvement of our brighter Gospel-Light and Grace, if we are not more spiritual in our Prayers and Praises than the Jews were. The Doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Son of God, his expiatory Death and Sacrifice, his Resurrection, Ascension and glorious Exaltation, his Intercession for Sinners, their Justification by his Righteousness, and Sanctification by his Spirit; and in a word, the whole Doctrine of Christ's Mediation, with all those admirable Perfections of God that shine forth therein, are things that were but little known under the Old Dispensation; but they shine with a far greater
Directions for

Ser. V. greater Brightness and Lustre under the New. Now as Believers, in those days, were most taken up in celebrating those Dispensations of God's Providence, that were then most remarkable; so should Christians be in celebrating the Work of Redemption, this being the most glorious Discovery of the Divine Perfections which God has given, or can give to this World.

I am far from confining our Praises and Thanksgivings to this Duty of Singing. These should mix themselves with all our Prayers and Supplications: In every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known unto God. But since the Singing and Chanting forth God's Praises has an Advantage above the bare Rehearsal of them in Prose; since this tends most to quicken and inlarge the Heart, and creates most spiritual Pleasure in the Soul; we should, in this way, offer to God those Praisings and Thanksgivings which have the Mysteries and Blessings of our Redemption for the Subject-matter of them.

Upon
the Duty of Singing.

Upon this occasion I cannot but heartily wish, that many Parts of the New Testament were translated into Metre, and so fitted to be sung in Christian Churches and Familys, and that the Practice did more generally obtain among us: Not to the Exclusion of David's Psalms, but only as a Supplement and Addition, because they don't so fully sute the State of the Gospel-Church, as they did the Jewish. This Part of our Christian Worship would be much more compleat and perfect, if those Doxologies and Benedictions were thus translated, that we meet with in St. Paul's Epistles, and other Parts of the New Testament. We read That the four Beasts and the four and twenty Elders did praise Christ 9. by singing a new Song, saying, Thou art worthy, &c. Many Expositors, by these Elders, understand (not improbably) the Members of the Christian Church upon Earth; and then the words are an intimation, that in Christian Assemblies Christ is to be prais'd with New Songs, suited to the Work of Redemption.
Directions for Ser. V. and the Glory he is advanc'd to, and not merely with the Psalms of David. If you desire further Satisfaction, I refer you to Mr. Watts's ingenious Essay on this Subject, which I have seen since the Composure of this Discourse.

§. 2. Upon publick Special Occasions we ought to have regard to those Providences of God that his Church and People are then under. As we are a part of Christ's Church, so we ought to be affected with the State thereof. When God's People lie under or are in danger of any general Calamity, and we are call'd to publick Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, such Psalms should be chosen, as bring to our remembrance the Circumstances of God's Church in former days. His wonderful Appearances for them, when their Strength and Hope was almost quite gone, the Methods they took in their Distress, and the Success of them, and what Returns they made to God for their Deliverances; the meditating upon, and singing forth such Passages, have an Aptitude and Tendency
the Duty of Singing.

dency to beget in us awful Appre-Ser. V. hensions of the Majesty and Power, Justice and Holiness of God; and they will greatly help to quicken and strengthen our Faith and Hope in his Grace and Goodness, since he is the same God yesterday, to day, and for ever, and has the same Love and Compassion for his People as ever.

Again, such Psalms are proper as are of a Penitential Nature, which contain Confessions of Sin, Deprecations of deserv'd Judgments, Supplications for undeserv'd Mercys; which are suitable to beget and stir up Self-abhorrence, Shame and Sorrow for, Hatred and Detestation of Sin.

And then on days of publick Praise and Thanksgiving, such Psalms should be chosen, as do set forth and magnify those Perfections of God, which were most conspicuous in the Mercys we commemorate, and which are the most apt to excite those Graces that should be exercis'd in the most lively manner on those days, and such as will be best expressive of our Resolution, to trust
Directions for Ser. V. trust and confide in God for the future. I forbear mentioning particular Psalms, that having been largely done in some of the foregoing Discourses. A Christian, who is conversant in David's Psalms, will find there are few Providences God's Church can be under, but there is something in them very suitable and applicable; and a wise Choice would be very serviceable to bring the Minds of Christians into, and to keep them in a good Frame, throughout the Dutys of such Days.

§. 3. In our Choice some regard should be had to the other Parts of Worship this Duty is conjoin'd with. We must endeavour to perform every Duty, that one may be a Preparatory to another, and that the subsequent Duty may further cherish and strengthen those holy Impressions and Affections in us which the foregoing began: that tho' we pass from one Duty to another, yet that which is the main end and design of all Dutys, viz. the glorifying of God, and the working up our Souls to a Divine and Godlike
Godlike Temper, may still be car-Ser. V. rying on more and more. When
Singing precedes Prayer, something should be sung that may best compose the Mind to a becoming Reverence for that Duty; and when it follows Preaching, something should be chosen that may be proper to second and further press home the Truths we have heard. When there is this blessed Harmony between one Duty and another, we shall perform them with the greatest Pleasure and Profit. I dare appeal to the Experience of serious Christians, whether they have not found the singing *the self-same Psalm* much more sweet and reviving to their Spirits at one time, when this Direction has been observ'd, than at another, when no regard has been had to it. *Again, on Sacrament-days,* when we have been commemorating the matchless Love of our dear Redeemer, at the close of that Ordinance something should be sung that may keep alive, and further excite those Graces we have been in the Exercise of, and that may send
Directions for

Ser. V. Send us away full of Admiration, Joy and Thankfulness.

§. 4. Christians in their private Families should have regard to their Family-State and Circumstances, and those particular Providences of God they are under, especially when they are peculiar and remarkable, either in a way of Judgment or Mercy. A suitable Choice at such times will improve the Seriousness of our Frame, and make the Dispensations more affecting and impressive. But care must be taken that our Joy or Sorrow don't degenerate into sinful Extremes, that under the Notion of Duty we do not cherish such a Temper of Soul as is really dishonourable to God, and injurious to our selves, and which ought to be striven against.

§. 5. Lastly, Private Christians may regard the particular State and present Frame of their own Souls. Tho' it be unquestionably lawful to sing such Psalms as don't exactly suit our own Circumstances, either outward or inward, because they are profitable for Instruction and...
the Duty of Singing.

Admonition; yet we shall be most Ser. V. affected when what we sing is suited to our Condition, and is expressive of the inward Sense and Language of our Hearts. Those sing with the most Pleasure, that sing David's Psalms with David's Spirit. In short, Christians should consider what special Graces they have more than ordinary need to have exercis'd and increas'd, what Corruptions to be mortify'd and kept under, what Difficultys, and Temptations, and Afflictions they are call'd to contend and grapple with. Such things as these must direct them both in the matter of their Prayers and Singing, when the choice is left to themselves. So much for the first General Head.

I now proceed in the second Place,

II. To such Directions as relate to the external manner of Performance. I don't pretend to instruct you in the Art of Singing, 'tis not my proper Business was I capable of it; I shall only mention a few things that Reason and the Nature of the Duty plainly suggest.

