

# VINDICIÆ CANTUS DOMINICI.

IN TWO PARTS:

- I. A DISCOURSE on the DUTY of SINGING the BOOK of PSALMS in SOLEMN WORSHIP.
- II. A VINDICATION of the Doctrine taught in the preceding Discourse.

WITH

AN APPENDIX:

CONTAINING

ESSAYS AND OBSERVATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

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Quæ carmina in templis Christianorum cani debent? Non illa ex sacris literis temere decerpta et male confuta, quibus garrula modulatione demulceri stultorum aures solent: sed ea quæ ipse suos Dominus docet: talia carmina sunt Psalmi a Spiritu sancto dictati.

*Beza.*

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Philadelphia:

Printed and sold by DAVID HOGAN, N<sup>o</sup>. 51, South  
Third-street, opposite the Bank of the United States.

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## P R E F A C E.

**T**HE subject of the following pages, must appear deeply interesting to every reader who considers the danger of admitting human devices into the worship of God. It is especially with regard to His own worship that He is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations. The quarrels and offences occasioned by the mixture of human inventions in the form of religious worship, seem to take up the greater part of ecclesiastical history; man's depraved nature being always fond of these inventions, and adverse to the simplicity of divine institutions.

The scheme of laying aside the Book of Psalms, as unsuitable for New Testament worship, and of substituting in its place hymns of human composition, has a manifest tendency to make men forget that the scriptures are writings, *sui generis*, of a nature and kind absolutely superior to all other compositions. For we have been told, in order to bring down the inspired forms of psalmody to a level with such as are merely human, that the words of the scriptures, when translated, however exactly corresponding with the original, are not the words of the Holy Spirit; and that Christians ought to expect the influence of the Spirit to assist them

them in composing hymns to be sung in solemn worship. There is indeed a saving work of the Holy Spirit, by which he brings persons to the exercise of faith, love, and other graces, and to the performance of duty in a spiritual and acceptable manner. But that work is as distinct from the immediate inspiration, under which the penmen of the scriptures wrote, as the business of gradually confirming any thing to be a standard, is distinct from the making of that standard.

The act of inspiration, by which God communicated the scriptures to the church, was without any mixture of human frailty or imperfections. But even these works of believers, which are performed under the influence of the Holy Spirit, are still their works, and as such, partake of their imperfection. Hence it is evident, that though their communication with one another, concerning spiritual things, be good to the use of edifying; yet they are by no means to be held sufficient to answer the peculiar purpose of one of the inspired books, or to be admitted, in that view, as of the same kind.

The methods taken to promote the scheme now mentioned, seem to want that candour and consistency which usually characterise the defence of the truth. According to the advocates of this scheme, when we sing the Book of Psalms in solemn worship, we do not approach to God in the name of the Lord Jesus; but countenance Arian blasphemers, in withholding from him the divine honours which are his due. And yet, after they have represented the singing of the Psalms in such an odious light, they tell the public, that they say little, and write less, against the ministers and private Christians who continue to sing them. Nor do they themselves scruple to comply with the condemned practice, occasionally, or when the majority of a congregation is in its favour. It may well excite wonder, to see a minister who had vented his rage against the singing of the Psalms, according to what he calls Rouse's version both by the pulpit

pit and the press, continuing to give forth a part of the same reproached psalms on the Lord's day, to be sung in public worship.

We allow, that christian forbearance ought to be exercised in matters of private and personal concern, or in those of an indifferent nature; that the weak and ignorant ought to be borne with; while they are willing to learn; and that such ought to be first instructed in the easier parts of religious truth, and then in those that are more difficult.

But such cases are manifestly different, from that of a minister giving the public sanction of his example to a form of religious worship, which, according to his own judgment, excludes a due regard to the Mediator, and is long ago abrogated, as well as the practice of sacrificing.

If the singing of the psalms in solemn worship be such an evil as they represent it, surely it ought to be judicially condemned; it ought to have a principal place among the causes of humiliation; and such as refuse to be reclaimed from it, ought to be cast out of church-communion.

This was the downright honest way in which our reforming ancestors walked. That faithful General Assembly, which was held at Glasgow in the year 1638, did not content themselves with recommending the Presbyterian form of church government, and saying nothing against the Prelatical; but they asserted the former as authorized by the holy scriptures, and condemned the latter as contrary to them; and therefore to be avoided.

It is usual for error to be proposed at first indirectly; the teachers of it being for some time very cautious of making plain and explicit declarations of it. Hence the holy scriptures represent them as *creeping in unawares*, Jude 4. ; and as *creeping into houses*, 2 Tim. iii. 6. ; whereas the confessors of the truth consider it as

their indispensable duty to set it forth in its native simplicity, by an open and express assertion of it.

It is said, that sometimes, when the advocates for the new scheme of psalmody meet with a person attached to the ancient practice of singing the inspired psalms, instead of bringing forth their scheme fully, and telling him candidly, that the Book of Psalms is not fit to be sung in New Testament worship, and that we may ourselves make hymns much more proper for that purpose; they insinuate, that we no more sing the scripture-songs when we use Rouse's version, than when we use that of Dr. Watts. There is so much disingenuity in this assertion, that men of common honesty, to be capable of it, must be amazingly under the influence of party spirit; while it is so manifest, that a close adherence, both in matter and expression, to the original, was intended in the version of the Psalms used by the church of Scotland; while Dr. Watts professed no such design in composing his Imitation, and while their objections against singing the psalms, are such as would be as much against our singing them in the original Hebrew, as in any version whatever. They attempt to cover the impiety of the reproaches which they cast upon that book, by pretending that they speak against Rouse's version only; which they represent as a human composition. But a literal version of the Psalms cannot, consistently with the reverence due to the holy scriptures, be called a human composition. For, though the turning of the book unto another language be human; yet the composition, (that is, the form of discourse, the arrangement, the metaphors,\* and other things, which are the same in the translation, as in the original) is divine. Surely, these men are conscious to themselves,

\* In order to avoid a captious criticism, it may be observed, that this enumeration is meant to be taken here, and in the following treatise, not distributively, but collectively.

themselves, that they may as well term the prose translation of the Psalms a human composition, as the verse translation of them used by the church of Scotland; nor will the fault, real or supposed, of the latter, rank it among human compositions, more than those of the former.

Our opponents charge us with leaving out the gospel, in our solemn praises; as if there were no gospel in the Book of Psalms:—with being strenuous advocates for the worship of the Old Testament; as if the singing of the Psalms were manifestly nothing else but an antiquated rite of the ceremonial law:—with rejecting New Testament light; as if no use could be made of that light in reading or singing the Old Testament scriptures:—with refusing to praise God for new mercies; as if the application of the Psalms to what God is now doing were absurd and impossible:—with forbidding the exercise of a talent for poetry in the service of religion; as if making hymns to be sung in public worship, were the only way of exerting such a talent to the edification of church-members.

These charges seem rather to be taken for granted, than attempted to be proved by our opponents. Hence we have little reasoning, and much declamation, in their writings on this subject. A great part, for example, of Mr. Latta's Discourse on Psalmody, is taken up in declaiming against his opponents, as overlooking, in their praises and thanksgivings to God, the great things which our Lord had said or done in his own person, or by the ministry of the apostles; as allowing the gospel no share in their songs of praise and gratitude to God; as passing over in silence God's acts of mercy and kindness to themselves; as conducting one great and leading part of their worship, without expressing an entire dependence, for acceptance with God, upon the mediation of his Son: while a reader, desirous to know whether his opponents are indeed liable to such charges,

looks

looks in vain through his performance for proofs; which ought to have been produced from their professed principles or writings. A different method, it is hoped, will be found to be pursued in the following treatise. The writer has brought no charge against the abettors of the new scheme of psalmody, but what he judges to have a sufficient foundation in the words of their publications; which he has been careful to quote exactly. He can say sincerely, that he has been studious to avoid misrepresentations and personal reflections; faults, which, in his opinion, tend greatly to render controversial writings endless and unprofitable.

The greater part of this treatise was formerly published; but it is hoped that, in this edition, the arguments for continuing to sing the Book of Psalms in solemn worship, are more distinctly stated and set in a clearer light.

With regard to the Appendix, consisting of Essays and Observations on various Subjects, the writer offers them to the public, not as containing new matter; but such as appears necessary to be attended to in the present state of the visible church. When particular articles of Christ's truth, are much opposed, traduced or forgotten, an attempt to explain and defend them, must be reasonable. Christians should often remind one another of those things of Christ, which belong to the word of his patience.

The glory of Christ, as King in Zion, shines eminently in the particular form of church government which he hath instituted. He was honoured more especially as a Prophet, by the Christians who suffered under the persecution of the heathens; and more especially as a Priest, by those who suffered under the Papacy; but the glory of his Kingly office was peculiarly displayed, by the testimony of those who suffered in the last age, under Prelatical tyranny. The blood of an Argyle, of a Guthrie, a Cargil,  
a Cam-

a Cameron, a Renwick, is crying aloud, not only against abjured Episcopacy, but against the indifference of professed Presbyterians; the cold indifference which declines an express assertion of the divine right of Presbytery, as the only form of government warrantable in the church of Christ; and which pours contempt on the solemn covenant engagements which have been entered into for the support of it.

That God, who hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought the things which are, may bless what is now offered to the public, and make it an effectual mean of removing the prejudices of some, and of establishing the faith of others, is, through grace, the prayer of the writer,

JOHN ANDERSON.

*June, 1800*

# I N D E X.



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# VINDICIÆ CANTUS DOMINICI.

## P A R T I.

### A DISCOURSE ON THE DUTY OF SINGING THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

SINGING the praises of God is a moral duty, warranted by the precepts and examples of both the Old and New Testaments. *Let the word of Christ, says one apostle, dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Is any merry? says another, let him sing psalms.\** Our Lord Jesus, in the same night wherein he was betrayed, joined with his disciples in singing a psalm.† And we find Paul and Silas engaged in the same exercise at midnight.‡ Nor can it well be controverted, that singing has, in general, (whatever may have been the case for a time in some particular churches) had a place in the appointed worship of God, since

\* Col. iii. 16. James v. 13.

† Matth. xxvi. 30. Many judicious commentators agree that, on this occasion, our Lord and his disciples sung the great *Hallel*, which the Jews usually sung on the night of the Passover, consisting of six psalms, that is, from the 113th to the 118th inclusive. That this was what Christ and his apostles sung, is more probable than that it was a hymn of his own composing; because not only he, but all the disciples sung it; and therefore it must have been what they were acquainted with: Besides, if he had dictated a new hymn on this occasion, who can think that the evangelists would have passed over so uncommon a circumstance in silence?

‡ Acts xvi. 25.

since the days of David and Solomon. The purity of this ordinance is the more to be contended for, in regard that, of all the exercises of God's worship on earth, it bears the nearest resemblance to the eternal exercise of the saints in heaven. Let us hold in just abhorrence the attempt of the Quakers to banish this and other ordinances of Christ out of the world. Let us detest the ungodly practice of those who account it a mark of delicacy and good breeding, to sit silent at church in the time of singing. And let us beware of encouraging the introduction of those modes of singing, which, being too complex and artificial, tend to impose silence on a great part of our worshipping assemblies.

On account of the controversies that have risen with regard to the right manner of conducting this part of religious worship, we propose, through divine assistance, to illustrate the following propositions:

- I. That there are parts of the sacred scriptures adapted to the purpose of singing in solemn worship, designed for the use of the church in all succeeding generations.
- II. That the scripture-songs are the only forms of psalmody which ought to be used in the solemn and public worship of the church.
- III. That the singing in solemn and public worship ought to be conducted with decency and simplicity, in subservience to the spiritual part, which is chiefly to be regarded.

We proceed to the consideration of the FIRST PROPOSITION—

That there are parts of the sacred scriptures adapted to the purpose of singing in solemn worship, designed for the use of the church in all succeeding generations.

WHAT we have to offer for explaining and confirming this proposition, shall be comprehended under four observations,

The

The first is, *That there are portions of scripture peculiarly adapted to this part of divine worship.* To determine what these portions are, might have been a matter of difficulty, if it had been left to our judgment, to collect them from all the various books of the scripture: For, in that case, though these books be equally of divine inspiration, and might furnish abundant matter of praise, yet it could not be said of any of them, that it was given to the church by the Holy Spirit expressly for the purpose of being sung in solemn worship. But this may be said of those parts of scripture which are called songs, and more especially of that book which is distinguished in the New Testament by the title of *the Psalms*.<sup>\*</sup> Suitably to that purpose, the form of the psalms is manifestly poetical; † and the subjects of them the most proper to be sung of in divine worship; such as, the glorious excellencies of God, the salvation of the soul, the condition of the church, &c.

The second observation is, *That these psalms were given to the church as forms of psalmody, and not as patterns after which other forms were to be composed for being used in solemn worship.* Many of the psalms are expressly directed to the chief musician, to be immediately used in public worship. And this appears to have been the case even with those that have not this inscription; for in 1 Chron. xvi. 7. the 105th psalm, which wants this inscription, is said to have been *delivered by David into the hands of Asaph and his brethren*. ‡ And in 2 Chron. xxix. 30. we read that Hezekiah the king, and the princes, commanded the Levites to sing praise unto

\* Luk<sup>e</sup> xxiv. 44.

† The author of an Examination of a Discourse on the Divine Ordinance of singing Psalms, page 13. asserts, that “The versification alone can essentially distinguish poetry from prose.” If by versification he means what is commonly understood by that word, namely, a succession of lines, each of which consists of a certain number of feet or syllables, to his opinion may be opposed that of Dr. Blair, who says, “That poetry is the language of passion, or of enlivened imagination, formed *most commonly* into regular numbers.” Hence he allows the denomination of poetry to the Telemachus of Fenelon, and the English translation of Ossian.

‡ Boston's *Traſtatus Stigmologicus*, Part I. cap. 3.

unto the Lord with the words of David and Asaph. Thus it is manifest, that the songs made use of in the solemn worship of the Jewish church were all along the very words of those songs that had been given by divine inspiration, and not songs composed by uninspired men, in imitation of the inspired ones.

The third observation is, *That the inspired forms of psalmody were given to be sung in the public and solemn worship of the church, to the end of the world.* It may be safely laid down as a maxim, that whatever form of worship God hath appointed, ought to be observed till the end of time; unless he himself intimate, that it is only temporary, and to be abrogated at a certain period. It cannot be denied, that he once appointed his church to sing his praise in the words of David and of Asaph. And where have we any intimation of his will that the church should cease to do so before the end of time? The ceremonial institutions, indeed, which were shadows of Christ as not yet come, such as, sacrifices, external purifications, the observance of meats and days, were abrogated when Christ was actually come, and the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles broken down: Some observances were superseded by other appointments of the church's Lawgiver coming in their place: Thus, circumcision was superseded by baptism, the Sabbath of the seventh day of the week by the Sabbath of the first. But the use of the psalms, either in reading or singing, can never be shewn to have been a typical service, to have belonged to the partition wall between Jews and Gentiles;\* or to have been superseded by

\* Psalm cxlv. 2. Mr. Henry observes, that the expression here used by the psalmist intimates, "That the psalms he penned should be made use of in praising God by the church to the end of time." We are far from laying stress on this, as on a principal argument; yet it seems no way disagreeable to the signification of the word, to the connection of the place, or to the analogy of faith. The author of an Examination, &c. page 20. answers it with a sneer; to which he adds, "These indefinite terms are frequently used in scripture in a limited sense." Well, sir, and what then?—Why then, *for ever and ever*, may mean no more than during the psalmist's natural life, or during the Jewish economy. Is it then your opinion, sir, that *praising the Lord for ever and ever*, means praising him during a man's natural life, or during the Jewish economy? It is hoped you will think otherwise in your cooler and more serious moments.

by any other institution of Christ. While the psalms are sung in the public assemblies of the church, David, Asaph and the other penmen, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, still continue to celebrate the praises of God in the church, as they sometimes intimate they were to do, to the end of time. *I will praise thy name, says David, for ever and ever.\**

OBJECTION. “The Jewish system of psalmody was exactly suited to the dispensation under which that people were placed, and many of the psalms belonging to that system have such express reference to the peculiarities of the Jewish worship—have those ordinances of it which the apostle calls *worldly, weak, poor, &c.* so interwoven with their subject matter, that they cannot universally suit the gospel dispensation, which is so widely different from the Jewish, and under which these ordinances are entirely abolished. With what propriety can church members now call upon one another to praise God with the harp, the psaltery, the timbrel, and dance, and to blow the trumpet in the new moon; when at the same time, they mean not at all to do any such thing? Upon what principle can we intreat God to do good to Zion, with this declaration in our mouths, that there he would be pleased with whole burnt offerings and bullocks, which the church should offer upon the altar? Under the Jewish dispensation such offerings were proper—they were divine ordinances; and the pious worshippers not only expressed them in words, but intended and actually performed them.  
“But

\* The author of an Examination, &c. page 17. says, “Such psalms,” those, namely, which involve in them the subjection of those who penned, or first sang them, to the ceremonial law, were as really a partition wall between Jews and Gentiles as any other ordinance.” Surely this is not that sound speech which cannot be condemned. It is a way of speaking never heard of before in the church of God, that some of the psalms were, as much as the practice of any of the Jewish rites or ceremonies, a partition wall, which Christ came to break down, Eph. ii. 14. Surely Christ did not come to destroy the scriptures, or any part of them, but to fulfil them, Matth. v. 17. As to the reasons which led the author to so strange an expression, they are considered in the following pages.

“ But no christian believes, that he should present such offerings; or, if he did, they would be pleasing to God. “ Can we consistently say in our songs of praise, that sparrows and swallows build by the altar of God, and that they are blessed who travel through the dry valley of Baca, dig wells in it, and collect the rain in pools, to supply themselves with drink, whilst they are coming from a distant part of Judea, to celebrate the annual festivals at Jerusalem? Whilst the Jewish economy lasted, this could be sung with truth; but now it cannot. These things exist no more. It must be very absurd, if not a kind of mockery, to approach the Most High with expressions in our mouths to which we have either no meaning at all, or one very different from their obvious sense, and that which they were intended originally to convey.”

ANSWER. The singing of those passages in the psalms, which mention some peculiar usages of the Old Testament dispensation, is supposed by the objector to be unsuitable to New Testament worship, either because such passages are obscure; or because the receiving of instruction by allusions to those usages, and by metaphors taken from them, is among the carnal and worldly ordinances, among the weak and beggarly elements, to which christians are not to return; or, lastly, because they are not applicable to the present condition of particular christians, or of the church. Let us consider each of these reasons.