S. I.
Some Regard ought to be had to external Harmony, that there be Melody made with our Voices as well as Hearts. If no care be taken about the Tune and Metre, there will be nothing but Discord and Confusion; such Singing will be a great Hindrance, and not a Help to Devotion. We are Sensitive as well as Rational Creatures, compounded of Body and Soul; and while we are in this state of Union, our Senses have great Influence upon our higher Powers. Sensitive Pleasure is lawful and laudable, while it is desir’d in subordination and subserviency to that which is more refin’d and rational, and not principally for itself. Without the one it is scarce possible, in our present State, to enjoy the other, for God works upon his Creatures in a way suitable to their Nature. The innocent Pleasures of the Ear, by melodious Sounds, has experimentally been found a mighty help to excite and raise devout Affections in the Soul: Nature (as one expresses it) in this case helps Grace.
But here our great Care must be, Ser. V. that we don't take up with the Means for the End, and mistake the pleasing of our sensitive Affections and Imaginations for that spiritual Pleasure which holy Souls take in God and Things of a Divine Nature. Whenever it is thus, the fault is in the evil Frame and Temper of our Hearts, and does not arise from the Nature of the thing; for holy Souls can and will improve it for holy Ends and Purposes. And indeed unless Singing be so order'd, as in some measure to be grateful to the Ear, the Ordinance will be expos'd to Contempt, and not serve the Ends of Devotion. God is the God of Order, and not of Confusion. I would not be thought to discourage those from this Duty who have little or no artificial Skill; many can sing in conjunction with others, tho' they can't lead a Tune: and they that have not so much Skill as this, may so manage their Voices, as not to disturb those that have, and by joining with them may be greatly affected and edify'd, much more
Directions for Ser. V.

more perhaps than those that have ten times their Skill, but want their pious Dispositions of Soul. Tho still I am of Opinion, that if such Christians have a natural Capacity for it, some artificial Skill would be very serviceable to them, in the more spiritual Performance of the Duty: provided they are not so taken up with minding the Tune, as to be taken off from observing the Matter sung, and the Frame of Heart with which they sing.

§. 2. Care must be taken that the Tunes sung, and the Manner of Singing be only such as have a Tendency to excite divine and spiritual Affections. Psalm-Tunes ought to be solemn, and grave, not vain, and light, and airy, as if they were only adapted to please and gratify a wanton and sensual Mind: This would be to turn one of the most noble and spiritual Duties of Religion into a mere Entertainment for the Senses and Fancys of carnal Men; this would be to turn God's House into a Theatre, and would in a manner defecrate God's sacred Worship,
Worship, and make it distasteful to pious Minds. The Power of Vocal
as well as Instrumental Musick is very great, and may be abus’d to
bad Purposes as well as improv’d to holy ones; and therefore only
such Tunes must be us’d in God’s House, as becomes his Majesty and
Holiness, and the Gravity and Spirituality of the Worship we
are engag’d in. Neither must the Voice be so modulated, as should
render what is sung unintelligible to the greatest part of the Wor-
shippers; for this would be, as to the Ends of Edification, the same
thing as if Persons sung in an unknown Tongue.

§ 3. In the choice of the Tune, some regard should be had to the
Matter sung; that it may have an Aptitude to excite in us those Di-
vine Graces, which the Matter of the Psalm requires and calls for.
Nothing is more certain than that different Tunes have a different
Influence and Efficacy upon the Minds of Men: Those that have
a Tendency to raise our Joy and Thankfulness, are Enemies to Sor-
Directions for
Ser. V. row and Sadness of Spirit; and those that befriend this Temper, are prejudicial to the other. It would be very preposterous, and a great Incongruity, if the Tendency of the Tune should promote Sorrow and Grief, when the Design of the Psalm is to raise in us a joyful thankful Admiration of God's Grace and Goodness.

§ 4. Such Tunes should be ordinarily sung, as the Generality of the Worshippers can join in; because Singing is a Duty incumbent upon all Christians that have any capacity for it, and is a stated Part of God's publick Worship: and therefore it is not rightly perform'd when it is so manag'd as to shut out the greatest part of the Assembly from having any share in it. I may add,

§ 5. That it is most eligible, that Persons, engag'd in this Ordinance of Singing, should have Psalm-Books, that so the Duty might be perform'd without the usual Interruption of reading Line by Line. By this means the Sense of what is sung will at once lie open to their View,
the Duty of Singing. View, and be better understood by Ser. V. them; and there will be a more intire and continu'd Harmony, and the Affections will not be in so much danger of cooling and flatting by the frequent Pauses that are made by reading. These things are but barely mention'd, having been more distinctly treated of before. But yet I subjoin, that the Inconveniency of Reading is such as may be lawfully dispens'd with, where it cannot be remedy'd without a greater; i.e. when without this Help the greatest part of an Assembly would be debar'd from joining in the Ordinance. Need I add,

§. 6. And lastly, That in the Performance of this Duty there must be all the external and visible Signs of Reverence and Devotion. Where these are wanting, we may, without breach of Charity, conclude, that there is not much inward Seriousness and Affection. Tho bodily Exercise alone profits little, yet God must be glorify'd with our Bodys as well as our Souls; they are the Workmanship of God, and the Pur-
Directions for

Ser. V. Purchase of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Ghost: The Lord is for the Body, and therefore the Body ought to be for the Lord. In this Duty the Head must be uncover'd, the Countenance compos'd and serious, the Eye fixt, not roving and wandering; and, in a word, the whole external Behaviour such as, in the judgment of Charity, bespeaks an engag'd and devout Mind and Heart, and as becomes the Perfections of the God we worship. And whether that Posture in Singing, which generally obtains among us, be so proper for Psalms of direct Prayer and Praise, I leave to your own serious deliberate Consideration. I now proceed,

III. To such Directions as respect the internal and Spiritual Frame and Temper of the Soul. Tho you are ever so careful in observing and following what I have hitherto said, yet unless a special regard be had to the State and Frame of the Soul, all will avail nothing as to your Acceptance with God. Some
of these Directions are such as Ser. V. concern this Duty in common with others, and therefore I need not much inlarge.

§. 1. The habitual Temper and Disposition must be such as is pleasing unto God. You must be in a converted, pardon'd, reconcil'd State. Till you have Grace in the Heart, and are fill'd with the Spirit, you are not qualify'd for the acceptable Performance of this Duty. The Exercise of Grace necessarily supposes the internal vital Principle; for Persons can never exercise that which they have not. Carnal and unsanctify'd Men do but debase and pollute every Duty they take in hand: Their State is unacceptable; the Principles from which, and the Ends for which they act, are not divine and supernatural, but low, base and mercenary; and consequently nothing that they do is properly pleasing unto God.

The carnal Mind is Enmity against Rom.VIII. God; it is not subject to the Law of 7, 8. God, nor indeed can be: So then, they that are in the Flesh, cannot please God. We are only accepted Eph. L 6.
Direction for

Ser. V. in the Beloved, to whom they have no vital Union, nor stand in any Gen.IV.4. federal Relation. The Lord had first Respect to Abel, and then to his Offering. If the Person be not accepted, the Sacrifice will not. I own all the Actions of Men in a justify'd State are not acceptable to God, for they do not always exert the good Principles that are within them, and act becoming their Relation and Character; and yet till the Tree be made good, the Fruit can never be truly so. Wicked Men may have pleasant and melodious Voices, and may be well skill'd in the Art of Singing, and so may be instrumental in raising the Affections of pious Christians; but not being animated by a Divine Spirit, they are but like so many dead and lifeless Organs: for want of that which ought to be in them, they lose not only the spiritual benefit of the Duty, but are obnoxious to Punishment for their Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, for making only an external shew of that which they really have not. I design not by this Discourse
the Duty of Singing. 169

Discourse to take unconverted Men Ser. V.§ wholly off from this Duty: for the same Objections that lie against their Singing of Psalms for want of habitual Grace, lie against their Praying, and Hearing, and any other Duty; for no Duty can rightly be perform'd without the Grace of God. I would only convince them of the Misery and Unhappiness of their present Condition, that they may not contentedly continue in it: Their moral Incapacity for Duty takes not away their Obligation to Performance, but is their Sin; and the greater it is, the more deprav'd it speaks them to be. However, if they do their best, with those Influences of common Grace that are afforded, and do honestly desire and endeavour to do better, they are much less guilty than they would be by a total Omission.

§. 2. You must sing with Attention and Understanding. This was the Apostle's Resolution: I will I Cor. sing with Understanding. Sing ye XIV. 14. Praises with Understanding. It's Pf.XLVII. impossible that blind Devotion 7; I should
Directions

Ser. V. Should ever be pleasing unto God.

Tho there may be Light in the Head, when there is no Heat and Warmth in the Heart, yet we can never be rationally and piously affected with what we understand not; such Devotion can be no better than superstitious Frenzy and Enthusiasm. Our great Care then must be, that we are not so taken up in our Thoughts about the Tune we sing, and the Sound and Cadency of the Words, as not to mind the Excellency, Weight and Importance of the Matter sung. This is a common fault, that ought diligently to be guarded against. I fear Mens Thoughts are often imploy’d in observing how they themselves and others sing, when they should attend to and be intent upon the spiritual and useful Nature of what they sing: Persons can never receive Instruction or Consolation by such kind of Singing. See then, that while your Tongues are imploy’d in chanting forth the words, your Mind and Thoughts be as bu­fily imploy’d in diving into, and
in sweet Meditation upon the spirit.

Ser. V.

Unless you have slothful and un-ingag'd Minds, you will find the Duty of Singing a greater help this way, than barely the reading of the words would be, there being a longer time for the exercise of Thought in the one than in the other.

§. 3. Yea, there must be melody in the Heart as well as the Voice: This particularly is the Apostle's Direction in my Text. If you ask what this denotes, I answer in two or three things.

(1.) That the Heart and spiritual Affections be ingag'd in the Duty, as well as the Mind and Voice. It is very possible the Mind may be imploy'd, and yet there may be no devout stirring of the Affections. It is one thing to know and mind what is said and sung, and another to be deeply and seriously affected with it. When this Duty is acceptably perform'd, there is a happy conjunction of all these; Grace in the Heart will exert and put forth it self. The Apostle,
DIRECTIONS for

Ser. V. Apostle, in his Epistle to the Colossians, explains what he means here by making melody in our Hearts, by telling us we must sing with Grace in our Hearts. Renewing Grace is very diffusive, it reaches to all the Powers and Facultys of the Soul; we must be sanctify'd wholly in Soul, Spirit, and Body. But yet the Heart is the principal Seat and Subject of Divine Grace; this is what God chiefly looks at, and calls for: My Son, give me thy Heart. We must sanctify the Lord God in our Hearts, make him our Fear and our Dread. Those Notions of God, how sublime forever, which do not distil upon and influence the Heart; and those external Actions, which do not flow from a Heart set right with, and duly affected towards God, are of no account with him. And as Grace has its Throne and Residence in the Heart, so it must rule and govern there in a lively and vigorous manner; it must fix and ingage, warm and inflame the Heart. Our Hearts must burn within us; for no external Dutys of
the Duty of Singing.

of Religion are pleasing to God, Ser. V. unless we are in the exercise of Grace in the performance of them.

(2.) This Melody denotes the variety of Divine Graces that ought to be exercis'd in this Duty. One Note makes no Melody. This is a Duty wherein the several Graces of the Spirit may and should be exercis'd; such as Faith and Love, Desire and Hope, Humility, Joy and Delight. And indeed I know no one particular Grace, but what there may be occasion for in this Duty one time or other.

(3.) It denotes the suitable Exercise of Grace. Every Grace should be drawn forth in its due and proper Order, according as the Matter sung shall require. The Exercise of one Grace must not exclude the Exercise of another. As in vocal Musick, every Note must be sung in its proper Place and Order, and there must be a skilful mixture of them, or there will be no external Melody; so there must be a sweet mixture of every Grace, and a seasonable act-
Ser. V. ing of them upon God, or else there will be no Melody in the Heart. It is a great part of holy Christian Wisdom, to know how to live in the suitable Exercise of Grace, and not to be acting one Grace, when God by his Word or Providence calls for another. It is a great fault in some serious Christians, that they too much indulge themselves in Fear, Sorrow, Grief, &c. whilst they neglect or seldom stir up the nobler Graces of Faith, Love, and Hope, and Delight in God; tho' these latter may be more suitable and congruous to their present Circumstances, and the Dutys they are engag'd in. There is no true Melody in the Heart, when Persons are so defective and preposterous in the Exercise of Grace. We must take care then, that every Psalm we sing do stir up those Graces, which in the Design of God, and the Nature of the Thing, it has an Aptitude and Tendency to do.

When there is an Assembly of such Hearts, thus tun'd and imploy'd
ploy'd in singing the Praises of Ser. V. God, they make Melody to the Lord: This is much more grateful to God, than the exactest and sweetest Melody of Voice can be to us. It's a real Pleasure to the Blessed God to see such a Union and Conjunction of Hearts, all animated by one and the same Spirit, breathing forth the same Desires, paying the same Divine Worship and Adoration, all swallow'd up in the Contemplation and Admiration of his infinite Excellencies and Perfections. If our praising Assemblies were but made up of such Worshippers, they would be a true Emblem of the Heavenly Choir and Society above: but it is greatly to be fear'd, that in most of them, there is much less Melody in the Hearts of Men than in their Voices; many who have harmonious Voices, have Hearts that will not stir nor move within them. Let every one of you look to your own Hearts, that this Melody be not wanting there; and then you shall be accepted of God, tho' you sing in Society with thos
Directions for those who are Strangers to it.

Now that you may be always ready thus to sing, I'll just subjoin a few words of Advice.

You must labour to be of an humble, thankful Temper of Soul, and make Praise and Thanksgiving your constant Employment; this should have a more considerable share in your daily Devotions than ordinarily it has. Take heed of a querelous, murmuring, complaining Spirit; for this greatly indisposes the Soul for the Work of Praise. Endeavour to live from day to day in a sense of God's Love to you, and in the exercise of Love, Joy, and Delight towards him.

Just before your Entrance upon this Duty, your Thoughts should be taken up in meditating upon God's Excellencys and Perfections, your own Meanness and Unworthiness, his Goodness to you above multitudes of your Fellow-Creatures, your many Mercys and Privileges, notwithstanding your Demerits and manifold Forfeitures of them. Think upon God's astonishing Love to Sinners in Christ, and
and the blessed Fruits and Effects of it. *Think* on the Joys of Heaven, and the noble Employment of Saints and Angels there; how they tune their Hearts, and with how strong a Breath they found forth the Praises of God, and of the Lamb. *Think* of the Torments of the Damn'd, and how happy they would reckon themselves if they were call'd to your Work; and how justly you might have been in their State and Place, who instead of praising God, are weeping, and wailing, and gnashing their Teeth. *Such Meditations* as these would be very serviceable towards the putting you in a suitable Frame for, and assisting you in the Performance of this Duty.

§ 4. *There must be a humble dependence upon the Spirit of Christ, for his assisting, quickening Influences.* Without these, tho' the Principles of Grace are implanted in the Heart, they will not exert and put forth themselves. Believers themselves without Christ can do no thing: *'Tis thro' Christ's strengthening us, that we are enabled to do all things:*

Ser. V. Things: He works all our Works in us, and for us. We must go forth in his Strength, and make mention of his Name, and of his only. As without God's general Concourse, as the God of Nature, we can't perform natural Actions; so without his Influence, as the God of Grace, we can't perform spiritual ones. The best of Christians have need to put up the Prayer of the Spouse: Awake, O North Wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out; then let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant Fruits. The giving or withholding of the Spirit's Influences is one great cause of the remarkable difference that there is betwixt one Christian and another, and betwixt the same Christian, at different times, in the Performance of religious Dutys. In this way God does signally either reward the Diligence, humble Dependance, and Expectation of his People; or punish their Carelessness and Sloth, their Pride and Self-Confidence.
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Every sincere Believer, yet there is a vast Variety and Inequality as to the Measure of his actual Assistance and Influence; and in proportion hereto the Hearts of God's People will be more or less enlarged and carry'd out in the Duty. The Spirit may justly reckon himself neglected and slighted, when there is not a deep and serious sense of our own Insufficiency, and a humble Dependance upon, and Expectation of Help and Assistance from him.