With respect to the first, a psalm or hymn may be said to be unsuitable for the use of such as have not the capacity or information necessary to the understanding of it. Such an obscure author as Persius the satirist, would be very unsuitable for a boy who had learned only some rudiments of the Latin tongue, and had read nothing of the Roman history. In this respect, it cannot be pretended that the psalms are more unsuitable under the New Testament dispensation, than they were under the Old: For it is obvious, that they may be more easily and fully understood with the light of the New Testament, than they could be without it.\*

With

\* Perhaps some may object, That if our understanding the psalms better than church members under the Old Testament dispensation, be allowed to warrant the singing of them in our solemn

With respect to the second reason, it is justly denied, that the way of receiving instruction by allusions to ceremonial usages, or by metaphors taken from them, is among the carnal and worldly ordinances, the weak and beggarly elements, to which we are not to return. It is true, the ceremonial institutions were carnal and worldly ordinances, and beggarly

lemp worship, the same reason might be urged for our observation of the ceremonial law. It is answered, that the writer of this discourse is not here advancing an argument for the singing of the psalms; he is only answering an objection, and shewing that the pretended obscurity of the psalms ought not to deter us from singing them. We have a far weightier reason against the present practice of the ceremonial law than the obscurity of it; namely, that it now imports a denial of the Messiah as already come—a denial of christianity. The author of a Discourse on Psalmody, page 93, 94. seems to reject the distinction between answering an objection and advancing an argument. Yet few distinctions are plainer. If you shew that a thing is not impracticable, you remove an objection; but you offer no proof of its lawfulness.

The author of an Examination, &c. page 43, 44, 45. instead of once attempting a serious reply to the reasoning here used, endeavours to amuse himself and his readers, by some criticisms upon two similies, which are omitted in this edition for the sake of brevity, and which had been introduced, not to add any thing to the argument, but merely to make it plainer. The first was to this purpose: Suppose the following text, *Unto you that fear my name, the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings,* were proposed to two persons, one of whom had beheld the sun shining in his strength, and the other had never seen that majestic luminary, having only some ideas of its figure, motion, and beneficial influence; the text now recited, would be suitable for the instruction of both, yet it might be said to be more suitable for that of the former. Here it was intended, that the particular text, quoted from the prophecy of Malachi, should be considered as in the place of the psalms; that the latter of the two persons should represent church members under the obscurity of the Old Testament dispensation; and the former, church members under the New. Thus it was said, that the book of psalms, considered as a mean of instruction, could hardly be denied to be rather more suitable to the state of the church under the New Testament, than it was to the state of it under the Old. A better simile, perhaps, might have been found; the writer has nothing to say for it, but that it seemed to him proper; that he expected the reader would have gathered the design of it from its connection with what goes before and follows it; and that the examiner misrepresented it in order

beggarly elements, when abstracted from Christ; or as they were represented by the Judaising teachers, (against whom the apostle is disputing when he uses these expressions) that is, when the practice of any of them was represented as necessary to the justification of a sinner before God, or when they were put in the place of, or somehow joined with, the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the affair of justification. But in this view, they are represented as unprofitable things in the psalms as well as in the epistles of Paul. To this purpose are these words of the 40th psalm: *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required:* And these words in the 50th, *I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor be goats out of thy folds: Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?* These ceremonial usages of the Old Testament dispensation, may also be said to be *beggarly elements*, with regard

order to give it a distorted appearance. The other simile represented this expression in the book of Job, *He hangeth the earth upon nothing*, as more suitable to the knowledge which has been attained in modern times, of the rotundity of the earth, than to the apprehensions which prevailed among the ancients, with respect to its figure. Here the writer of the Discourse was, perhaps, unguarded, because he had often found the rotundity of the earth, and its suspension in the air, put together, as relative ideas, in various authors. Le Clerc, in his Physics, speaking of the observations of those who had sailed round the earth, says, “*Hinc merito colligunt, terram esse rotundam, & veluti in ære, quo undequaque ambitur, pendere.*” Another well known writer says, “While the earth was considered as a plane, mankind had an obscure notion of its being supported like scaffolding, on pillars, though they could not tell what supported these. But the figure of a globe is much better adapted to motion.” The author of the Examination, however, signifies, that there is no relation at all between those two ideas; that the writer of the Discourse on singing Psalms, had represented the Divine Being as having hung the earth upon its spherical figure; that he had discovered about as much knowledge in philosophy as in divinity; that the shift he made by representing the above mentioned two ideas as suitable, and related to one another, had shewn his cause to be very desperate.

What some readers may think of these accusations, it is hard to say; but the writer, whom he accuses, owns his inability to understand them.

regard to the obligation which the church was then under to the practice of them, and with regard to the scanty measure of gospel light, which was thereby communicated to the greater part of church members, compared with the abundant measure of that light enjoyed under the New Testament dispensation. But we utterly deny, that the way of receiving instruction by allusions to the ceremonial usages, or by metaphors taken from them, is a worldly ordinance, or beggarly element, quite unsuitable to the condition of the church under the New Testament dispensation. For those usages, as alluded to in the psalms, like the earthly things in our Lord's parables, are made use of, not to veil or darken, but to illustrate spiritual and heavenly things. That they actually do answer this purpose, is what a person needs not be told; who is diligent in the practical and believing use of the bible. One instance may be given, with regard to that most important gospel truth, that the sufferings and death of Christ are of a vicarious and satisfactory nature. A plain and striking argument for this truth arises from the declarations of scripture concerning the substitution of Jewish sacrifices in the place of the offerer. This argument cannot otherwise be evaded, than by denying the principle, that those sacrifices were designed by God to be shadows, and as exact representations of the use and end of Christ's death, as such earthly things could afford; a principle which is clearly established in the epistle to the Hebrews. For another instance, we may mention the very instructive and affecting manner, in which the ceremonial law, concerning the plague of leprosy, sets forth the abominable nature of sin, the symptoms of its power and dominion, the total destruction that it brings upon those who remain under its dominion, and the manner in which the remedy revealed in the gospel, is effectually applied. Farther, the method of conveying instruction by allusions to the ceremonial usages, or by metaphors taken from them, is not a beggarly element of the Old Testament; for the New abounds with examples of it, both with regard to Christ, as in these expressions, *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour: Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way*  
*which*

*which he hath consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh—and with regard to his church or people, He is a Jew that is one inwardly: Peace be on the Israel of God: Ye are the circumcision: Ye are an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices: Ye are come unto mount Zion.* Indeed no allusions, metaphors, or similies, could be fitter for expressing and explaining the mysteries of the gospel, than those taken from the typical ordinances of the Old Testament; in which both the sign and the thing signified, are of God, and fitted to each other by his wisdom.\*

The third reason why the objector holds the Psalms improper to be sung in our solemn worship, is, that a great part of them is not applicable to the present condition of particular christians, or of the church: This he seems chiefly to insist upon, and asks upon what principles we can sing such passages as those he mentions?

We

\* The author of an Examination, &c. page 47. represents what is contained in this paragraph as inconsistent with what we grant as to the comparative obscurity of the Old Testament. The injustice of this representation will appear, when it is considered, that what we admit on this head is to be understood of the Old Testament taken by itself. For, it seems easy to conceive, that, though the language and principles of a great work, consisting of two parts, be all along the same, and though the style of both be remarkable for perspicuity, yet persons may experience a degree of obscurity in reading the first part only, which they may find removed by reading both. This may be illustrated by an instance to which our author will hardly object: It is supposed, that the language and principles of his sermon on Psalmody, and his Examination, are the same; and that neither of them is obscure; yet some things really intended in his sermon will appear more plainly to be contained in it by reading both, than by reading his sermon only; such as, that the words of a translation of the scriptures, however exactly corresponding with the original, are not the words of the *Holy Spirit*; and that the grand medium of the communication of spiritual blessings was not discovered under the Old Testament. Thus, what we say about the obscurity of the Old Testament, may be reconciled with our saying that, in the Old Testament taken in connection with the New, the mysteries of the gospel may be clearly discerned. A little candid consideration makes the reconciliation perfectly easy, though passion and prejudice would make it as impossible as it is to “unite the opposite poles of the heavens, and to make the same thing to be and not to be at the same time.”

We answer candidly, that the principles we proceed upon in singing such passages in the psalms, are chiefly these two: First, that, in this part of solemn worship, it is warrantable, to consider many passages which we sing as the words of others, and as expressive of their case, not of our own. Secondly, that some of these passages may be considered as examples of a common figure of speech, whereby an individual, or particular, represents a whole species or kind.

If the first of these principles be false, then it is utterly unwarrantable to sing any words which we cannot consider as our own, and as expressive of our own case; and then it must have been always unwarrantable for a great part of church members to sing such words of the psalms as these: *I have been young, and now I am old: Hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works: I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come: I have more understanding than all my teachers: I understand more than the ancients: Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off: Princes did sit and speak against me: Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law: My zeal hath consumed me: Seven times a day do I praise thee.* How could the Jews with propriety, according to the objection, in the time of the Babylonish captivity, or during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, call upon one another to praise God with organs, psalteries and cymbals, or to bind their sacrifices, while the peculiar service of the temple was become quite impracticable? \* So that  
if

\* The author of an Examination, &c. page 52. says, "I grounded the impropriety of singing the psalms referred to, upon our never intending to use these instruments, or offer these sacrifices, at any time or place." But still, sir, this impropriety would be chargeable upon many of the Jews, if they sung these psalms in the period of the Babylonish captivity, as well as upon us now. For, in the beginning of that period, many who heard and believed the prophecy of Jeremiah with regard to the term of that captivity, could never intend to offer sacrifice at any time or place, even as many as were then advanced in years, and could have no rational prospect of seeing the temple rebuilt. It seems, however, needless, if not somewhat ridiculous, to insist upon one particular instance in so plain a matter. There are multitudes of expressions in the psalms, which no body can pretend that every church member, even under the Old Testament dispensation, could sing,

if this principle be not admitted, we will not be able to maintain, that the psalms were exactly or universally suited to the state of the church, even under the Old Testament dispensation. But surely it is to be admitted; for, as a learned and godly writer observes, “Why may we not sing the words of David and of Asaph the seer, as well as the Levites did in Hezekiah’s days? Could they, and others that joined with them in this exercise, say of themselves whatever David said of himself? If the dispensations of God towards others of his children do not concern us, how are we to understand these words of the 66th psalm, *He turned the sea into dry land; they went through the flood on foot, there did we rejoice in him.* How could the psalmist and others in his time say, that they rejoiced at the Red Sea, when the people of Israel were brought through it some hundreds of years before he, or any of his contemporaries were in being? And how is it that in the 15th chapter of the Revelation, such as had gotten victory over the beast are said to sing the song of Moses the servant of God. The joyful or sad condition of others being turned into a song, may be matter of a song to us: Since we are members of the same body, the favours and deliverances bestowed upon others should be looked upon by us as favours conferred upon ourselves.”\*

With

as expressing either what he had done or intended to do, at any time or place. Such, for example, as the following: *Upon the harp will I praise. I have done this evil* (namely, the particular sin which David had committed in the matter of Uriah) *in thy sight. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will open my dark sayings upon the harp. When I shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly: I will destroy all the wicked of the land, &c.*

\* Brown’s View of the Quaker’s Religion. In the former edition of this discourse was the following passage: “The words which we sing are often to be considered not as ours, but as the words of the sacred writer, or of some other. Sometimes we sing the words of the church’s enemies: *Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that so the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.* Sometimes the words of the saints, declaring their great attainments, are in our mouths, though they may be far from being applicable to our present case; as when the psalmist says, *My heart is fixed, O God; my heart is fixed. I understand more than the ancients.*” The author of an Examination, &c. page 49, 50.

With respect to the second principle on which we proceed in singing such passages of the psalms as the objector mentions, we observe, that there is hardly any figure of speech more commonly used, than that by which an individual,

is chargeable with gross misrepresentation in his remarks on this passage. He says, "That according to it we should sing the sayings of others professedly as our own, though they should be ever so wicked; or that the worshippers of God should declare in his presence, that their heart is fixed, while it is wandering and unsteady." It is amazing how he could put such a construction upon the passage which he had quoted, since the sentence immediately before that which he quotes, declares, that, with regard to such instances, the words which we sing are to be considered, *not as our own*, but as the words of others. He represents the writer of that passage as following the example of Satan quoting scripture, in Mat. iv. 6. because, in quoting the words of the church's enemies in the lxxxiii. psalm, he had left out the words, *They have said*. A little candor would have led the examiner to observe one difference between Satan's manner of quoting in the text referred to, and that quotation upon which he remarks: which is, that what is left out in the latter, is plainly implied and intended to be understood, but it is not so in the former. It is evident, that the examiner here proceeds upon his own principle, namely, that singing and praying are alike, except as to the manner of performance; and that our singing a passage does in itself imply, that we consider it as applicable to our own case. He could not be ignorant, that the writer of the Discourse was far from admitting such a principle, as having declared his persuasion, that we are to consider the words which we sing as the words of the *Holy Spirit*; that we are to apply them to ourselves as far as they are justly applicable to our own case; and that otherwise we are to sing them, not as our own words, but as words given for our instruction.

It is supposed, that there are few readers who will not see the unfairness of imputing to the author of the Discourse consequences which only follow from principles which he had openly and utterly rejected.

Perhaps to some it may appear inconsistent, that the same words should be considered as the words of the Holy Spirit, and also as the words of David and other saints; or as the words of the church or of her enemies. But this difficulty is removed by observing, that they are to be considered, principally as the words of the Holy Spirit, having been all dictated by him; and, secondarily, as the words of those who penned them; and also of those whose character and exercise is therein represented, with infallible certainty and precision.

vidual, or particular, is considered as representing the whole species or kind. *The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming*; that is, all the birds of each of these kinds are led by their several instincts to do so. By this figure, a particular thing is often made use of as the representative of a general, even with respect to times and places, in which the particular so employed does not exist. Thus, when the merciful providence of God turns wars into peace, it may still be said, *He breaks the bow, and burns the chariot in the fire*; though every one knows that neither bows nor chariots are now used in war. A people who enjoy the blessings of civil liberty, and of being governed by laws made by their own consent, may be said to sit, *every man under his vine and under his fig tree*; and little regard would be due to the frigid remark, that there is not a vine or a fig tree to be seen among them. Thus, it may be said of the author of a pathetic song or ode,

He wakes to extacy the living lyre;

though it be well known he never saw the musical instrument so called. Thus, the musical instruments mentioned by the psalmist, the harp, the psaltery, the timbrel, being, under the law, among the appointed means of praising the Lord, are to be considered as representing other means of praising him, such as the gifts and graces bestowed on church members. The bringing of offerings and whole burnt offerings, being, under the Old Testament dispensation, *one* appointed way in which church members were then to testify their faith and obedience, is sometimes employed to represent the other appointed ways of expressing their faith and obedience, such as prayer and thanksgiving. And whatever comfort and refreshment the Lord grants his people in attending on his ordinances, is represented by the particular comfortable refreshment that some of the people of Israel enjoyed in going from distant parts of the land to celebrate their annual solemnities, *who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well; the rain also filling the pools*. To illustrate the application of this principle to the passages quoted in the objection a little more particularly, we observe, that a christian, suitably exercised in reading or singing the

150th psalm, in which men are called upon to praise the Lord with the psaltery and harp, with the timbrel and dance, with stringed instruments and organs, and upon the high sounding cymbals, will consider, that the praise here meant is the indispensable duty of all reasonable creatures; and therefore it is not to be understood only of that mode of praising by the use of musical instruments, which, after the time of David, appears to have been confined to the service of the temple; and which we have reason to consider as a ceremonial form of worship. He will therefore conclude, that the exercise, to which we are here called, is that of glorifying God with our bodies and spirits which are his; and that the psalmist uses such an enumeration of particulars, and such a vehemence of repetition, to signify that we are to praise him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.\* With respect to the close of the 51st psalm, he will see, that the offerings and whole burnt offerings of bullocks, with which the Lord is said to be pleased, cannot be understood of the outward rites merely, of which the psalmist says in a foregoing verse, *Thou desirest not sacrifice; thou delightest not in burnt offerings.* He will therefore infer, that what the Lord was well pleased with in the bringing of offerings, and whole burnt-offerings, under the Old Testament dispensation, was (what is exceptable to him still) the sincere expressions of faith in Christ, and of obedience to him: And he will be assisted by recollecting, that, in the New Testament, Christ is called *an altar*, and believers are said to be *an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* Again, when he sings these words in the 3d verse of the 84th psalm, *the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest, &c.* he will naturally be led to some such meditation as this: Christ faith to his disciples, *Fear not; ye are of more value than many sparrows.* My King and my God supplies the wants of

\* *Vos estis tuba, psalterium, cythara, tympanum, organum et cymbala jubilatiōis bene sonantia, quia consonantia. Vos estis hec omnia Nihil vile, nihil transitorium, nihil hic ludicrum vel lubricum; et quia sapere secundum carnem mors est, omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.* That is, "Ye are the trumpet, the harp, the organ, and the cymbals of joy, that are well sounding, because agreeing together. Nothing vile, transitory, ludicrous, or vain, is meant here; and since it is death to be carnally minded, let every one with the spirit praise the Lord." *Augustine on the place.*

of the sparrow and the swallow; and will he not much more satisfy that ardent desire of communion with himself in his ordinances, which he hath created in my soul? Farther, when he sings of the blessedness of those who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well, he blesses God for the refreshment which he affords his people in their diligent attendance on him in his ordinances.

If it be still insisted, that some things are left out in our application of such passages, which was included in the application of them by church members under the Old Testament, we answer, that what represents a whole kind, is to be understood as applied to more or fewer of the particulars comprehended in that kind, according to the occasion on which the application is made. Thus, it may be justly said, that the people of God offer to him the evening and morning sacrifice; though the word *sacrifice* does not include, in its present application, all that might have been included in its application under the Old Testament. The truth is, if, in singing a psalm or hymn, it be unwarrantable to leave out any thing in the application of it to our own case, which was included in the application of it when it was composed, then we can hardly ever find a psalm or hymn which we may warrantably sing: For how can we be sure, that we apply the words sung to all things to which they were at first applied in the mind of the composer? And if it be unwarrantable for persons to sing a psalm, unless they include all things in their application of it, which any person ever did, or does include in the application of it, we may justly ask, considering the variety of cases and capacities among men, where shall we find psalms which may be warrantably sung by a whole family or congregation? On the other hand, if it be allowed, that we may sing a hymn, applying the substance or principal import of it to ourselves, though some things in a former application of it be left out; then why may we not sing the passages of the psalms mentioned in the objection, applying to ourselves the substance or what was chiefly intended for the edification of the church and people of God, and setting aside from our application what would imply the present practice of the ceremonial shadow?

OBJECTION. It is not denied, that we may sing *some* of the psalms, but that we may sing them all; for "many of  
" them

“ them so excellently express the exercises of a pious and  
 “ devout heart, and sublimely extol the Most High, with-  
 “ out any reference to the peculiarities of that dispensation  
 “ which is now abolished, that they contain matter proper  
 “ to be sung to the end of the world.”