§ 5. There must be an actual Reliance upon the Merit and Intercession of Christ for our Acceptance: After the Injunction of this Duty in Colossians, it is immediately added, 'tis immediately added,

Whatsoever ye do in Word or Deed, do all in the Name of our Lord Jesus, giving Thanks to God and the Father by him. The best Christians bring much Guilt and Pollution into the Presence of God with them, they contract much while they are before him; their Graces and Duties are so defective and imperfect, that if God should be exact to mark Iniquity, they could not stand before him:...
Directions for Ser. V.

If there was not Forgiveness with him, there would be no Incouragement to fear or worship him. Our highest Praises are infinitely beneath the Excellencys and Perfections of the Divine Nature, and unworthy of the Divine Acceptance, consider'd merely as they flow from us. Christ is that Angel spoken of in the Revelations, who stands at God's Altar, and has a golden Censor full of Incense, which he offers, with the Prayers and Praises of all the Saints, upon the golden Altar which is before the Throne. We must be great Strangers to God and our selves, to the just and righteous Demands of his Laws, and the Imperfection of our Dutys, if we are not sensible of the necessity of Christ's Mediation, to recommend our Persons and Services to the Divine Acceptance. And therefore we ought to exert explicite Acts of Faith upon his Satisfaction and Intercession; for we cannot justly expect the Application of his Merits, when there is no Sense of the need of them, nor any actual Reliance upon them.
§. 6. And lastly, This Duty must be performed unto the Lord; so run the words of the Text, Singing and making Melody in your Hearts to the Lord. It is not material, whether by (Lord) we here understand God the Father, or the Mediator Jesus Christ; since in every Duty Christ is to be eyed as the proximate immediate Object, and God the Father as the final ultimate one. There is no Coming to the Father but by Christ; and we come to Christ, that by him we may be brought to God. God in Christ then is the Object to whom this Duty must be performed. We must sing in obedience to the Command of this Lord, do it as an Act of Divine Worship, which is due to him, and him only; with a Design to magnify and advance his Honour and Glory, by thus proclaiming his Perfections, our Esteem and Affection for them, and Trust and Confidence in them. We must in this way recommend him as an Object worthy of the Homage and Worship of the whole World. These, together with our own,
Directions for

Ser. V. own, and others spiritual Edification and Comfort, ought to be the Ends we should propose to our selves in the Performance of this Duty: not any low, mercenary, selfish ones of our own, such as worldly Advantage, the Ostentation of our own Art and Skill, the Gratification of the Ears and Fancys of others, that we may be applauded by them. Nay, mere Improvement in the Art of Singing ought not to be our principal Design, tho' it may be subordinately look'd at in the Performance of so religious a Duty. This would be not to sing to the Lord, but to our selves; instead of obtaining his Acceptance, we should certainly provoke his Displeasure, and merit his Rejection and Abhorrence of us and our Sacrifices.

Thus I have gone thro the three General Heads I propos'd: And now, upon the Whole, you may easily see, whence it is that many complain, they find so little Pleasure in, and Benefit by this Ordinance; their Esteem and Value for
for it lessens, and they are temp-Ser. V.
ted to live in the neglect of it. There has certainly been some failure in the manner of Performance in some of the foremen- tion'd Respects, which they ought to be sensible of, and humbled for, and charge upon themselves: To this they should attribute their Unprofitableness, and not to any want of Aptitude and Fitness in the Ordinance to do them good. Let but Persons constantly and conscientiously observe the Rules I have laid down, and I am con- fident they will quickly find this as quickning, and edifying, and comforting a Duty, as most of the Dutys of the Gospel.

And as for those of you that have a Value for this Ordinance, I would have you take care to follow these Directions, as ever you would reap Spiritual Advantage your selves, keep up the Credit of it in the World, and promote the Practice of it among others.

But
But the further enlarging upon, and enforcing of these things, with suitable Arguments and Motives, will be the Work of my Worthy Brother, who finishes what we design from this Subject.
An Exhortation to the Duty of Singing.

SERMON VI.

Psal. LVII. 8.

Awake up my Glory; Awake Psalter and Harp; I my self will awake early.

You have had the several Parts of this Subject of singing Psalms in so many Discourses distinctly essay’d, with design that the whole of it, as a Duty, might be more compleatly explain’d and assertyed by Us; while, as a Gift, the becoming manner of performing it is improv’d.
Exhortation to Ser. V. prov'd and cultivated by You: and, I hope, our joint Endeavors may do something toward the settling its Theory and Divine Regulation, its more decent and orderly Practice, the reviving its more general Use, retrieving its Glory, rescuing it from the Objections of the Scrupulous, and from the Corruptions of Levity or Superstition.

To this end the Nature of the Duty has been stated, that you may sing with Understanding. Its Obligations prov'd, that you may sing without the fear of Will-worship, or offering strange Fire. The Excellence of it has been display'd, as truly Angelical and Seraphic; as pleasing to God, and comely for the Upright; as that whereby we are carry'd into the Company of Angels, to join in their Work, and partake of their Joys. Objections have been answer'd, that your Hearts may be fix'd while you sing and give Praise. The true manner of singing the Divine Praises has been directed, so as to make Melody to God, and that it may be acceptable
the Duty of Singing. 187

ceptable to him, and profitable Ser. VI. to us.

What remains then, but that we make the most of such a Duty as this? And since here's nothing else to hinder, Indifference, Drowsiness or Carelessness should not; but that we awaken all our Powers to a Work that is so much its own immediate Reward. And since the foregoing Sermons have presented you with the Scale of Heavenly Musick, as found in Scripture set by the Holy Ghost, who in all this Matter is the chief Musician; practice upon it as high as you can: and tho at present the lower Notes only are within your Compass, hereafter the higher Strains shall not be beyond your reach: for when we are made like Angels, we shall sing like them too in that World where Love and Harmony are in Perfection: In the mean time, we may bear an humble Part. And why should we think our Heaven can begin too soon? If the Grace of Heaven do but tune the Heart, Wonder, Love and Joy will never let your Tongue lie
Ser. VI. lie still, but will awaken your Glory, and all that is within you to bless his Holy Name.

The former Part of this Psalm recounts the many Calamities David was under, his Circumstances dark and gloomy as the Cave he was now in; distress'd and besieg'd on every side, no way open to Relief but that toward Heaven; he was flying before Saul's Cruelty, now instigated by that evil Spirit, which in the absence of David's Harp and Psalmody, had taken entire possession of him. The Sweet Singer of Israel was thus drove out to join Comfort with the untaught Harmony of the Woods, wandering like a Vagabond, and had nothing fix'd but his Heart, and that he was resolv'd should never be remov'd from God, or from his Praise; for even in such a time as this he could say, My Heart is fix'd, O God! my Heart is fix'd; I will sing and give Praise. Fix'd in the midst of Agitations, serene within when all around was Storm and Tempest. And how Divinely Great does that Man look, whose
the Duty of Singing

whose inward Harmony no JarSer. VI. and Discord of all his outward Affairs can shatter and destroy? Who knows the Secret of fetching down his Consolation from Heaven, and making every thing contribute to his gradual Ascent therer? David in these straits not only quiet, but joyous! under these Depressions, and yet will not hang his Harp upon the Willows! If this be the Fruit of being accustom'd to sing the Divine Praifes, may we all be Psalmists, may we all say, Awake up my Glory, &c.

It will sufficiently answer my purpose to take notice of the Terms he uses, and then to press the Exhortation.

I. Of the Terms he uses.

§. 1. My Glory.