ANSWER. It is true, that some of the psalms may be more  
 suitable to the present case of a person or people, than others.  
 Some are more adapted to an afflicted condition, others to a  
 prosperous one. Some may be called penitential, and others  
 thanksgiving psalms. And persons are at liberty to fix on  
 such of the psalms for their present use, as they find to be  
 most applicable to their present case or frame of mind. But  
 it does not follow, that some of the psalms may, and others  
 may not be sung: For it is not unwarrantable to sing other  
 psalms than those that are applicable to our present case.  
 However small progress we have, as yet, made in true god-  
 liness, we ought not to decline singing the psalms which re-  
 present the high attainments of the saints recorded in scrip-  
 ture; and blessing God for all the grace bestowed on any of  
 Adam's family. Though we seem to be in a comfortable  
 condition, it may be profitable for us to sing the mournful  
 strains of the psalmist, that we may be prepared for a day  
 of trouble, and may know what temptations are common  
 to the people of God. Nor are we to be deterred from  
 singing the psalms which express the satisfaction of God's  
 people in the execution of his wrath upon his and their final-  
 ly impenitent enemies; though some, forgetting, that the  
 words we sing are not our own, but the words of the Holy  
 Ghost, mistake and reproach the exercise, as if we were there-  
 in cursing our personal enemies, or as if the Holy Spirit  
 might dictate songs either under the Old or New Testa-  
 ment, breathing a spirit of revenge; a sort of songs which  
 ought to be ascribed to him *who was a murderer from the  
 beginning.*

The objector seems to insinuate, that “ any reference to  
 “ the peculiarities of that dispensation which is now abol-  
 “ ished,” is sufficient to render a psalm unfit for modern  
 worship: for he represents the psalms that are now proper to  
 be sung, as “ without any reference to those peculiarities:”  
 and thus, according to him, any reference to the peculiar-  
 ities of the Old Testament dispensation, (though the language

of the New Testament abounds with such references) is sufficient to render a psalm unfit to be sung in our worship.

Error always loves to involve itself in ambiguous and indeterminate expressions. Those that have spoken or written against the singing of the scripture psalms, do not expressly say which of them it is sinful to use in New Testament worship. Surely they ought to have been explicit on this head, and to have given us an expurgatory index of the condemned psalms. For if the singing of some of the psalms be a mere peculiarity of the Old Testament dispensation, like the offering of sacrifices, or the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, then, to be sure, we have much need to be well apprized which are, and which are not the abrogated psalms. It is true, the Jewish converts were borne with for a while in their attachment to some of their old ceremonies. But it does not appear, that this indulgence was continued to any, after the canon of scripture was closed. So that, if the singing of the Old Testament songs be mere Judaism, it must now be a dangerous, nay, a pernicious custom.

We now proceed to a fourth observation, which is, *That as verse translations are necessary for the use of churches in their solemn worship; so those ought to be preferred that most exactly represent both the matter and form of the scripture songs.* Men may use whatever freedoms they judge proper with other books written in foreign languages, in order to adapt them to the taste of the people for whom they are translated; but such freedoms are altogether illicit in translating the holy scriptures. "The original text," to use the words of Mr. John Canne, to whom the lovers of the bible are indebted for his judicious marginal references, "ought to be translated, as much as possible, even word for word, without departing from the letter of the scripture in the least. For it is necessary to preserve the letter entire, how inconvenient, yea, how absurd soever and harsh it may seem to men's carnal reason; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men. The scripture metaphors must not be omitted, nor mis translated one for another. Many words of scripture, which to some may seem unfruitful, and afford not much matter in the letter,

“ letter; yet, according to the manifold wisdom of God, “ have an excellent meaning of the Spirit in them. ‘The “ original particles are so to be minded, and special notice “ taken of them, as a thing of great concernment to shew “ the connexion of text and context.’” Such are the principles upon which every translation of the sacred writing ought to be formed. It ought to represent, not merely the sense, but the very words of the original. Not that we are to have any superstitious regard to one language above another, or to any set of sounds or syllables; but, as we believe that the words of the sacred writings were dictated by the Holy Spirit, so we believe that these words, having been chosen by infinite wisdom, are the fittest and the best whether they be considered in relation to the things taught or in relation to those whom they were designed to teach. Hence it follows, that of two translations, of which the one is free, purposely representing the sense only, and the other literal, or, as much as possible, word for word, the latter ought, without hesitation, to be chosen; both because the latter way of translating bids fairest to preserve the whole sense of the original, and because it shews the most becoming regard to the choice which the wisdom of God has made of words to express what he has been pleased to reveal to us. A verse translation of the scripture-songs, designed for the use of the church in her solemn worship, ought to be formed upon the same principles. None of the original words ought to be neglected; the supplements ought to be few, and such as are plainly implied in the original words. Such a verse translation will give us the scripture-songs entire; the same beginning and ending; the same order of sentences, and of members of sentences, as in the sacred original. It is not the business of the translator to think how he himself would choose to express what he takes to be the sense of the psalmist, or how it may be accommodated to men’s supposed refinement of taste, or even to the state of the church under the New Testament dispensation. It ought to be his only concern, that each word in the original may have an exactly corresponding word or phrase in his translation; its relation to the words going before and following being the same in both. Such a translation will give us, not the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy

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ly Spirit teacheth. We do not say, that we have, or expect a verse translation absolutely faultless: but that such a one as adheres the most closely to the principles now laid down, is to be preferred, as giving us not only the matter but the words of the Holy Spirit.

**OBJECTION.** Still the form is merely human, unless we suppose the translator was inspired, when he versified the psalms, and that the Holy Spirit dictated to him the very phrases and measure of the verse.

**ANSWER.** The esteem of a translation of the scripture-songs according to the degree in which it corresponds, not only in the matter, but in the form, with the original, is a very different thing from pretending that it was made by immediate divine inspiration; its exactness being the fruit of learning, of assiduous application to the study of the holy scriptures, and of that assistance which the Lord ordinarily affords his people in whatever work he calls them to. It cannot be denied, that the mode of speaking, such as, affirmation, exhortation or prayer; the method, as it is pointed out by Mr. Henry, or any other judicious commentator; the metaphors and similies; the number of verses and members of verses, belong to the form of the psalms: And who will be so absurd as to say, that all these cannot, without inspiration, be preserved in a translation? All these, however, were divinely chosen; and whoever calls them merely human, cannot be free from the guilt of reproaching the divine word. There are some purposes which the original text alone can answer: Such as, those of correcting translations, of vindicating the true reading, and, in fine, of exhibiting the revelation which God hath given us in full perfection. But still it remains a truth, that so far, as the words of any translation are exactly answerable to those of the sacred original, they are as really the words of the Holy Ghost, as the Hebrew or Greek words; and are as profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness. With respect to the circumstance of the versification used for the conveniency of singing, it is by no means incompatible with a due care to retain the inspired form of the psalms as now described. Take the first psalm in the version authorized by the church of Scotland for an example. Whatever faults may be charged up-

on that translation, they are not such as arise from a designed neglect of the phraseology of the sacred original. Every part of it manifests a religious regard to the principles now laid down.

OBJECTION. Is it not an ordinary practice of ministers and private Christians, in selecting a passage to be sung on any occasion, to take such verses of the psalms as they judge to be suitable? Is not this much the same with what Dr. Watts has done in his Imitation? In this case, the form indeed is human, but the matter is divine.

ANSWER. With respect to the distinction between matter and form, as applied to the present subject, it may be said of any declaration of scripture truths, such as the Westminster Confession of Faith, that the matter is divine; but of a passage of scripture exactly recited, that it is divine both in matter and form. In the Imitation now mentioned, there are such transpositions and omissions of the matter of the psalms, and such a continual affectation of a style different from that of the psalms, that it is quite obvious the author did not intend to retain their inspired form. Ministers or Christians, in the case mentioned by the objector, take a psalm, or part of a psalm, which, as it was given by divine inspiration, they judge to be suitable to the present occasion. But this practice has no connexion with the attempt of Dr. Watts, to set aside the whole book of psalms, as it was given by divine inspiration, from the public praises of the church, and to substitute in its place a number of hymns, in which the matter of the psalms is left out, or admitted as the author thought fit. We do not say, that it is unlawful to write or read such hymns; but that it is inconsistent with that peculiar estimation in which we ought to hold the word of God, to use them as a substitute for the book of psalms; as if the declared design for which that book was given by the Holy Spirit, could be better answered by these hymns, than by the book itself.\*

The

\* With what sort of justice the author of a Discourse on Psalmody, page 102. pronounces the above illustration of the fourth observation, "Bold assertion without reason or scripture," the candid reader is desired, after a serious perusal, to judge. When we read what he adds about the songs of Moses and Deborah; as if he

## The SECOND PROPOSITION.

That the scripture-songs are the only forms of psalmody which ought to be used in the solemn and public worship of the church.\*

THE FIRST ARGUMENT we shall offer in support of the proposition now laid down, proceeds upon this principle: *That all ways or means of worshipping God, not appointed in his word, are to be rejected; that is, all such as cannot be shewn, either by the express words of scripture, or by a necessary consequence arising from the words of it, to be divinely instituted.* In vain, saith God, do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle: For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewn thee in the mount. We are to use as little freedom with the scriptural frame of instituted worship, as Moses was to use with the pattern of the tabernacle. How can we suppose that a seemingly small deviation is less dangerous in the latter than in the former case? The circumstance of putting the ark in a new cart, seemed to be but a small departure from the divine appointment, by which the priests were to bear it upon their shoulders; yet we see how awfully that error was punished by the death of Uzzah: An effecting example,

he meant to infer, that, because these inspired persons did not adhere to the language of a history, when they were not translating it, but only referring to it in a different sort of composition; therefore those who are uninspired should not adhere to the language of the sacred poetry, when they are translating it, and using the same sort of composition; we wonder among what class of readers the author expected that this would pass for argument.

\* The author of an Examination, &c. page 23. says, "This proposition, in reality, contains the main point in debate." But in page 48. he owns, that this is only a corollary to a previous proposition, namely, that God hath given the scripture-songs to be sung in the solemn worship of the church to the end of time; or in other words, that the singing of the scripture-songs is not abrogated under the New Testament dispensation. Now, the main point in debate is not the corollary, but the proposition from which it follows.

ample, which teaches us, that men will not be able to excuse their attachment to human devices in the worship of God, by alleging, as Uzzah might have done, that they meant well. They may expect to hear God saying to them, *Who hath required these things at your hand?*

*But the singing of other compositions than those which the Holy Spirit hath given us in the scriptures, under the designation of psalms or songs, is a way or mean of worshipping God, not appointed in his word; there being no precept or example of the word, from which it can be justly inferred, that the Lord Christ ever appointed any other to be sung in the ordinary solemn worship of the church.*

This is a native consequence of what was shewn under the former proposition, namely, that it is still the duty of the church to use that system of psalmody which was delivered to the church under the Old Testament; and is further apparent from the inconclusiveness of the arguments which have been attempted to be drawn from some places of scripture, for the singing of other compositions in New Testament worship. The principal of these places we now propose to consider in answering the following exceptions.

EXCEPTION 1st. In Col. iii. 16. we are commanded not only to sing psalms, which is the name appropriated to the book of psalms, but also hymns and spiritual songs, which are conceived to mean other compositions as well as the psalms; compositions drawn from *the word of Christ*, a phrase which has a peculiar reference to the New Testament.

ANSWER. It does not necessarily follow from the circumstance of two other names being here used than that of psalms, that any other are here meant than what are found in the book so called. This may be illustrated by a similar example. The Old Testament is most commonly called the scripture, Mark xv. 28. John ii. 22. vii. 58. x. 35. Rom. iv. 3. ix. 17. x. 11. xi. 2. Gal. iv. 30. and the scriptures, Matth. xxi. 42. xxii. 29. xxvi. 54. John v. 39. Luke xxiv. 45. Acts xvii. 2. 11. xviii. 24. Yet the same Old Testament is meant by three several names taken from the parts of which it consists, Luke xxiv. 44. And he said unto them, *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the*

*the psalms concerning me.* It may farther be observed, that the whole Old Testament scripture is called, *the law*, John x. 34. xii. 34. xv. 25. 1 Cor. xiv. 21. yet it is also called, *the law and the prophets*, Matth. v. 17. vii. 12. xxii. 40. In like manner, the psalms, in respect of the various matter and forms of composition to be found in them, may be called psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, corresponding, as many have observed, with the three Hebrew titles of David's psalms, *Mitsmorim, Tebillim, Shirim.* These belong to the word of Christ; for the Old Testament is his word as well as the New: The former testifies of him, and was dictated by his Spirit, to be a perpetual rule to the church of God on earth, as well as the latter.\* It is true, any article of divine truth may be called a word or saying of Christ; as, in the following text: *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me or my words in this adulterous generation, of him shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with his holy angels.*† Hence the words of Christ may be understood of some part of his doctrine, of which we are in danger of being ashamed, on account of the reproach attending the profession of it. But there is no reason to restrict the duty of having the word of Christ dwelling in us, to the scriptures of the New Testament: It was as much a duty before the New Testament was written, as it is now, Psal. cxix. 11.

EXCEPTION 2d. In the fourteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle mentions among the spiritual gifts of the Corinthians, that of dictating a psalm to be sung in public worship, (compare verses 15 and 16.) Now if Christians should sing no compositions in the worship of God but those contained in the book of psalms used by the Jews, there would be no need, nay, there would be no room for a spiritual gift, i. e. extraordinary inspiration, to enable them to propose a psalm to be sung in divine worship; for, upon this supposition every composition they should use, was written for them long ago.

ANSWER. The words of the apostle are these, verse 15. *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.* Verse 26. *How is it then brethren? When ye*  
*come*

\* John v. 39. 2 Pet. i. 19.

† Mark viii. 38.

come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. We may observe, that the exercise here meant by *having a psalm*, considered in itself, must have been either extraordinary, as being the peculiar effect of immediate inspiration, or something of an ordinary nature, which may be ordinarily attained in the use of means.

1. If the having of a psalm was in itself extraordinary, as being the peculiar effect of immediate inspiration, an effect that could proceed from nothing else; such as *revelation*, one of the particulars here mentioned, undoubtedly was; in this case, even supposing that *the having of a psalm* signified the dictating of one to be sung in public worship, yet the objector's consequent, namely, that the gift of dictating psalms to be sung in public worship is still in the church, will by no means follow. We might as well plead, from the gift of foretelling future events by immediate revelation, then existing in the church, that the same gift exists in it still.

2. On the other hand, if the having of a psalm was in itself something of an ordinary nature, that may still be attained in the use of ordinary means, such as the having of a doctrine or interpretation cannot be denied to be, then there is nothing to hinder us from understanding the phrase in question, of the discerning and proposing such a psalm as was most exactly adapted to the state and exigence of the church; and that this might be the case, appears the more reasonable, if we consider, what divines generally allow, that the principal business of the prophets in the time of the apostles was to explain the prophecies of the Old Testament, and to shew the agreement thereof with the doctrine of the apostles and evangelists.\* “But,” says an objector, † “there could be  
“ no need, nay there could be room for a spiritual gift, *i. e.*  
“ extraordinary inspiration, to enable them to propose a  
“ psalm to be sung in divine worship.” But why is there no  
need,

\* Singularem sacrarum literarum peritiam præditi, extraordinario Spiritus dono, antiquas prophetias interpretantur, ea quæ facta narrabantur ab apostolis et evangelistis conferentes cum præcis vaticiniis, et ex illis ostendentes ita fieri debuisse. *Witsius de prophetis*, cap. xxi.

need, no room for a spiritual gift in the case? All the answer that can be given is, that such an acquaintance with the psalms, and such a discernment of their meaning and suitability to the state of the church, as would be necessary for directing church members to a psalm exactly suited to their present case, may be attained by the use of ordinary means. But it is plain, that, in this respect, there was as little need or room for a spiritual or extraordinary gift to enable them to have some of the other particulars here mentioned, such as a doctrine or an interpretation. Nor is there any thing in the scope of the apostle here to hinder us from taking these words, *having a psalm*, in the sense now mentioned: since the disorder which the apostle reproves would be the same, whether the psalms they had were old or new. Besides, it is highly proper to observe here, that the expression *having a psalm*, taken abstractly, is not equivalent to that of dictating a new psalm; because when we have found, that there is nothing in the analogy of faith, or in the circumstances of the text, requiring such a particular interpretation, we should then inquire, whether the precise grammatical signification of the words renders it necessary.

We only add here, that the use of an extraordinary spiritual gift in delivering a doctrine or an interpretation, or in selecting and proposing a suitable psalm, might answer the end of such a gift; as, in these exercises, it afforded immediate and infallible direction, and this might serve both as a sign for confirming the truth of Christianity, and as a mean of supplying that light which was yet to arise from the completion of the canon of scripture.

EXCEPTION 3d. Inspired forms of psalms are not necessary under the New Testament dispensation, and therefore we are not to be confined to the singing of them in solemn worship. The gracious Saviour has provided and left us his word, and by the influences of his Spirit sufficient furniture of light, gifts and graces, for all the parts of religious worship, without leaving a system or liturgy, in the precise words of which we should either pray, or praise, or preach.

ANSWER. The necessity of our using any thing as a mean of worshipping God, arises from his own appointment: And therefore the supposition of our having ever so many other things which seem to us sufficient to supply the place of  
that

that mean, can do nothing to prove that it is not necessary in point of duty ; unless these other things were proved to be not only existing, but appointed to supply the place of that mean, and inconsistent with the continued use of it. Thus some are always declaiming on the importance of heart-religion, in order to dissuade people from adhering to any particular form of worship or church-government : But all such declamation must go for nothing with every serious inquirer, while a steadfast adherence to that particular form of worship and church-government, which God hath appointed in his word, instead of being inconsistent, is intimately connected with heart-religion. In like manner, our having the complete canon of scripture, and our being furnished with light, gifts and graces, are no way inconsistent with the singing of the scripture-songs in solemn worship; but rather serve to enable us to sing them with more propriety and spiritual advantage.

On the principle of the exception, there was no necessity for an inspired system of psalms even under the Old Testament : For church members, particularly such as were employed in the public administration of holy things, might then, as well as now, by the light of the word and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which enabled them to teach and pray, have also composed psalms or hymns for solemn worship, without that infallible direction and immediate inspiration of God, which were peculiar to the penmen of the holy scriptures. Yet it does not appear, that any of them ever attempted to do so, or that, in such an attempt, they would have been accepted of God, or approved of his church : For it is evident, that the songs given by inspiration of the Spirit, were the only songs used in the worship of the Jewish church. Hezekiah might have directed the priests and Levites to compose hymns for themselves, suitable to the time, if he had not been convinced, that they had no call from God to do so ; and if he had not found a divine suitability in the words of David and Asaph, to the case of the church then, as well when they were written.

With respect to the use of a precise form of words, there is a manifest difference between the case of joint singing in solemn worship, and the cases of prayer and preaching. There can be no joint singing without a prescribed form of

words; but who will say, that a prescribed form of words is as necessary in preaching or joint prayer? We have produced a scripture example of the words of David and of Asaph being sung in the ordinary solemn worship of the church, hundreds of years after they were first delivered: But where have we a scripture example of praying or preaching, in the ordinary solemn worship of the church, by the mere repetition of a prescribed form of words? The gifts requisite to public preaching, such as, an ability to divide the word rightly, aptness to teach, &c. shew that preaching must be something else than the mere repetition of a form of words. Accordingly, the Lord promises to give his people pastors who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding.\* In like manner, with respect to prayer, the assistance of the Holy Spirit is promised in this more particularly and expressly, than in other duties: so that we have ground to hope that he will direct us to right matter, to suitable petitions and arguments, as well as to the right manner of praying.† But where have we a precept or promise to direct or encourage the ordinary office-bearers or other members of the church, to compose psalms or hymns to be sung, instead of the inspired forms of psalms and hymns, in the ordinary solemn worship of the church? ‡

Those

\* 2 Tim. ii. 15. Titus i. 9. Jer. iii. 19.

† Zech. xii. 10. Rom. viii. 26.

‡ This paragraph has been represented as wide of the mark; as it does not prove the necessity of an inspired form of praise in the New Testament worship: But if the passage quoted from a Sermon on the Duty of Praise, had any colour of argument against that necessity, it must have been to this purpose; That, as the furniture which Christ affords his church, renders an inspired form of words unnecessary in prayer and preaching, it does so also in singing praise. In this case, to point out the difference between the exercise of praying or preaching, and that of singing, and to shew that it is quite unfair to reason from the former to the latter, with respect to the necessity of an inspired form of words, was, one should think, to hit the mark. It was impertinent to class prayer and preaching with singing, if he did not mean to represent them as alike with respect to the matter in question. But, perhaps, the author is only practising the stratagem of some birds, who, when you come near their nest, fly away to a considerable distance from it, in order to draw you from the place.

Those who plead for the use of set forms of prayer in public worship, attempt to argue for them from the use of such forms in singing. But there is a specific difference between prayer and singing. We allow that reading or singing the word of God ought to be accompanied with inward or ejaculatory prayer, suitable to what is read or sung. But it no more follows that singing is prayer, than that reading is so: And if singing in solemn worship, and prayer, were the same as to the subject matter, and differed only *in the manner of performance*, then, the singing of a psalm or hymn, in which there is no direct address to God, no petition, confession or thanksgiving, and consequently no prayer, (as in the first and second, and several other psalms) would properly be no singing at all; a supposition as absurd as it is contrary to the scripture, and the sense of the Christian church. Joint singing in solemn worship seems to be rather an expression of our joint acquiescence in the matter sung, as a subject of instructive and believing meditation, than what is, properly speaking, joint prayer. Hence our pious ancestors in Britain, justly complained of the custom in some English cathedrals of singing their prayers. It may be added, that it is no small presumption against the practice of praying by set forms, that the psalms which, of all the parts of scripture, have most the appearance of such forms, are given to the church for another purpose.

The SECOND ARGUMENT which we offer, for our singing no other than the scripture-psalms in solemn worship, proceeds upon this principle, *That if the inspired psalms be of a sufficient number and variety, no other ought to be sung in solemn worship.* By the number and variety of the psalms being sufficient, we mean, that we do not need a greater number or variety, even in the present state of the church, for attaining the ends for which this part of solemn worship was appointed; particularly, for expressing our sense of the Lord's wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth, in his way of dealing with the church and her members; and for encouraging ourselves and one another in a stedfast adherence to truth and duty; and for promoting spiritual affections, such as, holy admiration of the glori-

ous excellencies and works of God, joy in his salvation, and godly sorrow for sin.

We ought, therefore, to introduce no other psalms into our singing in solemn worship; because the introduction of other forms of psalms than what are necessary for the ends now mentioned, is not requisite in order to a single and acceptable observation of this divine ordinance, however it may gratify humour or vain curiosity.

*But the diligent perusal of the psalms given by divine inspiration, together with the past experience of the people of God, may well convince us, that no more forms of psalmody are necessary, even in the present state of the church, for our attainment of the ends now mentioned.* Such is the variety of matter in the book of psalms, that there is no article of scripture doctrine, which they do not, implicitly at least, contain; no gracious exercise or experience of a believer in his various personal trials and deliverances, which they do not exemplify: and with regard to true patriotism, or zeal for the church's welfare, the purest spirit of it breathes in the psalms.\*

EXCEPTION 1st. "Those scriptures which teach us to  
 " pray and praise, and indeed to do all our acts of religious  
 " worship in the name of the Lord Jesus, in such a manner  
 " as our Lord himself expressly tells his disciples they  
 " had never done before, most evidently shew us, that christ-  
 " tians should not confine themselves to the forms of wor-  
 " ship used under the former dispensation; but that, in  
 " prayer, praise, &c. they should have, according to the  
 " light and fulness of the gospel, a more express reference  
 " to the name, the person and offices of the Lord Jesus  
 " Christ, than is to be found in any discoveries or  
 " compositions under the law. If we confine ourselves  
 " to the psalms of David, we shall exclude from our songs  
 " of praise the distinguishing glories of the gospel, and still  
 " hold the veil upon the lovely face of the Redeemer; we  
 " shall ungratefully reject the light, and resolutely continue  
 " in the obscurity of the former dispensation. All this is  
 " evident from the following scriptures: *And whatsoever ye*  
 " *shall ask in my name, saith the Saviour, that will I do, that*  
 the

\* Psalm cxxxvii. 5, 6.

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“ the Father may be glorified in the Son. And again, *Verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you: Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name: Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. The time cometh, when I shall no more speak to you in parables; but shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name.* These are remarkable passages, declaring the duty and the privilege of christians beyond what was discovered to the Jews, or even to Christ’s own disciples before that time—’This was the case in the Jewish worship, and is so still.”

ANSWER I. If it be allowed that there is in the psalms a real reference to the name,\* that is, to the person and offices of Jesus Christ, as the only way of access to, and acceptance with

\* In the former edition of this Discourse, it had been said, that it is unjust to represent the Old Testament church as making no use of the name of Christ in their prayers or praises. The author of an Examination, &c. page 78. replies, “ There is no such expression, nor any from which it can be inferred, in the whole of my sermon. That glorious person is frequently spoken of in the Old Testament, &c. But I did represent, and do now say, that there is not a prayer or song of praise recorded in the Old Testament, which explicitly leads to God through Christ, in such views of, and dependence on him, as the New Testament directs.” An attentive reader must be sensible of unfair dealing here, in two respects: First, in insinuating, that, by the phrase, *making use of the name of Christ in prayer or praise*, something else might be meant than *coming to God through Christ*: whereas, it is plain from the scope of the paragraph, that nothing else could be meant; and therefore, his charge of misrepresentation must be groundless. Secondly, in obscuring the true state of the question, or rather departing from it, by using the word *explicitly*. Now, the question is not, whether the Old Testament is as explicit as the New in leading us to God through Christ? But, whether it as *really* and *certainly* leads us to God through him? And whether it is not necessary to understand it as doing so, particularly in all the prayers and praises of the saints recorded in it? For, if Christ be as really and necessarily to be supposed and understood as the ground of access to, and acceptance with God, in the prayers and praises of the Old Testament, as in those of the New, then there is no real or substantial difference between them in this respect. The scripture teaches not only what is declared in express words, but also whatever is implied or contained in the express words.

with God, as well as in the New Testament; then is the doctrine of the psalms in reality the same with that of the New Testament. The revelation being *more clear* or *express* in the latter than in the former, makes no difference in the matter revealed. Upon this supposition, the scriptures, which teach us to pray, praise, and do all our acts of worship in the name of the Lord Jesus, are nothing against our adherence to the scripture-forms of psalmody; because, in these, the reference to the person and offices of Christ is as real and constantly supposed and proceeded upon in the Old as in the New Testament: And therefore the passages of the New Testament quoted in the exception, being perfectly agreeable to what is *really*, though not always so expressly, contained in the psalms, teach us how to sing them with understanding and spiritual profit. It is evident then, that if it be allowed, that by the scripture-forms of psalmody we *really* praise God in the name of the Lord Jesus, it cannot be argued from the texts that teach us to do all our acts of worship in his name, that other forms of psalmody are necessary, as if our worship, in singing the scripture-songs, had no reference to the name of Christ. The reasoning of the exception, therefore, is either not to the purpose, or it supposes that there was no reference at all to the name of Christ in the forms of psalmody, prayers, and other worship of the church under the Old Testament. But if there was no reference to his name in their worship, it was not for want of a revelation of it: For we are assured, in the 10th chapter of the Acts, and 43d verse, *That to him give all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins.* Surely the witness or testimony of the prophets concerning Christ, necessarily implies in it their declaration of his name: And the Old Testament saints, whose faith undoubtedly corresponded with the testimony of the prophets, must have known and believed, that they would receive the forgiveness of sins through his name; and consequently that, through his name, their persons, prayers, praises, gracious desires, resolutions and aims at walking in the way of duty, would all be accepted with God. Accordingly, the prophets are very particular in declaring his name. See, among other places, Isaiah ix. 6. *His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty*

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God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Jer. xxiii. 6. *This is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Zech. vi. 12. *Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is THE BRANCH.* We find the saints expressly pleading upon his name: *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer: Cause thy face to shine on thy sanctuary for the Lord's sake: Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.\** The names by which Christ is called in the psalms, the Redeemer, the anointed one of Jehovah, the Man of God's right hand, the Priest ordained by the oath of Jehovah, the King and Shepherd of his people, are entirely in the language of the New Testament. Hence it appears, that the writer, from whom the words of this exception are quoted, has fallen, perhaps inadvertently, into a gross impropriety, when he says, "This was the case of the Jewish worship, and is so still;" a way of speaking which would lead us to form our judgment of the worship of the church of God, under the Old Testament, from the superstitious and ridiculous worship of the modern Jews.

With respect to our Saviour's words, *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name*, it is necessary to observe, that in scripture negative expressions are often to be understood comparatively; as when it is said, *By my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them: I will have mercy and not sacrifice: We wrestle not against flesh and blood: We are of yesterday, and know nothing.* The passage now adduced may be understood in the same manner; that is, as if our Saviour had said to his disciples, *Ye have not asked largely and with the full assurance of faith, as my name warrants you to ask.* It does not seem to be so much his design to charge them with not making use of his name, as with being too scanty in their asking: Hence the words, *in my name*, are not repeated, though they are certainly understood, in the following part of the verse—*Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full:* for it is natural to suppose, that he repeats that which he chiefly intended. But even supposing the emphasis

\* Psalm xix. 14. lxxxiv. 9.

emphasis to be laid on the words *in my name*, the expression must still be understood comparatively; as intimating that they had not attained such clear and distinct views of the Redeemer's name, as were necessary to make them ask with that boldness and confidence which they had ground for in his name. To suppose that this expression means, that the disciples before this time were quite ignorant of his name, and made no use of it in prayer as the ground of their access to, and acceptance with God, is quite inconsistent with all those texts which declare, that the disciples, while they followed him in his humiliation, had a saving knowledge of him as the CHRIST, the Son of the living God.\*

The truth is, however small we suppose the light of believers under the Old Testament dispensation, or of the disciples of Christ before his death, we must allow that they had a real and saving knowledge of Christ's name, as that by which alone there could be any acceptable drawing near to God. This they were taught by the first promise, by all the prophets, by the ceremonial law, and, particularly, by the mercy-seat. Without admitting this, we must either suppose, that they came to God in some other way than by Christ, or that they could come unto God by him without the knowledge of his name: And then we will necessarily be led into the opinion, of salvation being attainable by heathens who never heard of his name; an opinion that manifestly tends to the subversion of Christianity. †

2. We

\* A pretended examiner affects to make short work with what is here said concerning our Lord's words, quoted in the exception, by observing, that "the dispute of the writer of this paragraph is with the Saviour." But candid readers will allow that he came too soon to this conclusion: He ought first to have shewn, either that the remark about the use of negative expressions in scripture is false, or that it is misapplied here.

† "I observe, that they who hold that ancient Israel had little hope of eternal life, and no ground for such hope by God's word or promise, do generally incline to think favourably of those they call virtuous heathens; and their wanting this hope and good grounds for it, and the want of its influence in their heart and practice, was not such an essential defect in the religion of the heathens, but that without it they might attain to the pleasing of God, and to future happiness. Whatever arguments be used to guard

2. We are to guard against measuring (as the exception would lead us to do) what is contained in the Old Testament by the actual attainments of church members under that dispensation. We allow that the Old Testament scriptures were suitable to the condition of the Old Testament church, and to the attainments of her members: But not to them *only*; but also to the condition and attainments of the New Testament church, and her members. The apostle declares, concerning all scripture given by inspiration of God, that *it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness.* God never gave any part of his word but for the spiritual profiting of his people in all future generations. With respect to the psalms particularly, though they were, no doubt, adapted to the solemn praises of the Old Testament church and her members; yet it does not follow that they are not adapted to the New Testament church and her members; because the object of the church's praise is the same yesterday to-day and for ever; because the church had the same benefits to sing of, either as past or to come; because God's former dealings with his church and people are a pattern and counterpart of his after-dealings with them; and because the exercises of the saints represented in the psalms, are to be considered as a mould for the exercises of God's people in all succeeding generations.

3. We ought to distinguish between the scriptures of the Old Testament taken by themselves, and the same scriptures taken in connexion with the New Testament. In reading the whole of the Old Testament, and particularly in singing the psalms, we are to make use of the light of the New. By this light we discover not only Christ Jesus, as the great subject of which the Old Testament scriptures testify; but  
also

“ guard against the consequence of these sentiments, yet their  
 “ tendency is, and their consequence will commonly be, with  
 “ those who receive them, however there is set before themselves  
 “ the revelation and promise of eternal life, that they will be led  
 “ by such notions to think (what the carnality of men's hearts is  
 “ otherwise prone to) that the way to the kingdom of heaven is  
 “ more easy than it is indeed.” *The Scripture Doctrine of Sancti-*  
*fication, by Mr. James Frazer, of Pitcaizain, page 262, 263.*

also the inimitable excellence of the form of those scriptures, as delivered by divine inspiration.

EXCEPTION 2d. Let us suppose a person, who knew not what religion we professed, were to come into our worshipping assemblies week after week, year after year, and hear our songs of praise; would he by them learn the word of Christ, which the apostle enjoins us to teach, particularly in our praises? Or rather would he not, from this part of our religious services, form the same opinion of us that he would of an assembly of worshipping Jews?

ANSWER. We have already shewn, that the distinction between the Old and New Testament dispensation, does not lie in the forms of psalmody to be used in solemn worship; the Holy Spirit having given us a system of them in the Old Testament, designed for the use of the church till the end of the world. If the modern Jews, and other heretics, abuse the psalms, as they do the other scriptures, we are not on that account to be deterred from the right use of them. As to that part of the exception which respects the teaching of the word of Christ, though we receive instruction in singing, as well as in prayer, yet singing and teaching, formally considered, are to be distinguished.\* Our singing in solemn worship, supposes that we are already somewhat instructed in the first principles of our holy religion: For we can never *sing praises with understanding*, unless we have some previous acquaintance

\* Agreeably to what is here said, the author of a Sermon on Psalmody observes, that reading and singing are distinct ordinances. "In singing praises," says he, "God is the immediate object, and the primary end is to celebrate his supreme glory and perfection, in himself and in his works and ways; in reading, the primary end is instruction and edification." These words sufficiently answers the exception here under consideration. Yet they are not inconsistent with the truth of this proposition, That if the singing of those parts of scripture which were given to be sung, be improper, the reading of them in the way of solemn worship must be so too: For the obscurity, Judaism, &c. of the psalms, must hinder the edification of church members in the latter as well as in the former. It is true, that reading and singing have each of them something peculiar to itself; but the objections against the public singing of the psalms respects what is common to both. For example, both should be accommodated to the capacities of church members, and to the gospel dispensation.

acquaintance with the subject and grounds of them. Though the apostle exhorts christians that were of some standing in the church, to *teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*, he does not say that such singing is the proper way of beginning the instruction of a person who is grossly ignorant. The proposal, therefore, of teaching a stranger the word of Christ by public singing only, is absurd; since he can hardly be expected to profit by this without the previous use of other means. Indeed, neither strangers, nor even such as are brought up among ourselves, will rightly understand the public ordinances, or attain the ends of them, while they allow themselves in the neglect of the secret reading of the scriptures and secret prayer, of family worship and family catechising. On account of the carelessness of church members in these respects, they have reason to tremble at the threatening which God pronounces against such as are barren in his vineyard.

The THIRD ARGUMENT for the exclusive use of the scripture-songs in the solemn praises of the church, proceeds upon this principle; *That such is the superior excellence of the scripture-songs, that no other can justly be considered as equal to them, or sufficient to answer the same purposes.* "Let the writings of men contain ever so many valuable truths, we are not ashamed to declare, that never man spake like God."\*

No other forms of psalmody can approve themselves to the spiritual taste of christians like the scripture-songs. For the truths of God's word (though always sweet to the renewed taste) are like water, which is said to be sweetest when drunk immediately out of the fountain. There is an authority, a majesty, a spiritual savour, a richness in the words of the Holy Spirit, which it is in vain to expect in any other.

Besides, we have the best ground to look up to God for his special blessing upon the words, which, by his immediate inspiration, he hath put into our mouths; and to trust that they will prove a vehicle or mean of conveying the quickening and refreshing influences of the Holy Spirit to our souls. It consists with the experience of God's people, that the

\* Declaration and Testimony, by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, part iii. art. 6.

the Holy Spirit usually gives them the most sensible relief, and effectual counsel and comfort, by bringing to their remembrance, by opening and applying his own words. But what reason have we to expect that he will co-operate with men's words, introduced into that place which he hath appointed his own words to occupy?

Here we are told, that we may as well plead the excellence of the words of scripture for our using no other words in praying or preaching, than those of the prayers and discourses recorded in scripture. But we have already pointed out the difference between the exercises of prayer and preaching and that of singing: We may only observe here, that, in order to give this objection any force, it must be necessary to shew, that the suitable performance of the duties of prayer and preaching requires the use of a set form, as much as public and joint singing does; and that God hath given us a book of sermons by which to preach, or a book of prayers by which to pray, as he hath given us a book of psalms by which to sing. What we insist upon is, not that inspired forms should be used in those religious exercises in which no forms are necessary; but that, in any exercise wherein some forms, either humanly devised or inspired, must necessarily be used, the inspired forms, on account of their divine authority and excellence, ought to be preferred.

The LAST ARGUMENT we offer, arises from *the dangerous consequences of the new scheme of using other than the scripture-songs in solemn worship*. The advocates for this scheme profess that they have a great esteem and veneration for the scripture-songs, and that all they plead for is the lawfulness of using human compositions in conjunction with them. But it is manifest, that the use of such compositions, once introduced into solemn worship, tends to exclude the scripture-songs altogether. Accustomed to other forms of psalmody in solemn worship, people will gradually have less relish for the scripture-songs, and less disposition even to read or meditate on them. Thus, the worshipping of saints, having been introduced into the church of Rome, supplanted in a great measure the worship of God, to which it was at first considered only as a consistent and subordinate addition.

Further,

Further, the advocates for the use of human compositions in the public praises of the church, have been led to speak blasphemously of the scripture-songs, calling them Jewish psalms, cursing psalms, and the like; and also to disparage the whole Old Testament, teaching that it does not direct perishing sinners to our Lord Jesus Christ as the only way of their access to, and acceptance with God, or to make use of his name as their great plea with God; and that the New Testament alone (and consequently not the Old) declares the worship and ordinances which the King and Head of the church hath appointed for his followers now.\* Such tenets used to be stigmatised in the protestant churches as belonging to the Socinian system.† Indeed they accord well with the blasphemous

\* A Sermon on Psalmody, page 15. 35.