That is, my Soul (say some) because the Spirit of a Man is the Glory of a Man, whereby he is dignify'd and rais'd so much beyond the Brutes, as to be but a little lower than the Angels, nay akin to God himself, the Father of Spirits. My
An Exhortation to
Ser. VI. My Musical Skill, say others, the
Glory of the Artist above the Un-
skilful; and that wherein David
had the Glory of excelling, as Juf-
bal had of the first Invention. My
Tongue, say others; this is also the
Glory of a Man above dumb Crea-
tures, and the Glory of a wife
Man above a Fool. And as the
Tongue is the Glory of a Man, so
the Glory of the Tongue is to glo-
rify God. Praise is the Glory of
all other Uses to which the Tongue
is employ'd. And the Tongue is
in the Body that Temple of the Holy
Ghost, what the silver Trumpet
was in the Temple of Solomon; to
found the high Praises of God,
and express the rais'd Affections of
our Souls.

§. 2. Awake Psaltery and Harp.
The one for a Psalm, the other
for a Spiritual Song or Hymn: q. d.
All my musical Instruments and
Skill I will employ in, and confe-
crate to the Glory of him, who
puts new Songs into my mouth.
He first teaches my Fingers to
fight, and then to play the Epini-
cion, or Song of Triumph. Sound
then,
then, my Psaltery and Harp, emu-Ser. VI.

lous of those that are about the

Throne above: Your Melody can

soften my Cares, lay my Fears,

and turn my Cave into a Quire.

As to these Instruments in the

Worship of God, they were
doubtless allow'd to David, and to

the Church in his time. They

were agreeable to the State of

that Church and People, who were

led very much by their Senses;

and whose infant and less discern-
ing Condition made it needful for

the Natural Man to have some-
thing to fasten upon, and been-
tertain'd with in the Worship of

God, and to sweeten and take off

from the Labour and Burden of

that Service. But as the Gospel-

Worship and Appointments are a

more spiritual, pleasant, and rea-

sonable Service, and need them less,

so in the Gospel-Institution we

find no Footsteps of them; and we

know who first brought them into

the Church *, as well as who first

brought

* Pope Vitalianus, about the Year 666.

At Vitalianus Cultui divino intentus, & Re-
gulam
An Exhortation to Ser. VI. brought them into the World. It is not my business here to dispute this matter; and he must at any time do it but forrilly, whose Inclination is against him all the while, and whose Genius tempts him to wish himself solidly confused in all he can advance. But since I find these Instruments in my Text, and since the Sound of such Texts as these is made use of to turn the publick Worship so frequently into Consorts of Musick; I shall leave em with this Remark: That to let them alone, especially in publick Worship, tho one thought them tolerable, has a much better Grace with it, than to declare them sorely displeasing to God, and that they filthily defile his holy House and Place of Prayer *f*, and


† Homily of the Time and Place of Prayer, 2d Part. The Homily relates that a Woman should say to her Neighbour, at the Time of the Reformation; Alas, Gossip, what shall we do at Church, since all the Saints are taken
and yet to bring them into his Ser. VI. holy House and Place of Prayer, for the use of all promiscuously, who will sing in the Assembly, whether they think 'em so much as tolerable or no.

§. 3. I my self will awake early.

And without this all the rest had been an empty Sound: There would have been no Melody to the Lord, whatsoever good Musick he might have made to himself. He would not put God off with a Sacrifice of mere Air. He summons the Attendance of all his Powers. Himself is the Offering; and his Musick plays to the Sacrifice, as it goes up in holy Affections and spiritual Joys; and unless these ac-

taken away, since all the goodly Sights we were wont to have are gone, since we cannot hear the Piping, Singing, Chaunting, and Playing upon the Organs, that we could before. But, Dearly Beloved, we ought greatly to rejoice, and give God thanks, that our Churches are deliver'd out of all those things, which displeas'd God so sore, and filthily defil'd his holy House, and his Place of Prayer; for the which he hath justly destroy'd many Nations, &c.

K company
An Exhortation to Ser. VI. company the Song, the mere Breath of an Organ, or the Tremblings of the Strings of an Harp, is as good Devotion, and less offensive to God.

II. To press this Excitation, to which David in these Words awakens and stirs up himself.

Consider,

§. 1. By the precedent Discourses it's apparent God expects it from you, and insists upon it.

Where the Precepts are so positive, and the Directions so carefully laid down, it can never be thought he has left you at liberty. Supposing your Obligation clear to you, a willful Neglect here is not reconcilable to that Sincerity that has respect to all God's Commands. Praise is the proper Tribute due to God, the Eternal King; and where it is not paid, we have Instances that God has distrain'd for it upon the best of Men, who indeed do always owe the most. All Hezekiah's Goodness in other respects could not
the Duty of Singing.

protect him under the Neglect of Ser. VI. rendring to God according to the Bene-
sfits he had receiv'd. And to say that this rendring to the Lord may be done other ways, besides singing his Prais'es, is true; but does no more satisfy the Authority which has appointed also this way, than the doing of some Dutys will atone for the Neglect of others: as if because a Man acknowledg'd God by Hearing, he need not do it by Prayer, &c.

§. 2. You cannot answer the Neg-lect to Gratitude, any more than to Obedience.

It's fit the Benefactor should chuse his own way of being acknowledg'd; and he has particularly told us, that he that offereth Praise glorifies him. The Motives to it are infinite, and the Ingrati-
tude must be monstrous, where the Obligations are so many. Does he not daily load us with his Benefits, and crown the Year with his Loving-kindness? And his tender Mercys over us, do they not keep pace with, nay, out-number our Pulse and our Moments? Think how
An Exhortation to Ser. VI.

how glorious he is in himself, as

well as how beneficent to us; and

that he places so much of his Glory

in his Goodness to us, and it must

awake your Glory in Praises to

him.

For whom did he raise the noble Architecture of this World, where your Eyes cannot look off from a Miracle? The Earth so situated and furnish'd, as to be full of the Goodness of God, so is also the great and wide Sea. But God needed not the Cattel of the thousand Hills of the one, nor the Fish of the other. For whom did he so furnish the Heavens over our heads? He that inhabited Eternity, needed neither Times, nor Seasons: But he knew how much we needed the useful Variation of Summer and Winter, Light and Darkness.

Can we behold the Sun, Moon, and Stars, their artful Order, the exact Periods of their Motion, their Brightness and Influence, and not strike in with David upon a

Ps. VIII.2.

like Survey, How excellent is thy Name, O Lord? 'Tis thy Glory has
The Duty of Singing.

has gilded their Beams; thy Skill has fix'd their Orbs. Not to give God the Glory due unto this part of his Name, looks like a Combination with the Enemy of his Honour to defeat the Design of the whole Creation, which is to declare the Glory of God; but that it can do only objectively. Man is the Priest in this great Temple of the World, whose Tongue must articulate and express what they silently offer; he must collect the Incense they all afford, and lay it upon the Altar. But further,

Need you be put in mind of that nursing Providence, Provision, and Preservation, that has follow'd you all your days, with as tender and watchful a Care, as if there had been but one Person in the World to look after; and yet at the same time provides for the Millions and Millions that compose the large Family of Heaven and Earth? Feeds them above with Light and Love, and fills our Hearts below with Food and Gladness. Not forgetting to spread a Table for the Fowls of the Air, who
An Exhortation to Ser. VI. who light on the ground to gather the providential Meat, then rise and sing among the Branches, Psal. CIV. 12. tho it be but for a Dinner upon half a Worm, a Sip of Water, and a poor Lodging in a Bush, are thankful in their way; as the Poet renders that Verse:

Tate. Where shady Trees, from scorching Beams, Yield shelter to the feather'd Throng: They drink, and to the bounteous Streams Return the Tribute of their Song.

We need but mention the Grace of Redemption, to awaken every Christian's Glory to the Song of the Lamb. For has he snatcht us from weeping and wailing, and shall we not sing? Shall we not break forth into Singing? When Angels lead the way, shall not we who are nearest Luke II. concern'd repeat, the Glory to God in the highest for this Good-Will to Ps. CVII. 2. Men? For his Mercy endureth for ever: Let the Redeem'd of the Lord say so. Should
the Duty of Singing.

Should I go over the Means of Ser. VI. Grace, the Hopes of Glory; the Blessings that spring out of the Earth, and those that come down from Heaven; the Comforts and Directions of his Word; the Refreshment of his Ordinances; the Kingdom a Man enjoys in Peace of Conscience; the Heaven upon Earth foretasted in the joy of the Holy Ghost; the Triumphs of Soul in the Sense and Evidence of Pardon; the growing Image of God toward Perfection; the Comforts in Death, and Confidence in Judgment: Should I enlarge upon each of these, I should turn my Excitation into a Song; and following the Train of these Motives, should immediately lose my self in Heaven: whose high Hallelujahs must be answer'd from Earth with, O give thanks unto the Lord! for his Mercy endureth for ever: Let the Redeem'd on the Earth say so, and echo back to the Redeem'd in Heaven: as two Instruments, tho' at a distance, if tun'd alike, will answer each other.
An Exhortation to

Ser. VI. § 3. Consider the Nature and Excellence of the Duty, as it has been laid before you.

Singing Psalms is a Compound of several other Duties; it contains Prayer to a very great advantage: The Stretch of the Voice does humour and lead on the earnest reaching of the Mind after the desir'd Blessing. 'Tis the very Element and Breath of Praise; and the Apostle tells us, that Teaching and Admonishing one another is perform'd in singing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs. For when we sing of Judgment, 'tis awakening to Sinners; and when we sing of Mercy, it is comforting to all. Meditation can't have a better Help. The solemn Movement of the Time gives room for the Mind to compass the full Sense of the matter, and to impress it deep; and while the Tongue is making the Pause, the Heart may make the Elevation. In short, it gives an Accent to all Duty; 'tis the Musick of all other Ordinances; 'tis adapted and suited to all Circumstances; as appears from these Psalms.
Psalms compos'd upon all Occa-Sions and Subjects; Doctrinal, Prophetical, Hortatory, and Historical: of Praise and Prayer; of Grief and Joy, in the Penitential and Complaining, in the Triumphant and Rejoicing: as if singing of Psalms could stand for every thing, and like the Manna in the Wilderness, have a Tast of all the other Food we enjoy in the House of God.

So that tis a Duty that seems design'd to reach many Ends at once; and fitted to move and raise the Mind, to stir and exercise the Graces, to excite our Joy, and to vent our Grief. It is not only calculated for a time of Joy, tho. that's the Climate under which it mostly thrives. There is many a weeping Song indited for a time of Trouble, and some have found this Musick sweetest upon the Waters: They have never sung with more Melody in the Heart, than when 'twas with Tears in the Eyes.

It has been already remark'd, that Luther and his Company us'd to
An Exhortation to Ser. VI. to sing away their Fears, and sing up their Confidence in God in the worst of Times; when the prospect of Affairs was threatening and melancholy, and the Company about him dejected by Apprehensions from the Enemy of the Reformation.

Allowance must indeed be made for the Constitutions of some, and the first Shocks of Grief in others, and the different degrees of Grace, and of Strength of Nature: yet it must be acknowledg'd that this Duty has remov'd Grief from some, or in others turn'd it into a better channel; i.e. from a worldly Sorrow that worketh Death, into a godly Sorrow that worketh Repentance unto Life. Has taken off the corrosive Fret of worldly Crosses and Disappointments, and turn'd it into a more genuine and healing Grief: which has enabled Christians to drop those Tears in Joy, that were rais'd by Sorrow; and to vent that agreeable Confusion of Passions, which the Chequer-work of Providence does sometimes throw them into. As when Sorrow
Sorrow had fill’d the Hearts of the Ser. VI. Disciples at the parting with their Master, and yet Peace and Good Cheer was the Legacy he left them, this was the Ordinance they chose to close all with. So Christ, to fute this Frame, went out singing towards the Cross, as some of our Martyrs have done towards a Stake: So futed is this Duty to all the various Sallys of an holy Soul; it refines and purifies the Passions and Affections it draws forth; that while the Joys of the Wicked are but Sparks of their own kindling, or an expiring Blaze, this Joy, like the Fire from Heaven of old, does both kindle the Sacrifice, and carry it up along with it.

This Duty and this Frame must needs shorten our way to Heaven, and take off the Wearisomness of our Journey: ’tis going to Heaven, as one says, per Compendium Iineris, by the shortef Cut. Indeed it’s better to go to Heaven any how than not at all; but we may thank our selves for a heavy mournful Passage, when the Righ-
An Exhortation to
Ser. VI. are describ'd as going thither singing; They shall sing in the way of the Lord, for great is the Glory of our God. Not that these Persons escape their particular Crosses; but by the help of this Practice and Frame they do not squalry and morosely drag their Crosses along, as if vex'd that there is any such thing as a Cross in Christ's Religion: but they seem cheerfully to run away with it toward Heaven upon this Consideration, because great is the Glory of God; because of the far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

§. 4. I shall press the Exhortation, from the Honour that God has put upon this Ordinance of singing the Divine Praises.

The Judgment of God is according to Truth; and 'tis at your peril, that you slight, or neglect, or think meanly of a Duty that God has put such an Honour upon: Honours that seem'd design'd to show, among other ends, how much he is concern'd for it, we in it, and what we may expect from it. He
the Duty of Singing.

He has honour'd it with most Ser. VI.

signal Appearances of himself; he himself descended, and fill'd the Temple with a bright Cloud, as the Singers were praising the Lord, saying, Praise the Lord, for he is 2 Chron. good, for his Mercy endureth for ever; and then the House was fill'd with a Cloud, so that the Priests could not stand to minister by reason of the Cloud, for the Glory of the Lord fill'd the House of God.

God has crown'd it with eminent Successes and Blessings: Jechosaphat's Singers went before the Army, praising the Beauty of Holiness, and their Enemys flew one another; and he ascrib'd his Victory more to the Divine Song, than to the Military Sword.

God has set the Broad Seal of Heaven to it by Miracle and Conversion at once, confirming thereby its Divine Original, its Efficacy and Power upon the Heart: Paul and Silas sung Praise at Midnight, the Foundations shook, the Prison-Doors were open'd, every man's Bands were loos'd, and the Jailor converted. First Nature trembled, and
An Exhortation to Ser. VI. and then the Jailor’s Heart; which shows this way of praising God to be a means of Grace. Here were Songs in the Night without a Figure, and Musick that moves the Stones themselves without a Fiction.

§ 5. It’s an Ordinance against which Satan and his Agents have expressed a great deal of Rage; and for which, on the other hand, good People have always had an high Value and Esteem.

It has been very much the Object of Satan’s Spite and Persecution; and therefore our Neglect would fall in with the Design of the Enemy of God’s Glory, and our Salvation. I may venture to say, that this Ordinance has had its Martyrs and Confessors too, as well as the other Parts of our noble Religion. The following Instances will at least show a mighty Value for this Ordinance.

In the Reign of Julian the Apostate, when the Oracle of Daphne (or they that manag’d it) was disturb’d that the Bones of Babylas the Martyr lay so near it; the Christians were order’d to remove them.
them; and Theodorus, a godly Ser. VI. young Man, at the Head of the Company, brought away his Coffin, singing as they went that part of Psalm XCVII. where 'tis said, Confounded be all they that worship graven Images. Julian inrag'd, commanded the Ringleader to be apprehended; 'twas done: Theodorus is seiz'd, and tortur'd from Morning to Night with variety of unparallel'd Crueltys, and a Succession of fresh Tormentors; and tho he was taken up for singing a Psalm in contempt of the Emperor's Religion, yet while he was upon the Rack, and the Tormentors plying him on every side, he continu'd with a cheerful Countenance to sing the same over again, Confounded be all they that worship graven Images. The other is that of Publia, who, as Julian pass'd by, would sing Psal. CXV. 4. Their Idols are Silver and Gold, the Works of Mens Hands; they that make them are like unto them: and when commanded to be silent, especially when the Emperor pass'd by, she sung on Psal. LXVIII. 1. Let God arise,
An Exhortation to

Ser. VI. arise, and let his Enemies be scat-

er’d. Enrag’d at this, the Apostate commanded her to be brought before him, and beaten till she was all bloody: all which she took as the highest Honour, went back to her House, and continu’d to sing with those about her. Her Behaviour in this I am not here to dispute, I mention it only as an Instance of a zealous Adherence to this part of her Religion, singing of Psalms.