† The following extract from the work of a Dutch divine, who flourished in the beginning of the present century, may satisfy the reader of the truth of what is here asserted; the book being only a short view of the common doctrine of the protestant churches. *Perperam Sociniani Volunt, &c.* “The Socinians erroneously hold, that the following things were added under the New Testament: 1. The worship of the Son; though it was expressly enjoined under the Old Testament, Psalm ii. 12. *Kiss the Son*; and exercised, Gen. xviii. 6. *The Angel who redeemed me from all evil, &c.* 2. The worship of the Father in the Son as Mediator; which was also enjoined under that dispensation; faith in the Messiah being prescribed, Hab. ii. 3. *The just by his faith shall live*; and exercised, Psalm lxxx. 16, 18. *Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.* Dan. ix. 17. *For the Lord's sake.* 3. The duty of praying; which was enjoined, Psal. i. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble*; and exercised by all the saints. 4. That form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called, the Lord's Prayer; which is no new duty, but only a help in discharging an old one; nor indeed contains any thing new as to things, or the order of them.” *Marckii, Christiani Theologi Medulla.*

“The Anabaptists,” says another systematic writer, “think that the Old Testament is now abrogated; because we are said to be not under the law, but under grace; confounding the law with the Old Testament. The Socinians are of the same opinion, because they maintain, that the religion of the Old Testament is essentially different from the religion of the New; in regard, that under the Old Testament, men were saved by the observation of the law, while we are saved by the observation of the gospel. They think,

blasphemous opinions, that Christ is not truly and properly God, and that he was no King or Head of the church before his incarnation, but by no means with the opposite truths.

Human compositions being introduced into the public psalmody of the church, on this principle, that men may improve upon what God hath appointed in his word, by adapting it better to the present state of the visible church, or by rendering it more conducive to devotion; a door will be thereby opened, for the admission of organs, images, holy days, set forms of prayer, surplices, crossing, or any thing that suits the depraved taste of the multitude.

This,

think, therefore, that the reading of the Old Testament is now not necessary, or at least less useful. On the contrary, the Reformed maintain, that even under the New Testament dispensation, the divine authority of both Testaments is the same; and therefore, that the Old Testament is as necessary and useful to be read as the New. Our reasons are, 1. That the books of the Old Testament are of divine inspiration as well as the New, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.; and therefore of infallible truth and authority. 2. That the Old Testament was given to the church for a rule of faith and manners as well as the New, Mal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Rom. iii. 2. ix. 4. 3. That we do not read of its abrogation in the New Testament. 4. That, on the contrary, it is confirmed by the command of Christ, John v. 39. Matth. v. 17, 18.; by his practice, Luke xxiv. 29.; by his referring to it, Luke xvi. 29.; by the use he continually made of it in refuting his adversaries, Matth. iv. 7. xix. 13. xii. 3, 4. xxii. 29, 43.; which was also the practice of the apostles; of Peter, Acts iii. 20.; of Paul, Acts xviii. 28, &c. 5. That the whole doctrine of the New Testament is contained in the Old. Paul declares, Acts xxvi. 22. that he said no other things than what were contained in the Old Testament: So much is this the case, that the Bereans examined the doctrines of the New Testament by the Old, Acts xvii. 11. To Jesus, indeed, all the prophets are said to bear testimony, Acts x. 40. Luke xxiv. 27. 6. That some articles of our faith are delivered more clearly and at greater length in the Old Testament than in the New; as the articles concerning the creation of the world, the fall of man, &c. 7. That the Old Testament is said to be the foundation of faith, and of the christian church, Eph. ii. 20. Acts xxiv. 14. 8. That the usefulness of the Old Testament is great and manifold even under the New." *Mastricht's Practica Theologia*, Libro primo, capite secundo, sect. xxxv.

This, like other schemes of superstition, may be justly expected to attend a great and general prevalence of ignorance and lukewarmness as to the purity of religion. In such a night season, the enemy will, no doubt, be employed in sowing the tares of damnable heresies; and hymns are likely to be a very insinuating and successful mean of conveying them into the minds of the people, lulled asleep by the charms of poetry and music.

It is vain to say, that the power of godliness prevailed in the early ages of the church, even after the introduction of such hymns into their worship; for we may now see, that this was one of the evils that prepared the way for the grand apostacy, and that were instrumental in promoting it.\* And since

\* The Methodists actually introduce their peculiar doctrines into hymns of their own composition, which they artfully intermix with others that express different doctrines. A few instances may be given. The Arminian doctrine of universal redemption occurs frequently in their hymns:

His soul was once an off'ring made  
For ev'ry soul of man.

*Page 2d. of a pocket hymn book, prefaced by  
Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury.*

What shall I do to make it known,  
What thou for all mankind hast done! Page 126.

Lovers of pleasure more than God,  
For you he suffer'd pain:  
Swearers, for you he spilt his blood,  
And shall he bleed in vain?

*A pastoral Hymn at the beginning.*

The doctrine of perfection in this life is a favourite theme:

Let me in thy Spirit live:  
Live, till all thy life I know,  
Perfect through my Lord below. Page 43.

Let me now in thee,  
A new spotless creature:  
Perfect, when I walk before thee,  
Soon or late, then translate  
To the realms of glory. Page 50.

Let me thy witness live,  
When sin is all destroy'd. Page 87.

- I view

since the reformation attained by the protestant churches, the admission of this and other corruptions into the worship of God, will be far more inexcusable than it was before the rise of antichrist. It seems that the guilt and danger of corrupting the ordinances of Christ by a mixture of human devices, will increase as the time of his second coming draws near. Hence he presses us to a stedfast adherence to our holy profession, from the consideration of the suddenness of his coming; *Behold, I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast.*

### The THIRD PROPOSITION.

That, in the solemn praises of the church, the outward part ought to be conducted with decency and simplicity, in subservience to the spiritual part, which is chiefly to be regarded.

THE decency in the manner of singing, which ought to be studied by worshipping families and congregations, is such a harmony of voices, as may fitly represent an agreement of minds in believing what is sung, and in the exercise of suitable affections.

The proper means of exciting gracious affections, are not the charms of music, but the precious truths of God, as conveyed to us in his own word. It is true, music serves to excite natural affections; but it is delusive to suppose that it will, *in like manner*, excite those that are supernatural and heavenly; for such affections have another spring; they proceed from faith apprehending spiritual things, and particularly Jesus Christ, as set forth in the word. It is *in believ-*  
*ing,*

I view the Lamb, in his own light  
Whom angels dimly see.

As if they excelled the angels!

Another doctrine taught in their hymns, is the liability of true believers to fall away from grace totally and finally:

I rode on the sky  
Freely justified I.

Ah, where am I now?

When was it, or how,

That I fell from my heav'n of grace?

Page 203.

ing, not in the hearing of musical sounds, that the *God of hope fills us with joy and peace*. Hence nothing can be a mean of exciting gracious affections, which is not a mean of enlightening our understandings in the true knowledge of Christ, and of leading us to the exercise of faith in him. Little of the art of music is necessary in religious worship: A few tunes, that are chiefly recommended by their gravity and simplicity, may serve to represent the hearty agreement of gospel worshippers; and to prevent the discomposure and inattention to the matter sung, which is apt to be occasioned by a rude confusion of voices. Those who expect greater advantages from the use of music, as an art, in religious worship, will either find themselves miserably disappointed, or what is infinitely worse, they will take up with some carnal reveries or enthusiastic delusions instead of the exercise of saving grace and spiritual affections. Besides, in that case, they are commonly fond of complicated airs, in which the art is most displayed; but which, in religious worship, manifestly tends to cause that distraction of mind, which a more simple melody would be a proper mean of preventing. The truth is, men are greatly deluded, when they place religion in any particular mode of singing; as when it is reckoned, that God is better served by singing according to what are called *the parts*, or by singing *alternately*, than by a more plain and artless manner of singing; because it never can be shewn, that God has required such particular modes of singing in his worship: And therefore, those who insist upon them, as rendering our worship more acceptable to him, cannot be acquitted of superstition.\*

Upon

\* The scope of this paragraph is expressed in the following sentences of Dr. Owen: "The Papists will, with much earnestness, many evidences of devotion, and sometimes with difficulty and danger, repair to their solemn worship; and yet when they are present, understand not one word, whereby their minds might be excited unto the real actings of faith, love and delight in God. Only order, ceremony, music and other incentives of carnal affections, make great impressions on them. Affections spiritually renewed, are not concerned in these things. Yea, if those in whom they are, should be engaged in the use of them, they would find them means of diverting their mind from their proper work of divine worship, rather than an advantage there-  
" in.

Upon these principles, our British ancestors, (denominated Puritans, or Presbyterians) who, being valiant for the truth upon the earth, did and suffered so much to hand down to us the ordinances of Christ in their purity, condemned the following particulars in the singing of the church of England, particularly in their cathedrals :

*First.* With respect to organs, and other musical instruments, they looked upon the use of them in New Testament worship as quite unwarrantable. It is true, that God was worshipped with instrumental music under the Old Testament dispensation. But this use of it, after the time of David, appears to have been confined to the temple, which was the great theatre of ceremonial worship. This restriction intimated that it belonged to the system of ceremonial rites, which was to be abrogated at the coming of Christ.\*

*Secondly.* Another thing condemned by our ancestors in the worship of the church of England, particularly in their cathedrals, was, that the singing of the divine praises in these churches was restricted to so many persons appointed to that business; others hardly ever joined in the exercise, as not being required by the rules of their cathedral worship. It is represented in scripture as the common duty of church-members,

“in. Real order in the worship of God, that order which is an effect of divine wisdom, is suited and useful unto spiritual affections. *Beholding your order*, Col. ii. 5. Every thing of God’s appointment is helpful and delightful to them. Affections that are spiritually renewed, move not, act not, but as faith discovers their object, and directs them unto it.” *Treatise of Spiritual-mindedness*, page 303, 346, Glasgow edition.

\* *Ecclesia non canit instrumentis inanimatis sed cantu simpliciter, cujus utilitas magna*: that is, “The church does not sing with inanimate instruments, but simply with the voice; which is an exercise of great utility.” *Justin Martyr in libro Questionum et Responsionum*. Justin Martyr, to whom this book is ascribed, lived in the second century. It is generally allowed, that organs were not introduced into the worship of the christian church before the seventh century. “The church,” says Thomas Aquinas, who lived in the thirteenth century, “does not employ musical instruments, such as harps and psalteries, in the divine praises, lest she should seem to Judaize.” “Musical instruments,” says Calvin, “are no more fit to be used in the worship of the christian church, than incense, lamps, and other shadows of the law of Moses.”

members, to sing praises to God, and to speak to themselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. With respect to the Psalmittee or singers mentioned in ecclesiastical history, they were never heard of in the christian church before the fourth century. From the apostolic age till then, singing was a part of public worship, in which the whole body of the church used to join together.\*

*Thirdly.* There were some things in the vocal music of the established church of England, as it was performed in her cathedrals, which our pious ancestors considered as inconsistent with the simplicity of New Testament worship: Such as, the carrying on of different parts of music together, by so many singing one part, and so many another; † and alternate or responsive singing. ‡ Persons would hardly be fond of such modes of singing, if they were exercised like Bernard, who, in his meditations, challenges himself after public worship, for having had more delight in the modulation of the voice, than real compunction of heart; or, like Augustin, who says in his Confessions, “When I find I am more moved with the music than with the matter sung, I confess that I sin most grievously.” The truth is, in these artificial modes of singing, so many are the divisions, repetitions, and pauses; such attention is given to the different parts;

\* Primum, quod in cantu damnamus, est restrictio istius ministerii ad certam classẽ, clericorum, nempe, aliorumque psalatarum selectorum. *Altare Damascenum*, cap. viii.

† Secundum est cantus symphonicus in ecclesiis cathedralibus. Cantus ecclesiæ primitivæ non erat varius et dissonus ex quatuor vocum symphonia et concursu, sed simplex. Deinde inventus est a Gregorio Quinto, circa annum Domini 735, is cantus qui musicalis dicitur, ubi sunt cantores et pueri symphoniaci, qui certe mera est corruptila cantus ecclesiastici, et qui nihil habet pietatis, sed totus ad aurium delectationem comparatus. *Ibid.*

‡ Tertium quod damnamus, est cantus alternatus. Theodorus de Flaviano et Diodoro sic refert: Hi primi, in duas partes divisæ cœtib; psalmos accinentium, insiluerunt alternis Davidicum melodiam decantare; quod Antiochiæ fieri cœptum pervagatum usquequaque est. Theodoritum sequuntur Sigebertus, Pamelius et alii complures. Quisquis est auctor, ipsum institutum non est laudabile; quia non intelligitur plerumque materia. *Ibid.*

parts; such, in short, is the whole ordering of the manner, as if the matter sung were to be very little regarded; and as if the great design was, to exhibit the musical abilities of one part of the congregation, as an entertainment to the other part of it. That strangers may be hereby allured to attend on the ordinances of religion, is a stale apology, which has been used in defence of other popish corruptions. Mr. Pope compares those who regard nothing in what they read but the style, to such as go to church,

Not for the doctrine, but the music there.

It is not to be ordinarily expected, that people of this class will give attention to any thing except what was their principal object. But it is a pity, that, in order to gratify them by lengthening out the singing, that which is the great end of ordinances, the edification of church members, in knowledge and faith, should be hindered.\*

*Fourthly.* The Puritans, or Presbyterians, also complained, that in the cathedrals of the church of England, certain passages in prose were sung, which were neither psalms nor hymns; such as the creed, part of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel of John, &c. The Non-conformists, of whom we now speak, insisted, that the church of England, like the other Reformed churches, should use a verse translation of the psalms; in singing which, a few plain tunes would be all the music necessary for public worship.†

*Fifthly.* They also testified against the singing of human compositions in public worship. They complained, that in many of the churches of England, the hymn, entitled, *Te Deum*, was oftener sung than any of the inspired songs.‡

Such

\* Hoc quoque damnamus, quod tempus hoc exercitio teritur, aliisque decerpitur magis necessariis et nobilioribus. Nobilior modus est provocandi homines ad devotionem per doctrinam et prædicationem, quam per cantum, ait doctor scholasticus. *Ibid.*

† Quintum quod damnamus, est quod canunt non canenda, ut symbolam, &c. *Ibid.* In quibusdam eorum officiis canunt psalmos soluta oratione secundum morem Romanensium. *Ibid.* cap. x.

‡ Hymnes breviarii Romani non retinent, non autem quia non extant in sacra scriptura. Nam canticum, *Te Deum laudamus*, quod non habetur inter cantica, scripturæ, retinent; et quidem ampliori

Such was the testimony of our faithful ancestors against the corruptions of the ordinance of singing, which had obtained in the church established by law in England; a testimony which they held at the hazard of all that was dear to them in the world. And it behoves us to consider, that they bound themselves, and us, their posterity, by solemn oath and covenant, to hold fast every part of scriptural reformation which they had attained.\*

HAVING

ampliori dignantur prærogativa, quam psalmos aut alia cantica. Hoc habent commune cum aliis scripturæ sacræ partibus psalmi et cantica, quod lectioni, meditationi, enarrationi, seu interpretationi inserviunt: hoc singulare quod canenda. *Ibid*, cap. x.

\* That we may be under an additional obligation to endeavour to procure the purity of God's ordinances, by an oath or covenant entered into for that purpose, is the doctrine of the Westminster Confession concerning vows, chap. xxii. sect. 6. Where a vow is declared to be "that whereby we more strictly bind ourselves to necessary duties, so far and so long as they safely conduce hereunto." Thus, as Mr. Durham observes on the third commandment, "though our engagement to moral duties cannot make the obligation of God's command greater, yet we thereby join our approbation, and consent to that whereby, as by a positive, superadded voluntary consent, we bind ourselves: So that in some respect we have two bonds, the law and our oath, for one. The latter makes the former have a deeper impression upon us." But some say, what have we in this land to do with the covenant-engagements that were entered into in Britain? We answer, by observing, that these American churches, which consist either wholly or chiefly of persons, who themselves or their forefathers have been members of the British churches, after these churches had entered into the solemn covenant-engagements in question, cannot be free from the obligation of them: For, with respect to contracts or engagements of a public nature, such as these undoubtedly were, (the matter of them also being no other than moral duty) if the majority of any church be confessedly under the obligation of them, that church itself cannot, consistently with the common law of human society, be denied to be under the same obligation; for if this be denied, it must be for one or other of the following reasons: Either, 1st, Because it was unlawful to enter into these engagements at all: or, 2dly, Because they were binding upon that generation only that entered into them, and not upon posterity: or, 3dly, Because, tho' the present generation in Britain and Ireland be under the obligation of them, yet such of them are freed from

HAVING thus endeavoured to point out some corruptions or abuses in the external part of this exercise, a few things may now be added with respect to the internal and spiritual part of it. While we have the Lord's song in our mouths, we are to make melody to him with our hearts.

In the first place, the spiritual knowledge of what we sing is necessary in this part of divine worship. It is written in the 47th psalm, *Sing ye praises with understanding*. We are chargeable with attempting to mock the Most High God, if we be careless about having a right understanding of his words, which are in our mouths.

The same means should be observed for the understanding of the psalms, which are used for the understanding of other parts of scripture; such as, a careful attention to the signification of the words of the Holy Spirit, to the scope and connection of the passage, and to the analogy of faith; humble

from it as are settled in America: or, 4thly, Because, though it be allowed that the ministry and majority of any church are under the obligation of these engagements, yet the church itself is free from it. But all these reasons are unscriptural and absurd. The first is contrary to the doctrine of the above-mentioned chapter of our Confession, founded on the precepts, promises and examples of God's word, with respect to vowing and swearing to the Lord our God; see Psal. lxxvi. 11. Isai. xix. 18, 21. Ezra. x. Nehem. x. The second is contrary to the common sense of mankind: For when, in any other case, was it ever doubted, that a society, having entered into an oath, (the matter of which is moral duty, and having a manifest respect to posterity) continues, while it is the same society, under the obligation of that oath? It was, by no means, a peculiarity of the people of Israel, but what arises from the common nature of human society, that the covenant which they entered into at Sinai, is all along under the Old Testament represented as obligatory on them. The absurdity of the 3d reason must strike every one who reflects, that the great God, the party sworn to in these engagements, and also the duty (to which they bind us) of holding fast whatever scriptural reformation has been attained, are the same in every part of the world. As to the 4th, it is contrary to the common order of human society, that the majority of the members of a particular church should be under a solemn covenant-engagement to public reformation, and yet the church itself not under it. Thus a professing people, in the circumstance now specified, cannot deny the obligation that they are under from these solemn covenant-engagements, without great absurdity and treachery towards God.

humble and earnest prayer; without neglecting the help which we may receive from the communication of others, by writing or by word of mouth. Persons ought to bring their bibles to the place of worship, that, when a passage is pointed out to be sung, they may immediately turn to it, and carefully observe the words, and the connexion in which they stand.\*

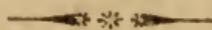
In the next place, the exercise of faith is indispensibly necessary in the exercise of singing the psalms. For they are full of the language of an appropriating faith. *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength; the Lord is my rock and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength, in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower. In God is my salvation and my glory. The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.* We cannot sing such passages aright, without seeking to obtain like precious faith. When we sing in solemn worship, it is necessary that we regard the words we sing, as the words of God; as words given by divine inspiration; as words which God himself puts in our mouths for our use; and on the truth of which we are to rest with full confidence for eternity. It is only as applied by faith, that what we sing becomes profitable to us for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, or consolation. In a word, there are no genuine or acceptable praises of God on earth, but such as are found in the mouth of faith.

Further,

\* This custom, which has long prevailed among Presbyterians, and which some now seem disposed to lay aside, ought undoubtedly to be encouraged: 1. It is often proper for the hearer to read the passage of the psalm, proposed to be sung, in the prose translation. 2. In that sort of discourse, which is commonly called a Lecture, it is proper for the hearer to keep his eye on the verses, while the minister reads them, and points out the design and connexion of them. 3. It is often useful for hearers to mark in their bibles some of the texts quoted in the sermon. 4. People in the country, generally living at a considerable distance from the place of public worship, should have their bibles to make use of in the intervals of worship. They should then be reviewing the passages of scripture which have been discoursed on, and praying for the Lord's blessing on what they have heard, or if they converse with one another, the bible should furnish the subjects of their conversation.

Further, it is necessary to exercise gracious affections in our solemn praises; such as an holy awe and reverence of God, joined with superlative love to him, in singing of his glorious and admirable excellencies, as they are manifested in Christ to his church; an utter abhorrence of sin, and godly sorrow for it, in singing of the guilt and pollution of it; gratitude and holy joy, in singing of salvation through a Redeemer; fear and trembling, in singing of the judgments which he executes upon the ungodly. Here it is still to be remembered, that those spiritual affections cannot otherwise be begun, continued or increased, than by that faith which apprehends him who alone is worthy to be praised, in his own word.

Finally, we are by no means to ground our expectation of profit to our souls in this part of solemn worship, upon any natural connexion that may appear to be between the music and the emotions or passions of our minds: Because the connexion between any outward exercise, and the good of our souls, is purely supernatural; depending upon the appointment and blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit. *The Spirit, saith he, is that which quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*



## A P P E N D I X.

### N<sup>o</sup>. I.

#### *Of the HISTORY of PSALMODY.*

**T**HE following observations are offered, for the removal of some prejudices with respect to the history of psalmody.

I. Though it could be shewn, that the singing of human compositions in the ordinary public worship of the church, obtained as early as the first part of the second century, yet  
this

this would not be sufficient to justify the practice from the charge of superstition. Because (as hath been shewn abundantly by our writers in the Popish and Episcopal controversies) there were various manifest corruptions in doctrine and worship, which, even in that early period, began to prevail in the christian church. Thus, according to Justin Martyr, they mixed the sacramental wine with water; a practice which had nothing in scripture to countenance it. It was then a principal subject of controversy, on what day Easter ought to be celebrated; though there is no divine warrant for the observation of it at all. Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, supposed to have been a disciple of John the apostle, and of great authority among the primitive christians, taught, that after the resurrection, there shall be a thousand years wherein Christ is to be corporally present, and reign on earth. Thus, the churches in the second century were not free from error and superstition.

II. Several arguments which have been used in support of the opinion, that hymns of human compofure were sung in the early ages of christianity, by worshipping assemblies, as we now sing the psalms, are manifestly defective. This is the case with a passage of Tertullian, quoted by Grotius on Matthew xxvi. 30. which informs us, that it was the custom in some christian assemblies, for church members to be called forth, in order to their singing, every one what occurred to him, either from the scriptures or from his own gift: *Ut quisque de scripturis, vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere*: For what these words describe is the singing of individuals; *ut quisque provocatur in medium*; not the joint singing of the whole assembly. What is referred to in this and similar passages, which we meet with in the writers of the second and third centuries, appears to have been either irregular and blameable, or the exercise of an extraordinary gift; in either of which cases, it must be allowed to be improper for our imitation. We know of no hymns dictated in this manner, which ever came into use in the ordinary public worship of the church. If there had been any such, one should think, there would have been some collection either extant, or, at least, mentioned by Justin Martyr, Cyprian, or some other eminent writer of the first three centuries.

ries. But among them there appears to be a deep silence on this head.

Some allege, that the singing of human composures is referred to in an expression that is used in an epistle of the younger Pliny to Trajan, concerning the case of those christians whom he had examined. The passage is to this purpose: "An anonymous libel was presented to me, containing the names of many. As to those who denied that ever they had been christians, as soon as they had, after my example, invoked the gods, offered wine and incense to your statue, and blasphemed Christ, (a thing which, it is said, no true christian can be brought to do) I dismissed them. Others, also mentioned in the libel, confessed that they had formerly been christians, but that they had renounced that religion; some of them lately, and some of them many years ago. All these paid the reverence that was required to your statue, and to the images of the gods, and blasphemed Christ. They affirmed, that the whole fault or error of the christians, consisted in their practice of meeting together on a stated day, before sunrise; of singing a hymn to Christ, as to God; and of obliging themselves by a solemn oath to abstain from all manner of wickedness."

It deserves notice, that the practice here described, is not what "Pliny himself, or any other spies that might creep in to christian assemblies," had been witnesses of, but what some persons who had formerly been christians, declared upon their examination before Pliny. It is evident, that the worship of Christ was the cause of the persecution at this time. And therefore, though these apostates found themselves obliged to acknowledge the innocence of their former associates in all other respects, they would not fail to represent what rendered them at that time obnoxious to the reigning powers. This was not, in itself, a misrepresentation; yet it can hardly be deemed sufficient to prove that any other than the scripture-songs were then sung in the solemn worship of christians; because while the singing of the psalms was indeed the worship of the only true God, these apostates knew, that it was at the same time considered by christians, as the worship of Christ; and they might mention this particular of their worship, as being that which rendered

rendered them odious to their heathen judges. It may also be inquired, whether the exactness of Pliny's account in this particular is to be relied on, since it was all one, as to the ground upon which the christians were condemned, whether it was in hymns or prayers that Christ was worshipped; and since it is well known, that the heathen writers betray great ignorance and carelessness in their accounts of such matters.

To prove that hymns of human composition were used in the ordinary solemn worship of the ancient church, the author of a Discourse on Psalmody shews, that Nepos, Clemens Alexandrinus, Gregory Nazianzen and others, wrote hymns for the edification of their brethren. But while it is not shewed, that these hymns were actually used in the ordinary solemn worship of the church, his adducing them is nothing to his purpose: They are no more instances of what he pleads for, than the poems in Mr. Flavel's Husbandry and Navigation spiritualized, or Mr. Erskine's Gospel Sonnets, which were never intended for the use of the church as forms of psalmody in her solemn worship.

When the same author tells us, that Paulus of Samosata, was condemned by an ecclesiastical council for setting aside the psalms that had formerly been sung *in gloriam Christi*, to the glory of Christ, he should have added, what was so peculiarly horrible in this case,—Paulus' substituting in the stead of those psalms, hymns in his own praise.\* What induced that author to omit this part of the fact is best known to himself: But every reader must feel the difference between this representation of it and his. Something more than bare assertion is necessary to satisfy us, that the scripture-psalms cannot properly be said to be psalms in honour of our Lord Jesus Christ. And every one must allow that if Paulus attempted to substitute songs in his own praise, instead of the scripture-songs, in the solemn worship of the church, he was a proper subject, on that account, of the highest ecclesiastical censure.

It

\* Psalmi in gloriam Christi ante cantati sublatis, et cantilena in honorem ejus introductæ non sine horrore audientiam. *Latus's Compend. Hist. Univ.* page 85.

It may be allowed, that in the fourth century, or even sooner, some human compositions appear to have been sung in the public worship of the church. Thus we read of songs used in the church of Antioch, about the middle of the fourth century, agreeably to the Nicene Creed, which, it is said, Leontius, a crafty Arian bishop, bore with. But the singing of these hymns may justly be ranked among those unwarrantable innovations in the worship of God, which, upon one pretence or another, began in that period to be multiplied. But that, even then, the singing of human compositions was of no good name in the church of God, is highly probable from the following passage in the decree of the council of Laodicea, held about the year 364. In canon 59th, it is decreed, that no *ιδιωτικες ψαλμοι*, no psalms that are the compositions of private persons should be sung in churches, nor any books read which are not canonical. The author of the Discourse on Psalmody has given us a criticism on *ιδιωτικες*, as here used. He represents the venerable council, as gravely determining that no psalms composed by unlearned and ignorant persons should be sung in the churches. Hardly any reader can be at a loss about the acceptation of the word here, when he observes, that it stands opposed to *καθολικες*, for hence it is plain, that the songs here prohibited are songs not canonical, or not contained in the sacred scriptures.\*

Some insist, that we should sing such doxologies as were used in the fourth century, and continue to be used in some churches to this day. This, they say, is a proper testimony against the Arian heresy. We answer, that our confession of faith, our sermons and prayers, sufficiently declare, that, in singing the psalms, we take their true sense to be quite contrary to Arianism, and that we consider them as expressing the personality, necessary existence and supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. We say doxologies, as a judicious divine observes; that is, we give and ascribe glory and praise to the blessed Trinity in several expressions in our prayers, and particularly in the conclusion of them. And we sing doxologies to the blessed Trinity, when we sing psalms to the

\* The council in the same canon gives a list of the canonical books.

the praise and glory of God. And, though sometimes only one person is named, yet the other persons are also understood. It is indeed necessary to give glory and praise to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; but the singing in solemn worship of a particular form of words, not to be found in the scripture, is not necessary either by scripture-precept or example. Besides, the doxology hath been, and is used in a superstitious manner. Who can account for their practice, who, after the singing of a scripture-psalm, rise up and stand at the singing of the doxology; as if greater reverence were due to a hymn of human composition, than to psalms and hymns indited by the Spirit of God.\*

III. We have such historical evidence as may satisfy us, that the scripture-psalms were sung in the christian church before the fourth century. Tertullian, a writer of the third century, enumerating the public exercises then in use, mentions the singing of psalms, as well as the reading of the scriptures and the delivery of sermons.† In another place, he speaks of it as a well known fact, that the 133d psalm was stately sung at the administration of the sacrament of the supper, blames the Catholics (he being then a Montanist) for not singing it except at that time, and represents the schemes of the Montanists as agreeable to the profession of brotherly love and sympathy, which was made in the singing that psalm at the celebration of the sacrament.‡

We cannot think, that the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries, would have represented, as they do, the singing of the psalms as the common and ancient practice of the church, if it had not been in use before the fourth century. Cyril of

\* Wisheart's Theologia.

† De Anima, cap. 9.

‡ See his treatise de Jejuniiis, cap. 13. where we have the following words: Vide quam bonum et quam jucundum, habitare fratres in unum! Hoc tu psallere non facile nosti; nisi quo tempore cum compluribus cœnas. Conventus autem illi, stationibus prius et jejunationibus operati; dolere cum dolentibus; et ita demum congaudere gaudentibus n̄runt. Si et ista solennia, quibus tunc præsens pretrocinatus est sermo, nos quoque in diversis provinciis fungimur, in spiritu repræsentati, lex est sacramenti.

of Jerufalem,\* and Jerome, both writers of the fourth century, tell us, that the 31st and the 45th psalms were fung at the eucharist. Augultine plainly intimates, that this was the practice of his own church: For, in' one of his homilies,† he takes notice of the epistle, and then of finging the 65th psalm. The following passage from Cassian, a writer of the 5th century, in vindication of the Egyptian monks, is remarkable. “ Our elders,” says he, speaking as a member of their society, “ have not changed the ancient custom “ of finging psalms, but the devotions are performed in the “ same order as formerly, in the meetings by night: The “ hymns which it had been the custom in this country to “ sing at the end of the night vigils, were the same hymns “ which they sing at this day, namely, the 50th, the 62d, “ the 89th, the 143th and following psalms.”‡

From this passage it is evident, 1st, That the psalms of David were called hymns; and therefore when we read in the ancient writers of finging an hymn, without any farther explication, it may be understood of a scripture-song. 2dly, That, in Cassian's time, the finging of David's psalms was an ancient practice, *antiqua consuetudo psalmorum*; which it could not then be called with any propriety, if it had not been in use before the fourth century. Hence, in order to vindicate the Egyptian monks from the charge of novelty, he tells us, that they fung the psalms of David, and not hymns of human composure.

From an expression which occurs in some writers of the fourth century, namely, that the psalms of David began to be fung at such a particular time and place, it has been concluded, that, before that time, some other songs or human composures were fung in public worship. But such an expression may be understood, not of the psalms of David coming in the place of human composures formerly used; but of the exercise of finging being then introduced or restored in a particular church.

“ It appears,” says Calvin, “ that the custom of finging “ in churches is not only very ancient, but apostolical; as we “ may

\* Catech. Myst. 5. n. 17. † Serm. 10. De verbis Apostoli.

‡ Cassian. Lib. 3. cap. 6.

“ may gather from the words of Paul, *I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also*; and from the epistle to the Colossians, iii. 16. Augustine however shews, that that custom was not universal. He tells us, that they began to sing in the church of Milan, under the ministry of Ambrose, when Justina, the mother of Valentinian, raging against the orthodox faith, a particular fervour and assiduity in religious exercises was excited among the people. In this custom, they were followed by the rest of the western churches. Singing had all along been used in the east. In the 2d book of Augustine’s *Retractions*, he intimates, that, in his time, the African church used singing. One Hilary, says he, reproached the custom which then obtained at Carthage, of singing hymns out of the book of psalms, either before the offering for the benefit of the poor, or while distribution was made of what had been offered. I answered that reviler, at the desire of the brethren.”\* “The Donatists,” says Augustine in another place, “reproach us, because we sing with sobriety the divine songs of the prophets; while they inflame their minds with the poetical compositions of human genius.”†

Our opponents appear to lay much stress upon the assertion of Mosheim, that, in the fourth century, the psalms of David were introduced into the christian church. We are far from disputing the general character of Mosheim as a learned and industrious historian: Yet it is necessary to observe, for the sake of the unlearned reader, that the assertions of a modern writer, like Mosheim, who lived in the present century, with respect to ancient facts, are to be no otherwise esteemed, than according as they are supported by the authority of ancient historians.

The assertions of historical writers are often not authentic facts, but inferences drawn from such facts. A modern historian, like Mosheim, may be very valuable, though some of his inferences be inaccurate. Two things may have given occasion to the assertion now mentioned. One is, that, in the latter part of the fourth century pope Damasus is said to have

\* Calvin Institut. Lib. iii. cap. 20. § 32.

† Epist. 119. c. 18. tom. 2.

have introduced the singing of the psalms into the western church, and appointed the Hallelujah to be sung at other times as well as at Easter. But all that can be justly inferred from this is, that the exercise of singing had before been much neglected in that part of the church, and that Damasus attempted to render it general; for, as Mr. Calvin observes, it was not so in the beginning of that century. The other thing is, that about the same time Flavian and Dioscorus introduced into the church of Antioch an alternate singing of the psalms of David, by two bands of singers. But why may it not be allowed, that what they introduced was the alternate manner of singing, and the two bands of singers. It is an undoubted historical fact, that the Cantores, or singers, were unknown in the church before the fourth century. Besides, supposing (but not granting) that the church of Antioch had not been for some time before, in the practice of singing the psalms of David, it will not follow, that these psalms had never before been sung by that church; and far less will it follow, that they had not been sung by any other part of the catholic church: We have produced an instance of their being sung in public worship in the third century, from Tertullian, and have shewn by quotations from Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Augustine and Cassian, that, in the fourth and fifth centuries, the singing of them not only obtained, but was then considered as an ancient custom. We may here add the testimony of Chrysostom, who allows the psalms of David the first, the middle, and the last place in the public praises of the church.\*

The author of a Discourse on Psalmody says, the practice of singing David's psalms in public worship, "decided clearly in favour of that tenet of Arianism, that divine worship was to be paid only to the Father."† We leave the reader to consider how great a reproach this assertion casts upon the character of those eminent lights of the ancient church; whose writings testify that they sung David's psalms. Can we suppose, that they who contended so earnestly

\* Primus et medius et novissimus est David. Chrysostom. Hom. 6. de pœnitentia.

† Discourse on Psalmody, page 103.

earnestly and successfully against Arianism, would allow themselves or others in a practice which decided in favour of Arianism? And is it not blasphemy against the word of God, to represent the use of any part of it in his worship as deciding in favour of Arianism,—as deciding against itself?

IV. All the Reformed churches use the whole book of psalms in their public praises. And the best Reformed, in their purest times, used no other. Though some of the Reformed churches retained, among other popish corruptions, a few human compositions in their psalmody, yet the principle which is now so much insisted upon, namely, that the psalms of David are unsuitable to the state and privileges of the New Testament church, was unknown among protestants in the early days of the reformation. It is perfectly agreeable to the genius of the protestant religion, *ut ecclesia*, as Mastricht says, *nulla cantica publice cantanda permittat, nisi quæ prostant in scripturis*; that the church should allow no songs to be sung in her public worship, but such as are found in the holy scriptures.

## N<sup>o</sup>. II.

Of Dr. WATTS' IMITATION of the PSALMS, as amended  
by Mr. BARLOW.

THE public has been lately informed, that the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, (now called, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North America) “appointed a committee to examine the different versions  
“ of the book of psalms, to which they could have access,  
“ and from them to select such a collection as they should  
“ judge best; and to lay it before the synod, at a future  
“ meeting, for their consideration: That in pursuance of  
“ this appointment, the committee proceeded on the business;  
“ and after a considerable time, reported to this purpose;  
“ That having compared such versions as they could  
“ obtain, they did not apprehend any so well calculated  
“ for

“ for christian worship as that of Dr. Watts’, as amended  
 “ by Mr. Barlow of New England.” That the version,  
 “ thus amended, was then laid before the synod for their  
 “ consideration, who, after mature deliberation, gave it  
 “ their judicial sanction; as may be seen in a printed ex-  
 “ tract from their minutes, bound up with the said version.”\*

This is a matter in which, as it effects the purity of divine worship, the whole christian church is deeply concerned. It is indeed our duty to submit to the determination of church courts, concerning articles of faith or the manner of divine worship, when they are (what they ought to be) only examples of the due exercise of that authority, which Christ hath given his ministers, to act jointly in exhibiting and applying, as particular cases require, the rule of his word contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. But it is no less our duty to bear testimony against such of their determinations, as are contrary to his word. Hence it is manifest, that christians ought, by no means, to acquiesce in the synodical determination now mentioned; till they have seriously and impartially considered, whether the Imitation of the Psalms of David by Dr. Watts, as corrected by Mr. Barlow, ought to be preferred, as more proper to be sung in the church than the psalms themselves, faithfully translated. As a mean of exciting church members to this inquiry, and of assisting them in it, the following observations on that Imitation are humbly offered.

### SECT. I. *Of the Title of this Book.*

THIS performance has been called a version, or translation. But the comparison of a single verse with the original, is sufficient to convince the reader of the impropriety of calling it so. This impropriety is the more manifest as Dr. Watts himself did not give this work to the public as a translation. In his preface, as well as in the title page, he calls it an *Imitation* of the Psalms. The difference between a translation and an imitation is commonly understood. He is not a translator, who does not say the same thing in one language

\* Mr. Black’s Sermon on Psalmody, page 46.

language which his author says in another. But he may be a very good imitator; he may copy his manner, and yet say very different things. Translation requires diligence and faithfulness. But imitation leaves room for invention. Dr. Samuel Clarke translated Homer's Iliad into Latin. Virgil imitated it in the same language. Thus Phœdrus represents himself as an imitator, not a translator of Æsop, when he says of his fables :

Quas Æsopæas, non Æsopi nomino.

Is there not something too assuming in this title? Is not the word of God as well as his works inimitable? *There is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.*

SECT. II. *A Review of Dr. Watts' Imitation of the First Psalm.*

IT will be allowed, that there is not one of the imitations in this book, that comes nearer the form of the original, and that the generality of them are farther from it, than the imitation of the first psalm. Indeed, there are no such Hebrew idioms or allusions to antiquated rites, as could afford the Doctor the least pretence for departing from the style of the original. This is, therefore, fixed on as a proper example; by examining which we may observe, how little of the form of the original is retained in the imitation.