The Value of the Primitive Christians for this Duty was so great, that when they met in the greatest Dangers, and in the Night, this nevertheless made a part of their Worship: And by one that liv’d near the second Century, we are told, that ’twas then among the Marks of a Christian, that he was one that prais’d God with Thanksgiving and singing of Psalms; and that the holy Souls of that time were continually blessing, and praising, presenting Hymns to God, and singing Psalms. Praise is the very Breath of the new Creature, and can it ever be wholly stopp’d in a living
living Soul? Surely the RighteouS Ser. VI.
shall give Thanks unto thy Name.
When all the World is call’d upon

to do so, 'twou’d be strange for
them to be silent.

Awake my Glory; q. d. it’s the
Glory of a good Man, that when
his Mind is tun’d, his Soul can go
up with his Song, and is able to
mount above the Attraction of
worldly Pleasures, and the Impref-
sion of worldly Occurrences, glo-
rying in the Lord: My Glory I do
not place in my Nomination to
the Kingdom, nor in my military
Skill, nor in my Relation to King
Saul; but that I have a fix’d Heart
and a ready Tongue to sing and give
Praise.

Other Christians have chosen
rather to endure all Torments
than quit the Practice, and give up
the Ordinance.

And at the time of the Refor-
mation you might, both in England
and France, distinguish Papists and
Protestants by their enmity against
this Duty, or Value for it. When
England began to shake off Rome,
we are told, by a learned Writer,
"That
Exhortation

Sen. VI. "That Mens Affections to the Work of Reformation were everywhere measured by their singing or not singing of the translated Psalms. And as to France, when Clement Marot, a Courtier and a Poet, had consecrated his Muse to God, and translated about fifty of David’s Psalms into French Metre; Beza did an hundred more, and all the Scripture-Songs: Lewis Guadimel, the Asaph or Jeduthun of that Age, skilfully set them to those melodious Tunes that are sung to this day. This holy Ordinance so charm’d the Ears and Affections of all, that it gave a mighty Spread to the Reformation, and contributed greatly to the Propagation of the Gospel. Persons of all Ranks sung Psalms, not only in the Temples, but in their Familys; and no Gentleman of the Reform’d Religion would sit down at his Table without praising God, by singing a Psalm: and they made it a special Part of their Morning and Evening-Worship. The Rage of the Papish Clergy aga

Synod. in Gallia-Reform. vol. 1. p. 5.
the Duty of Singing.

against this was no wonder, but Ser. VI. the manner of managing their Opposition was remarkable, and the Alarm that it gave them. 'Twas represented to the King, Beze Hist. that the Church was falling, and that the Magistrate was going to be depos'd, and that the Lutherans were raising Sedition, because they sung Psalms; tho' the Psalms for the King's Majesty, and the Prosperity of the Kingdom were always sung first: Whereupon the singing of Psalms was prohibited all the Kingdom over.

But their usual Methods of Force and Violence were not the only Opposition they made to this Ordinance: Profane Songs were encourag'd, Catullus and Tibullus were brought into the Field against David and Asaph; and the Ribaldry of those obscene Poets, whom the Cardinal of Lorain had procur'd Synodicon to be translated, and sung in the Court, was oppos'd to the teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs: as if they were conscious who were the best Allys to their Cause, those
An Exhortation to Ser. VI. those inspir’d from Heaven, or those from Hell; and that the Romish Church had less to fear from the Profaness of those wanton Poets, than from the singing David’s Psalms with Grace in the Heart.

It’s certain, that if this Ordinance had had fair play, Popery would have been driven out by it, as surely as the evil Spirit in Saul flied before David’s Harp, or the Ammonites before Jebohadath’s Singers. No wonder then ’twas one of the first things struck at, both when the Reformation was first begun, and the Extirpation of our Religion more lately design’d, and carry’d on in France by the Great Persecutor of this Day, in comparison of whom the Nero’s and Dioclesian’s of old were harmless and modest Names.

Singing Psalms was always an insupportable Part of our Worship to the Popish Clergy: They omitted no Endeavours to deprive the Protestants of this Consolation by several Edicts. Some forbidding Singing in private Houses; some commanding them to cease Singing,
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ing, even in their Churches, when Ser. VI. the Sacrament past by, or at the time of any Procession. But at length, when the Project of destroying the Reform'd was ripe for execution, they got it universally prohibited by an Arrest of Council in the year 1661. Then it was criminal to sing Psalms either in publick or private, upon penalty of 500 Livres; their Psalm-Books were burnt publicly by the common Hangman, and several were beaten and sent to Prison for praising God that way: as if David's Psalms were a very naughty Book, and not so fit to be trusted with the common People as Catullus and Tibullus.

Hereupon criminal Processes were form'd against several, who made no more difficulty of violating this Order, than Daniel did with respect to that Decree which forbade him to pray to his God.

A Protestant Minister publish'd a M. Brou- little Book in the Defence of singing Psalms, and to show the injustice and Impiety of these Prohibitions, and the Obligations that all
all Christians are under to sing the Praises of God: 'Twas or-
der'd, by another Arrest of Coun-
cil, Ann. 1663. that his Book should be burnt, the Author banisht for a Year, and render'd incapable of exercising his Ministry during that time; and that the Bookseller, who printed it, should not only be ba-
nish'd for two Years, but should pay 300 Livres; and neither he, nor any of his Family, should ever keep Shop any more: which was executed accordingly. But not-withstanding these Declarations, and the Severity with which they were executed, so vast a number continu'd to sing Psalms both in their Houses and elsewhere, that those Judges who had any Remains of Honour or Conscience, were asham'd to execute always the Severity of these Edicts: Yet they continu'd in full force, and as the Persecution encreas'd, they redou-
bled the rigorous Execution of these Prohibitions against singing of Psalms.

Among others, 'twas a noble Testimony born to this Ordinance by
the Duty of Singing: 215

by an Artisan, of the Town of Ser. VI. Castres in the Upper Languedoc:

When an Officer shew'd him the Declaration against singing Psalms, he confounded the Adversary, by subscribing at the bottom no other Answer than this, with his own Hand: Psal. XXXIV. 1. I will bless the Lord at all times, his Praise shall be continually in my Mouth.

In their Version:

Jamais ne Cesserai,
De Magnifier, le Seigneur,
En ma Bouche aurai fon Honeur
Tant que vivant feraï.

Tate and Brady:

Thro' all the changing Scenes of Life,
In Trouble, or in Joy,
The Praises of my God, shall still
My Heart and Tongue employ.

This was indeed with David to say, While I live I will praise the Lord; I will sing Praises to my God while I have my Being. As if David liv'd by the Breath of Praise, and desir'd to live no longer than he could do so.
I may be allow’d to mention, as a further Instance of a mighty value for this Ordinance, the People of Orange; who when the melancholy News was brought them that they were abandon’d to the French Cruelty without Relief, and that they must leave their Habitations and Country, they were resolv’d to part with a Psalm: and judging it to be the last Liberty they should have of assembling in the Church, thither they all repair in Crowds, and melting into Tears: The Minister, who preach’d that day, caus’d the Lift Psalm to be sung kneeling; Sing they would, tho’ they were interrupted with a great many Sighs, and Sobs and Tears.