1. BLEST is the man who *shuns the place,*  
Where sinners love to meet;  
Who fears to tread their wicked ways,  
And bates the scoffer's feat.
2. But in the statutes of the Lord  
Hath plac'd his chief delight:  
By day he reads or hears the word,  
And meditates by night.
3. [He, like a plant of generous kind,  
By living waters set,  
Safe from the storm of blast and wind,  
Enjoys a peaceful state.]

4. Green

4. Green as the leaf, and *ever fair*,  
*Shall his profession shine* ;  
 While fruits of holiness appear  
*Like clusters on the vine.*
5. Not so the impious and unjust :  
*What vain designs they form ?*  
*Their hopes are blown away like dust,*  
 Or chaff before the storm.
6. Sinners in judgment shall not stand,  
*Among the sons of grace* ;  
 When *Christ the Judge at his right hand,*  
*Appoints the saints a place.*
7. *His eye* beholds the path they tread,  
*His heart* approves it well :  
 But *crooked ways of sinners lead*  
*Down to the gates of hell.*

N. B. The words or phrases printed in Italicks are not in the original.

*Not walking in the counsel of the ungodly*, means more than *shunning the place where sinners love to meet* ; for all the counsel which the ungodly give, or take, surely comprehends a great deal more than the Doctor's phrase. He speaks of the affections of *fearing* and *hating*, where the psalmist's expressions plainly denote the habitual practice. The repetition of the negative particle is a beauty which he has not attempted to preserve in any of his imitations of this psalm. He seems also to have overlooked the gradation in the words, *ungodly*, *sinners*, *scorners* ; of which many judicious commentators consider the second as setting forth a worse character than the first ; and the third, a worse than the second. Such is the progress of that apostacy from which *the Lord preserveth the faithful*.

In the second verse, the psalmist teacheth us, that it is the distinguishing character of the godly, that they are endowed with a new principle of delight in the law of the Lord, which disposes them to habitual meditation on it. The *reading* and *bearing* of the word, which the Doctor adds, are ascribed to unbelievers as well as believers, Math. xxii. 31. James i. 23. ; and are not so properly joined with habitual meditation on it, as that which distinguishes the truly godly  
 from

from others, Psal. cxix. 97. Jerem. xv. 16. Besides, no good reason can be given for the Doctor's distinguishing the night as the proper season of meditation, when the psalmist had represented day and night indiscriminately, as the season of it: And in the text just now cited, he tells us, it was his exercise all the day.

In the third verse, the psalmist compares the godly man to a *tree* planted by the rivers of water. But the Doctor, attempting to improve upon the psalmist, has substituted a *plant of generous kind*. He seems to have no good reason for changing the tree into a plant.\* When the Doctor adds, that it is safe from the storms and blasting winds, and enjoying a peaceful state, he wanders not only from the language and sentiments of the psalmist, but from the subject: For what the psalmist is here considering is the continued fruitfulness of the tree as proceeding from a permanent cause. Besides, the reader, or singer, that follows the Doctor will be led into such doubts about the consistency of these two lines with many places of scripture which tell us, that the godly are tossed with tempests, and engaged in a continual warfare, as must greatly divert the mind from the particular point to which we are led by the simplicity and precision of the words of the psalmist.

The Doctor cannot be excused for omitting, in all his three imitations of this psalm, that emphatical and instructive expression, *in his season*; since there is so much of the beauty of a holy practice in giving every duty its own time and place.

The

\* "A plant," says a very good judge of the English language, "is any vegetable production arising from seed, but seems confined to such as are not very large. Thus saplings are the largest that should be called plants." It has been observed, in defence of the imitation, that, in various places of scripture, the idea of a plant is annexed to that of a tree. This is not denied. But because one idea is connected with another, we are not therefore to confound them. No ideas are more easily distinguished than these two, the state of a vegetable production when it is come to maturity and bearing fruit, (which is plainly what the psalmist here meant) and the state of it when it was only a plant. The word *tree* indeed may sometimes denote the kind, as distinguished from herbs, as in Gen. i. 29. Levit. xix. 23; but here it denotes not only the kind of the production, but the state of it.

The last clause of this verse (*whatever he doth shall prosper, or, as some render it, it shall bring to full ripeness whatever it beareth,\**) is wholly omitted in the Doctor's first and second imitations. In the third, indeed, he gives us two lines in place of it;

And heaven will shine with kindest beams  
On every work his hands begin.

On these lines two things may be remarked; 1st, That the metaphors here introduced by the Doctor, being different from the simile of the psalmist, diverts the attention from it. 2dly, That any meaning that can be put upon the expression, *heaven will shine with kindest beams*, (that is, supposing it to signify the cause of prospering) is fully held forth to us by the psalmist in that part of the simile, in which the rivers of waters are represented as the cause of fruitfulness.

In the imitation of the fourth verse, we have an example of the bad effect of multiplying words unnecessarily: The persons here spoken of are said to be both impious and unjust; as if some impious persons might prosper, provided they were not also unjust. The second line of this stanza is superfluous, the sense of it being sufficiently expressed in the third line. Their hopes, says he, are blown away like dust before the storm. But this is far from the significance of the psalmist's expression, which includes their persons, professions, and works, as well as their hopes. How flat is the verbose manner of the Doctor compared with the noble simplicity of the original! *The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff, which the wind driveth away.*

In the next verse, we have two words, *ungodly* and *sinners*; which, though often used as synonymous, are of different derivation and import; and they are both used here to intimate, that no sort of transgressors, not even those who elude the severest scrutiny of men, shall escape the judgment of God. Again, the psalmist represents standing in judgment, and standing in the assembly of the righteous, in different members of the verse, as what are to be considered distinctly. These distinctions the Doctor has not attempted to preserve in his imitation.

The

\* See the preface of Robertson's *Clavis Pentateuchi*.

The antithesis between the eye and the heart is a childish conceit. The original psalm concludes with a concise and nervous expression, *The way of the wicked shall perish*: that is, themselves with their works, projects, and purposes, shall perish. The imitator, dropping the figure here used, loses not only the poetry, but also much of the sense.

In order to be convinced, that it is not the versification that occasions such a departure from the style and manner of the sacred original, the reader may compare the imitation of this psalm with the version of it used by the church of Scotland.

SECT. III. *Examples of Erroneous Expressions in Dr. Watts' Imitation, corrected and enlarged by Mr. Barlow.*

THE DOCTOR says, he has translated the second psalm according to the divine pattern, Acts iv. 24, &c. But he confounds the translation in the 25th and 26th verses of that passage, with the use and application of the psalm in verses 27 and 28.

The psalms ought to be read and sung in an exact and literal translation, like that in ver. 25 and 26, that the church, and particular members of it, may make that improvement of them which their present situation and circumstances require, after the example here set us by the apostles.

The good and faithful soul shall find

A God *as* faithful and *as* kind. Psal. xviii. 5.

The psalmist indeed says, With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; but he does not say *as* merciful: For though, when the Lord enables his people to gracious exercises, there is a suitableness thereto in their experience of his gracious dealing with them; but not any proportion like that between work and wages.

Justice and truth attend thee still;

But mercy is thy choice. Psal. xlv. com. met. ver. 5.

There is nothing in the original that represents mercy as more properly the choice of Christ than justice and truth. In Christ mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. The author of the *Night Thoughts* speaks more agreeably to the analogy of faith:

In love immense, inviolably just,  
Thou, rather than thy justice should be stained,  
Didst stain the cross.

The world admires her heavenly dress.

Pfal. xlv. 2d part, long met. ver. 2.

There is no such thing in the original. And surely if by dress be meant gospel holiness, it is rather hated than admired by the world, John xv. 19.

A soul oppress'd with sin's desert,  
My God will ne'er despise.

Psa. xli. 2d. part, com. met. ver. 4.

Cain and Judas had nothing of that broken and contrite heart which the psalmist says, *God will not despise*; and yet, it is manifest, their souls were oppress'd with sin's desert.

'Tis thy own Son, —————

Thy first-born Son, adorn'd and blest

With power and grace above the rest. Psal. lxxx. 11.

Since the imitator gives these words as the meaning of psalm lxxx. 17. where Christ is spoken of as Mediator, and is called the Son of man, not the Son of God; does it not appear that the imitator meant to foist in here his well-known tenet, (abundantly confuted by Dr. Gill and others) that Christ's being the Son of God, as well as his being the Son of man, arises from his Mediatorial office?\*

With his rich gifts the heavenly Dove

Descends and fills the place;

While Christ reveals his wondrous love,

And sheds abroad his grace. Psal. lxxxiv. com. met. ver. 3

Here

\* It appears from some of the Doctor's works, particularly, that entitled, *Useful and important Questions concerning Jesus Christ, the Son of God*, and from another entitled, *The Glory of Christ as God-man displayed*, that he taught, that the Sonship of Christ referred to his human nature, or to his office of Messiah; that his human soul existed with the Father from before the creation of the world; that the man Christ became properly God through his union to the Deity itself, personally considered as the Father; that the Holy Spirit is not a person really distinct from the Father, but the divine power or influence, or God himself exerting his influence; that there are no real distinct persons in the Godhead. See *Memoirs of the Lives, Characters and Writings of Dr. Isaac Watts, and Dr. Philip Doddridge*, printed at Boston in 1793, pag. 90, 91, 92, 100, 101, 102, 122, 141, 142.

Here distinct offices are assigned to the Son and the Holy Spirit; the latter descending and filling the house, while the former reveals and sheds abroad his grace. This way of distinguishing these two persons of the Godhead has no warrant from this psalm, or any other place of scripture. The Son's revealing his grace and shedding abroad his love, are by the Holy Spirit, John xvi. 14. Rom. v. 5.; and therefore cannot with any propriety be represented as distinguishing him from the Holy Spirit.

Thou art my chosen King; thy throne  
Shall stand eternal, like my own.

Psal. lxxxix. first part, ver. 3.

Do not these words imply, that the throne of Christ is not the throne of God, being only like it? This doctrine is contrary to Heb. i. 8. *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;* and to Rev. iii. 21. *I overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.*

Believe, and take the promis'd rest;

Obey, and be for ever blest. Psal. xcv. long met. ver. 7.

Here obey and be blest, or, in other words, Do and live, is represented as of the same signification with, Believe and be saved: As if there were no real difference between salvation by works and salvation by grace through faith.

Mercy and truth on *all* are met. Psal. lxxxv. 2d part, ver. 2.

He comes to make his blessings flow

Far as the curse is found. Psal. xcvi.

These expressions are very extravagant, and countenance the blasphemous opinion of universal salvation.

What wonders hath his wisdom done!

How mighty is his hand!

Heaven, earth and sea he fram'd alone:

How wide is his command! Psal. cxxxvi. com. met. ver. 2.

Is it because the imitator judged the sweet expressions, *His mercy endureth for ever*, unsuitable to the New Testament dispensation, that he hath set it aside here, and put expressions of a different import in its place?

Thou art my portion when I die,

Be thou my refuge here.

The psalmist declares that God was his portion in the land of the living; that is, here as well as hereafter; while he lived,

lived, as well as when he died : Carnal men persuade themselves that they would have God for their portion when they die ; but in the mean time prefer the vanities of the world and the pleasures of sin.

He moved their mighty wheels  
In *unknown ages past*.

How can the ages in which the heavenly bodies have been performing their revolutions be said to be unknown, while we know by the word of God that it is not yet 6000 years since their creation ?

SECT. IV. *Examples of the Strain of Discourse being altered by the Imitator.*

EVERY reader will observe, that in the psalms there are various kinds of discourse, such as, assertion, exhortation, prayer, narrative, promising, threatening. It cannot be disputed by any who believe that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, that, whichsoever of these kinds of discourse are used in any place of scripture, it is used there for some necessary and important purpose ; and that no other would be so proper in the same place or connexion. He cannot, therefore, be acquitted from the charge of presumption, who, instead of the kind of discourse actually used in any place of scripture, substitutes another, supposing it to be better adapted to the true scope and design of that place. How far this charge may be brought against the imitation of the psalms by Dr. Watts, the reader may judge from the following instances :

*The genus dicendi, or mode of speaking, is,*

In the Original.

In the Imitation.

Psal. iv., 5.	An exhortation.	A profession	Psal. iv. long met. ver. 4.
xxv. 22.	A prayer.	An assertion.	Psal. xxv. third part. ver. 8.
xxviii. 7.	An account of the psalmist's past experience.	A prediction of what was to be his attainment.	
— 9.	A prayer.	A conditional vow or resolution.	
xxxvii. 1, 3, 4, 5.	Exhortations.	Meditation or profession.	Psal. xxxvii. first part, ver. 1, 3, 4.

In the Original.

In the Imitation.

Pfal. lii. 8. A profession of the psalmist's confidence in the Lord's mercy.

A general proposition.

lv. 22. An exhortation.

A profession or declaration of his present exercise. Psal. lv. com. met. ver. 9.

lx. 4. A grateful acknowledgement of what the Lord had done for his people.

A prayer. Psal. lx. 4.

lxii. 5. A soliloquy or address to his soul.

An assertion. Psal. lxii. 1.

lxxxix. 6. Spoken by the church in the form of an interrogation.

Spoken by the Father to the Son in the form of an assertion. Psal. lxxxix. first part, long met. ver. 4.

cxliii. 11. 12. A prayer.

A description of the heavenly happiness. Psal. cxliii. 12.

SECT. V. *Examples of the Arrangement or Method of the Psalms being altered by the Imitator.*

THAT it was the design of the Holy Spirit, that we should attend to the method he has been pleased to make use of in the scriptures, is evident, from the necessity of observing the arrangement and connexion of any discourse, in order to the right understanding of it, from the light we obtain as to the meaning of a text, by a careful attention to the context, and from the dangerous errors into which many fall, by taking up with detached expressions, without considering their connexion with what goes before and what follows. All the scriptures having been dictated by the Holy Spirit, there is in every part of them, such a disposition of matter as is best adapted to his design. And therefore to suppose that a different disposition of the matter of the psalms is necessary, in order to render them fit for being read or sung in public worship, is to suppose, that the psalms, as they stand in the scriptures, were either not designed to be used in public worship, or not all dictated by the Holy Spirit. That such was the supposition on which the Imitator proceeded, is evident from the method he uses being frequently so different from that of the psalmist.

Thus

Thus in the xxxi. psalm, his first part puts together the 5, 13, 19, 22, 23 verses; and his second part the 7, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21.

In the xxxvii. we have, in the 2d part of the imitation, the 16, 21, 26, 30, 31 verses, and in the 3d part, 23, 24, 28, 29, 34, 35, 36, 37.

In psalm l. second part, common metre, the 15 and 23 verses are joined together; and in the third part, the 1, 5, 8, 16, 21 verses.

In psalm lxxviii. the 1—6, 32—35 verses are put together in one hymn, the 17 and 18 are wrought up into another; and the 19, 9, 20, 21, 22 verses compose a third.

In psalm lxxi. ver. 16 is joined to the last three verses; and the intermediate ones come afterward into a separate hymn.

In psalm lxxxvii. any thing in the imitation that is like the last verse, comes before the matter of the 5 and 6.

Psalms cxix. is greatly transposed.

Psalms cxxxv. is imitated in the following order: Ver. 1, 4, 14, 19, 5—12.

#### SECT. VI. *Verses of the Psalms omitted by the Imitator.*

THE verses omitted occasion a continual variation from the order and connexion of the original; often a different beginning, as in the xxxi. psalm, and a different ending, as in the li. If we consider the work of Dr. Watts as a version or translation, as some have affected to call it, the designed omission of so many verses, renders it good for nothing. If we consider it as a collection of as much of the book of Psalms, as the Doctor thought fit for christian worship, a reproach is cast upon the remainder as unfit for it; although the wisdom of God appointed the whole book to be used in his worship.

The following list is not given as complete, even as to whole verses omitted by the imitator: And none of the parts of verses omitted are specified, though the same objection lies against the omission of them.

A List of verses omitted in Dr. Watts's Imitation of the Psalms of David, corrected and enlarged by Joel Barlow.

Psalms	Verse	Psalms	Verse
v.	1, 2.	lxxxviii.	5—9.
vii.	7.	xcii.	8.
x.	7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15.	xciv.	3, 4, 5, 6, 15.
xvii.	1—12.	xcvi.	3,—9.
xxvi.	11, 12.	cv.	16—26.
xxxii.	8, 9, 10, 11.	cviii.	7—17.
xxxv.	10, 11, 16—28.	cix.	5—31.
xxxvi.	10, 11, 12.	cxvi.	9, 10, 11.
xxxvii.	17, 18, 19, 20.	cxviii.	1—5, 13, 28.
xxxviii.	11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20.	cxix.	4, 6, 7, 8, 12, 17, 21, 23, 31, 43, 45, 47, 48, 52, 56, 65, 66, 77, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 95, 101, 102, 106, 108, 109, 117, 124, 126, 131, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 144, 145, 146, 149, 151, 152, 155, 157, 167, 168, 169, 172, 173.
xl.	12—16.		
xli.	4—13.		
xliv.	4, 5, 6, 7, 9—14.		
xlvii.	2, 3, 4.		
xlix.	2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17.		
li.	6, 18, 19.		
lv.	9—14.		
lvii.	4, 6.		
lviii.	- - 3.		
lx.	6, 7, 8, 9.		
lxi.	7, 8.		
lxii.	1, 2, 3, 4.		
lxiii.	11.	cxxix.	8.
lxviii.	7, 8, 10—16, 23, 24.	cxxxvii.	8, 9.
lxix.	22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28.	cxxxviii.	4, 5.
lxxi.	1—4, 10—13.	cxxxix.	19.
lxxiv.	5, 23.	cxl.	6—11.
lxxviii.	40—71.	cxxli.	1, 7, 8, 9, 10.
lxxx.	18.	cxliv.	7, 8, 9, 10, 11.
lxxxii.	2—7.	cl.	3, 4, 5.
lxxxvi.	1—7, 14—17.		

SECT. VII. *Metaphors and Similies of the Psalms left out in the Imitation.*

THE omission of these metaphors, whether plain language or other metaphors be substituted in their place, implies a dishonourable reflection upon the author of the psalms: For if plain language would answer the author's purpose as well, metaphors are unnecessary and improper; and if other metaphors be preferable, the author has made a wrong choice. The omission, therefore, of so many metaphors of the psalms cannot be reconciled to a due reverence and esteem of God's word. The Lord's people find the metaphors and similies of his word incomparably fitter for setting forth spiritual things, incomparably more favourable and pregnant with instruction, than any other.

A List of the Metaphors and Similies of the Psalms left out in the Imitation, as corrected by Mr. Barlow.

- Psalms ii. 9, 12. Like a potter's vessel. Kiss the Son.  
 iii. 3, 7. Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me. Thou hast smitten the cheek-bone, &c.  
 v. 9. Their throat is an open sepulchre.  
 vii. 15. He made a pit, and digged it.  
 x. 9. He lieth in wait secretly, as a lion in his den.  
 xiii. 3. Enlighten mine eyes.  
 xiv. 4. Who eat up my people as bread.  
 xxi. 12. Thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings  
 xxii. 14. I am poured out like water.  
 xxvii. 9. Lead me in a plain path.  
 xxxvii. 20. The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs.  
 xxxviii. 5. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.  
 13. I, as a deaf man, heard not, &c.  
 xli. 3. Thou wilt turn all his bed in his sickness.  
 xlii. 7. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts.  
 10. As with a sword in my bones,——mine enemies reproach me.