Shall they sing thus in the Furnace of Affliction, and glorify God in the midst of the Fires? Shall they not only offer the Sacrifice of Praise, but make themselves a Sacrifice rather than omit it? And will not their Singing up-braid our Silence and Neglect? Blessed be God we are not call’d to be Martyrs for the Ordinance,
the Duty of Singing.

nor to sing the Songs of the Lord in Ser. VI. a strange Land, and in the want of all things: Nay in the want of all things (says a great Soul) should we praise the Lord; tho' he has taken away everything else, if he hath not taken away Himself, who is greater and better than All. But where God has given all things pertaining to Life and Godliness, and fill'd the Mouth with good things, 'tis that the Lips should show forth his Praise, for our Personal, Family and Publick Mercys, in secret, in private, and in publick.

(1.) Sometimes secretly, and alone by our selves. David had his Songs in the Night, when alone; and several of his Psalms seem compos'd for his own private Use: And the Apostle says, If any Man, any particular Man by himself, be merry, let him sing Psalms. The Voice of Praise will sweeten Retirement, perfume the Closet, and bring down the best of Company to us, or carry up our Souls to that which is so: This has been found, by many a poor Sufferer,
An Exhortation to
Ser. VI. a strong Consolation in their dark
and solitary Dungeons and Prisons.

(2.) In your Familys, supposing a
competent Number, and capable Vo-
ces. This moreover supposes Fa-
mily-Worship (i.e.) that you are
Christians, according to the Judg-
ment of a great Person, whose
words are these: "Constant Fa-
"mily-Worship is so necessary
to keep alive a sense of God
and Religion in the Minds of
Men, that I see not how any
"Family, that neglects it, can in
"reason be esteem'd a Family of
"Christians, or indeed to have
"any Religion at all. And sing-
ing Psalms makes a refreshing en-
livening part of that Worship,
where it can be decently per-
form'd. That this was the Prac-
tice of the Primitive Christians,
appears from several Testimonys
produced by the learned Author
of the Enquiry into the Constitution
and Discipline of the Primitive
Church: They sung Psalms at their
Meals, and at their Festivals. Ter-
tullian inveighing against Marriage

the Duty of Singing.

with Unbelievers, from the pre-Ser. VI. justice such an unequal Yoke would be to Family-Religion, takes particular notice of this Branch of it, of singing * Psalms: What Jar and Discord must Vanity and Profaneness be to this heavenly Musick of a Soul divinely tun’d? And afterwards describing the Happy Pair whom Love and Religion have united, he mentions this Part among the other Harmonys of such a Condition, That they sing together (Sup-poseing Ability) as Heirs of the Grace of Life; neither their Prayers, nor their Psalms were hinder’d. This was formerly more the Practice of good People, than ’tis now; and in later times, when Family-Religion was not so unfashionable a thing.

One of the Ministers, in a Fare-wel-Sermon, tells his Hearers, "That he cou’d remember the time when a Person, on a Lord’s Day, might hear a continu’d

* Quid Maritus suus illi, vel marito quid illa canabit? † Sonant inter duos Psalmi & Hymni, &c.

L 2 " Melody
An Exhortation to Sew VI.

Melody of Psalms, in walking from one end of this City to the other. It's certain there are Family-Mercys and Blessings that call for Family-Praises, as well as publick and personal. David seems to mark the good Man's Door with this Inscription, The Voice of Rejoycing and of Salvation is in the Tabernacles of the Righteous; and he compos'd a Psalm on purpose for the dedicating of his own House. Under the Law every House was dedicated: Dedication and Worship make a Church, and by this 'twill be known that there is a Church in thy House.

Mr. Philip Henry's Life. And as a Man of God us'd to say, "This is the way to hold forth Godliness, like Rahab's scarlet Thread, to such as pass by our Windows. And as the same excellent Man us'd to say, "They do well who pray Morning and Evening in their Familys, but they do better who pray and read the Scriptures; but they do best of all, who pray, and read, and sing Psalms: and Christians should covet earnest-..."
The Duty of Singing.

"ly the best Gifts. This was his Ser. VI.

own daily Practice, which he manager do as to make it a Pleasure, and not a Task to Children and Servants; seldom long, never tedious: for he had an excellent Faculty of rendering Religion the most sweet and amiable Employment in the World.

It's a Trifle to object we are afraid of being overheard, and that we shall only entertain the Banter of a scoffing World. Indeed, a prudent Man will order his Affairs with Discretion, and Wisdom is profitable to direct; but examine, whether this is not being ashamed of God and his Way. May not your Example and Practice do good to others? Has not your own Heart been warm'd and affected when you have gone by and heard a Family so employ'd? I shall only add, That if Paul and Silas had been afraid of being overheard, the Jailor might never have been converted.

(3.) Awake your Glory, and sing to God in Publick, with the united Voices of the Congregation. Let us L 3 come
An Exhortation to
Ser. VI. come before his Presence with Thanksgiving, and make a joyful Noise unto him with Psalms; and praise him in the midst of the great Congregation.

Be this the Burden of your Song,
In full Assemblies bless the Lord;
All who to Israel's Tribe belong,
The God of Israel's Praise record.
Psal. Tate.

I close all with an Address to two sorts of Persons.

First, You that are yet unsatisfied and unconvinced, have a care of a censorious judging Spirit, or reproachful Language: don't give way to any Estrangedness from your Brethren upon this account. Your differing Opinion in this Matter ought not to drive you from the Communion of those that practise Singing; because you are not forc'd to sing with them, but may be meditating all the while; and because of the indispensible Duty all Christians are under to allow each other the Liberty of Conscience. If a Congregation should
should be equally divided for, and Ser. VI. against this; I can see no Reason why the one should say to the others, you shall not sing, while the Singers do not force it upon the Refusers; but according to Rule, leave them that are otherwise minded, till God shall reveal it; and yet where to we have attain'd walking together. I am not utterly a Stranger to the Twiftings and Turnings us'd to evade this; but be open to Conviction: Strain not for Difficulty's: Do not make an hard shift to remain unsatisfy'd, while some may without Censure be suppos'd to practise many things in Religion upon less Evidence and weaker Proof. Omit not the Methods of Information, Reading, Prayer and Converse; and when your Objections are fairly answer'd, let not Prejudice or Custom step up to the Breach, and maintain the Ground against a friendly Attack; in yielding to which you'll afterwards see Reason to sing a Triumph over your own Defeat.
Exhortation to Ser. VI. You that are satisfy'd, let not your Souls be untun'd by any slights that may be put upon it by the Profane on the one hand, or the Mistaken on the other. It sounds odd to you, the making it a Question, whether we should sing God's Praises or no? but let it not surprize you that this Ordinance has its Enemys. Exercise a Candour and Love towards those you count mistaken; and tho you cannot, must not carry it so far as to sacrifice a plain Duty to their Prejudice, neither let your Zeal for one Duty eat up the other of Charity and Forbearance. Be true to your own Principles, and allow a Latitude to others.

Let your gracious Frame, and serious manner of performing it, and your spiritual Improvement by it, do an Honour to the Ordinance, and recommend it to others.

Always admire the Grace and Goodness of God in a Mediator, that does not disdain to accept of such Praises as ours. Admire that any
the Duty of Singing.

any thing we can do should be Ser. VI. call’d Service, and that any thing we can say should be call’d Praise. When the Sons of the Morning still sing together, and continually sur-round his Throne with unspotted Hallelujahs; yet he says to a Worm, Let me hear thy Voice, for Cant. II. ’tis pleasant. Certainly this is to 14. the end that my Glory should not be silent, but should sing and give Praise. With David’s Resolve;

Psalm?

IN praising God, while he pro-
longs
My Breath, I will that Breath imploy:
And join Devotion to my Songs,
Sincere as is in him my Joy.

While
While Sinners from Earth's Face are hurl'd,
My Soul, praise thou his Holy Name:
Till, with my Song, the listening World
Join Consort, and his Praise proclaim.

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