- Pfalm xliv. 3. Thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance.  
19. Thou hast covered us with the shadow of death.
- xlv. 8. All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, &c.  
14. The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee.
- xlix. 5. When the iniquity of my heels shall compass me.  
li. 7. Purge me with hyssop.  
lii. 2. Thy tongue deviseth mischief, like a sharp razor.  
lv. 21. His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords  
lvii. 4. My soul is among lions.  
lviii. 10. He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
- lx. 3. Thou hast made us drink the wine of astonishment.  
lxi. 5. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.  
lxvi. 11, 12. Thou broughtest us into a net: Thou laidest affliction upon our loins.  
lxxii. 3. The mountains shall bring forth peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness.  
9. His enemies shall lick the dust.  
14. Precious shall their blood be in his sight.  
16. There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon.
- lxxiv. 14. Thou gavest the leviathan to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
- lxxv. 3. I bear up the pillars of the land.  
8. In the hand of the *Lord* is a cup; and the wine is red: It is full of mixture, &c.
- lxxiii. 4. There are no bands in their death.  
6. Pride compasseth them as a chain.  
10. Waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.  
21. I was pricked in my reins.

- Pſalm lxxvii. 2. My fore ran in the night.  
 lxxx. 2. Stir up thy ſtrength.  
 14. Look down from heaven, and behold, and viſit this vine.  
 lxxxii. 10. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.  
 16. He would have fed them with the fineſt of the wheat.  
 lxxxii. 5. All the foundations of the earth are out of courſe.  
 lxxxii. 13. Make them [the enemies of Iſrael] like a wheel.  
 lxxxiv. 6. Paſſing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: The rain filleth the pools.  
 xcii. 10. My horn ſhalt thou exalt, like the horn of the unicorn.  
 12. The righteous ſhall flourish like the palm-tree.  
 xcvi. 2. Let the floods clap hands.  
 ciii. 5. Thy youth is renewed like the eagles.  
 cxii. 9. His horn ſhall be exalted with honour.  
 cxiii. 7. He liſteth the needy out of the dunghill.  
 cxxvii. 4. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, ſo are the children of youth.  
 cxxviii. 3. Thy children, like olive plants, round about thy table.  
 cxxix. 3. The plowers plowed upon my back: They made long their furrows.  
 cxxx. 1. Mine eyes are not lofty.  
 cxxxii. 17. There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp.  
 cxlviii. 14. He exalteth the horn of his people.

SECT. VIII. *Remarks on the Style of the Imitation.*

WHERE the purity of God's worſhip and ordinances is concerned, the ſtyle of a writer appears too ſmall a matter to deſerve attention. But as it is ſometimes ſuggeſted, that the uſe of Dr. Watts' imitation would render our public ſinging more agreeable to ſuch as have a taſte for elegance of ſtyle, the following remarks may, perhaps, tend to ſhew that, even in this reſpect, the advantage of introducing it would not be ſo great as it has been repreſented. Some  
 improprieties

improprieties in composition, that have occurred in the perusal of the imitation, are pointed out under the following heads:

I. Ungrammatical Expressions.

1. Instances of impropriety in the application of words, and in the syntax.

Psal. lxvi. 1st part, ver. 6. Ye saints fulfil his praise.  
 iii. com. met. 7. Fulfil thy grace.  
 lxxxiii. 6. Convince their madness.  
 xcii. 1st part, 5. I shall *share a part*.  
 xxxvii. 3d part, 3. Blessings *long* to come.  
 lxxiii. short met. 6. I *indulg'd* my doubts to rise.  
 iv. long met. 5. Thy light and love we pray.  
 Instead of, we pray *for*.

2. Instances of improper circumlocution.

Psal. lxxv. 2d part, ver. 5. He settles in a peaceful form.  
 vi. long met. 5. My thoughts are tempted.  
 xxxvi. com. met. 1. Their thoughts believe.  
 For *in peace, I am tempted, they believe*.

3. Instances of tautology, or superfluity of words.

Psal. cxxxix. 1st part, long m. ver. 4. Amazing knowledge  
*vast and great*.  
 Ibid, c. met. ver. 4. Within thy *circling* arms I lie,  
*Inclus'd on every side*.  
 lxxi. 2d part, 6. His death—has fav'd me *by his*  
*blood*.  
 xlix. 6. Though dragons roar *with their*  
*breath*.  
 lxi. 2. The rock that's high *above my*  
*head*.

II. The abuse of Figures and Metaphors.

1. Instances of personification that seem absurd.

Psal. lxxxv. 3. We wait for *praise to tune our voice*.  
 cxix. part 6th, 3. My *thoughts* in holy wonder rise,  
 And *bring their thanks* to thee.

2. Instances

2. Instances of metaphors incongruously heaped upon one another.

Pfal. xl. 1st part, 2. And from my bonds releas'd my feet,  
*Deep bonds of miry clay.*

ix. 2. *Thy frowning mantle* spreads the sky.

Let the reader try to conceive a picture of deep bonds of clay, or of a frowning mantle.

3. Instances in which the figure and plain expression are improperly mixed.

Pfal. xlviij. 2d part, ver. 5. Rites adorn'd with gold.

li. long met. 2d part, 6. No Jewish *types* could *cleanse* me so.

viii. com. met. 7. *The fleshy cloud.*

cxxxix. 2d p. l. m. 4. The finish'd members of the mind.

III. What Swift calls the *Art of Sinking* is exemplified in this Imitation.

Pfal. xix. 1st part, ver. 3. They shew the *wonders* of his hand,

And orders of his throne.

xxii. 1st p. c. met. 8. They nail my hands, they pierce my feet,

And *try* to vex my heart.

cxxxvii. 2. Let dire destruction seize this guilty frame,

My *hand* shall perish and my *voice* shall cease.

IV. Low Expression, Puerile Conceits, and a Manner of Expression bordering on the Burlesque.

1. Instances of expression too low for the subject.

Pfal. xvi. 1st part, c. m. 5. He gives me sweet advice by day,  
 And gentle hints by night.

xlvi. 1st part, l. met. 3. Dress thee in arms.

lxv. 3d part, 1. Visits the pastures every spring.

lxxv. 5. Nor can the wind such blessings blow.

Pfal.

Ap. No. II. *Of Dr. Watts' Imitation of the Psalms.* 89

Pfal. cxxxiii. com. met. 1. Lo, what an entertaining fight,  
These friendly brethren prove.

2. Instances of puerile conceits.

Pfal. xxii. long met. ver. 5. They wound his head, his hands,  
his feet,  
Till streams of blood each other  
meet.

cxix. part 1st, 2. With their whole heart they seek  
the Lord,

And serve him with their hands.

Ibid, part 5th, 6. Sailors rejoice to lose their fears.

3. Sometimes Hudibras seems to be imitated rather than David.

Pfal. xxii. long. m. 4. O savage people! cruel priests!  
How they stood round like raging  
beasts.

lxxiv. 5. How are the seats of worship broke!  
They tear the buildings down.

lxxxix. l. m. 2. Are not thy servants day by day,  
Sent to their graves and turn'd to  
clay?

V. Passages that have little or no Meaning.

Pfal. xxix. 3. The fearful hart and frighted hind,  
Leap at the terror of the sound.

civ. 8. From pleasant trees which shade the brink,  
The lark and linnet light to drink.

VI. Rant and Extravagance.

Pfal. cxxxix. 1st p. c. m. 8. I fly beyond the west.

cxlvii. long. met. 1. Let heaven begin the solemn  
word,  
And sound it dreadful down to  
hell.

*Jam satis.*

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END OF THE FIRST PART.

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# VINDICIÆ CANTUS DOMINICI.

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## P A R T II.

Being a VINDICATION of the DOCTRINE  
taught in the preceding DISCOURSE.

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### C H A P. I.

#### *Of SINGING in SOLEMN WORSHIP.*

**G**OD is worshipped really and materially in ejaculatory prayer, in meditation, in an habitual endeavour to conform our conversation to the rule of his word. From this material and habitual worship, acts or exercises of immediate and formal worship are distinguished in the following respects: 1. A formal act or exercise of divine worship always implies a previous design of employing a certain portion of time in it. But material worship is just that habitual regard to God, or expressions of it, which ought to run through and sanctify our whole conversation: 2. All the acts of solemn or formal worship come under the denomination of religion; and therefore are all to be found most particularly described, and expressly appointed in the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament. But it is not necessary, to constitute an act of material worship, at least the outward part of it, that it be an act peculiarly belonging to religion, or that it be particularly and expressly prescribed in the scriptures,

scriptures, but only that it be not forbidden. Thus, a man's going to Jerusalem, if his journey be from right principles and to right ends, might be accounted an instance of material worship, in the same sense in which plowing or sowing is so. But the popish consideration of it, as formal worship, is grossly superstitious. Thus, there may be some use of hymns of human composure; because neither the composing nor the reading of them is forbidden.\* Such compositions in verse as Mr. Ralph Erskine's Sonnets, are very useful: Principles or precepts in verse both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards. But still they cannot be warrantably sung in solemn and formal worship, whilst there is no appointment of them to that particular purpose in scripture. 3. Formal acts of worship are means of divine appointment for promoting that which is material or habitual. Hence it is necessary for christians to observe this distinction, whilst in the present militant state; the most advanced in habitual worship having need of the means and ordinances of solemn worship. There will be no such distinction in the exercise of the saints in heaven; which will be one continued eternal exercise of immediate worship.

Singing in *public* worship is more frequently mentioned in the preceding discourse, because that part of the subject seemed to be more immediately in debate, and also because public worship ought to be an example and pattern for that which is private; nor ought any other forms of psalmody to be used in solemn and formal worship in private, than what are used in public.

## CHAP.

\* In the present controversy, the question is not, Whether it be warrantable for christians to exercise their talents in writing poems on religious subjects; and thus to communicate their knowledge of revealed truth or spiritual experience for the edification of others? Hence, if Mr. Lata meant such compositions, it was highly impertinent to bid his opponents prove, that it was "the duty of christians not to draw the doctrine and admonitions which they communicate to one another in psalms and hymns, from the doctrines and discourses of Christ and his apostles, but from the words of David and Asaph." *Discourse on Psalmody.*

C H A P. II.

*Shewing that there are Forms of Psalmody in Scripture, which God hath appointed to be used in the Solemn Worship of the Church.*

THE second proposition which was laid down in the preceding discourse is, *That there are portions of the sacred scriptures adapted to the purpose of singing, which ought to be used in the worship of the church, till the end of time:* For the explanation of this proposition four observations were offered; which have occasioned our inquiry into a variety of interesting subjects.

SECT. I. *Of the particular Parts of Scripture which ought to be Sung in the Solemn Worship of the Church.*

THE first of the observations now mentioned was, that *there are portions of scripture peculiarly adapted to the purpose of singing in solemn worship.*

It is objected to what is said on this observation, in the discourse, "That though the observation be true in itself, the discourse goes wrong in pointing out what parts of scripture ought to be sung."

Answer. The position itself being granted, all is granted which the writer intended in this part of his subject; because he apprehended, that the question was not, Whether this or another part of scripture should be sung in solemn worship? but, Whether some parts of scripture literally translated, or human compositions, should be so used?

The objector adds, "The writer of that discourse has raised a horrid outcry about attempts to corrupt the divine ordinance of singing psalms; but he is not explicit in declaring what the church ought to sing in public worship; he, therefore, adds to the corruption of that ordinance."

Answer. It is unreasonable to expect more of any writer, than what falls within the compass of his declared design. The discourse in question combats two things, which the  
writer

writer considered as corruptions in the public praises, namely the disuse therein of literal translations of the psalms, and the substituting of human compositions in their place.

These he distinctly pointed out. But that about which, according to the objector, the discourse is not explicit, seemed not to be the point immediately in dispute.

Were it once granted however, that the whole book of psalms is proper to be sung in our solemn worship; and that nothing is so but compositions bearing the title of songs, which are found in the inspired scriptures; we might then proceed to another question, namely, Whether any other parts of scripture than the book of psalms ought to be used in our solemn worship? This could hardly occasion any great difference among the sincere lovers of the purity of God's ordinances.

The writer of the discourse specified the book of psalms, because this is plainly the question under consideration, Whether the church, under the New Testament dispensation, ought to sing these psalms? These make up the far greater part of scripture-songs. If these be discarded, we have no system of psalmody in the bible.

Supposing it to be granted, that nothing ought to be sung in solemn worship but literal translations of the sacred scripture, the two following observations may be of use in determining what portions of it ought to be fixed on for that purpose.

The first is, That no portions of scripture ought to be sung in solemn worship, but such as, in their form, are poetical, that is, such as are entitled psalms, songs, or hymns, having the sentences commonly divided into corresponding, and often equal members, and perhaps distinguished in the Hebrew original of the Old Testament by the metrical punctuation. The other observation is, That we ought to be directed in this matter by the divinely authorized example of the church of God in her ordinary solemn worship, recorded in the scriptures. We have seen that there are psalms or songs delivered to the church of God to be sung in her ordinary solemn worship; and that we read of her using these, but not of her using any other in that worship.

Here we allow, that the poetical form of composition may be used in some parts of scripture for other purposes than  
that

that of being sung in the ordinary solemn worship of the church. Hence we do not say, that the books of Job and the Proverbs ought to be sung in that worship. Whatever is sung ought to be in the poetical form; but whatever is in the poetical form (as Milton's *Paradise lost*) is not intended to be sung. That form may have been used in these books by the Holy Spirit on some other account; such as, that it is best adapted to the matter of these books, and is most helpful to the memory. Thus, we do not say, that the songs ought to be sung in the ordinary solemn worship of the church, which we find interwoven in the series of scripture-history, and which exhibit the spiritual exercise of such a saint on such an occasion; as is the case of the song of Deborah, that of Hannah, or David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan; as also of the songs of Mary, of Zacharias and Elizabeth; or the songs which we meet with in the book of Isaiah or the Revelation: For these are to be considered as rather representing the frame and exercise, to which the Lord hath brought, or will bring his church and people, historically or prophetically, than as prescribing a form of words to be sung in solemn worship. The judicious Mr. Boston indeed, in his *Traclatus Stigmologicus*, p. 6, thinks, that the songs of Moses, of Solomon, and of Hezekiah, &c. were designed to be sung in solemn worship as well as the psalms, they being, as he observes, expressly called songs by the Holy Spirit. But he also observes, that they are pointed, not with the metrical accentuation used in the psalms, the Proverbs, and the book of Job, but with the same prosaic accentuation used in the text which is purely historical. Now as he allows, page 8, that the metrical accentuation has some relation to the music or singing in solemn worship, we may suggest, with all deference to the judgment of that most excellent author, that the want of the metrical accentuation in the songs just now mentioned, seems to be rather against the opinion of their being recorded in order to be used in solemn worship, in the same manner as the psalms. Another thing, which he also takes notice of, page 6, namely, that the xviii<sup>th</sup> and the cv<sup>th</sup> psalms have the prosaic accentuation, as they stand in 2 Sam. xxii. and 1 Chron. xvi. and the metrical as they stand in the book of psalms, seems to indicate, that the songs of the

saints

faints inserted in the historical books are intended to be read as a part of the sacred history, but that, being inserted in the book of psalms, they are appointed to be sung in solemn worship. It may be further suggested, that as there is nothing in the manner of writing in the Greek language parallel to the metrical accentuation of the Hebrew scriptures; so it is rational to suppose, that some such numbers as those of the Greek poets would have been made use of in recording the songs of Mary, of Zacharias and of Simeon, had they been designed to be forms of psalmody.

In short it appears, that, in determining what parts of scripture ought to be sung in solemn worship, we are to be directed by the poetical form of some parts of scripture, as we have already defined it; by the psalms or songs being delivered to the church, not merely in the series of history or prophecy, but in an insulated or unconnected state, accompanied with intimations of their being designed to be sung in solemn worship; and lastly, by the approved example of the church in her ordinary solemn worship, recorded in scripture.

It is a fundamental principle of our holy religion, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God. Hence, though one place of scripture may afford more light with respect to a particular case than another, yet there is no part of scripture that is of greater authority than another. Nor will the infinite wisdom of its Author allow us to suppose that any part of it is unnecessary. The whole scripture is equally to be regarded as the word of God, indited by his Spirit. Indeed the scripture contains many sinful suggestions of Satan, of wicked men, and of remaining corruption in the saints. But these are no less necessary in their place; and, considered as authentic and absolutely exact representations of the nature and operations of sin, they bear an expression of divinity as well as the other parts of scripture. Hence we are to beware of magnifying one part of scripture to the disparagement of another; or of interring the inferiority of any of the sacred books from the supposed inferiority of the penmen; as if they had not all the same Omniscient God for their Author.

The writer of the Discourse on Psalmody seems to have been little aware of this, when, speaking against what he supposes an undue estimation of the psalms, he says, "The  
" blessed

“ blessed Jesus has revealed the nature, works and will of God, in a clearer, fuller and more authoritative manner, than it was possible for any of the human race to do.” Are we then to consider the psalms as a revelation made by some of the human race? Does not God reveal himself in the same authoritative manner in the whole scriptures? Did not the same Spirit speak by David that afterwards spake by Christ and his apostles? Does not such a way of speaking as this writer uses, lead his readers to regard no other authority in the scriptures than that of the persons who spoke and wrote them? Most certainly it does: For if it be allowed that the Holy Spirit was as well acquainted with the mysteries of the gospel, when he spoke by David, as when he spoke by Christ and his apostles; then the inferiority of the psalms cannot be inferred from the superiority of Christ and his apostles to David. If some point of truth is not so largely insisted on in the psalms, as in the New Testament, the reason is, not that such a point of truth was not perfectly known to the Divine Author of the psalms; but that the full declaration of that point is more fitly placed in the New Testament. Though it were allowed that the penmen of the psalms had but “ obscure, transient and distant glimpses of our Saviour’s glory;” yet this does not affect the psalms, which were dictated by the Spirit of Christ, as well as the books of the New Testament.

This author also attempts to charge those who contend for the use of David’s psalms, with preferring them to other parts of scripture, and particularly to the New Testament: “ For,” says he, “ why should the New Testament be wholly degraded from bearing a part in the most agreeable, the most devout part of our public worship, if the words of David and Asaph were not preferred before it?”

The answer to this question is obvious. We sing the book of psalms in solemn worship, not because we prefer this book to those of the New Testament, but because in the former, and not in the latter, we have those forms of psalmody which God gave and appointed to be used in his worship. We esteem the books of the New Testament, in the form wherein they are delivered to us, as no less divinely excellent, than the words of David and Asaph, in the form

wherein they are delivered to us.\* Both having been dictated by the same Spirit, are of the same authority. But the form of the psalms has a manifest relation to singing in solemn worship. This relation, and not any opinion of the superiority of one part of scripture to another, is our reason for contending that the psalms or songs of scripture, and not other parts of it, ought to be sung in solemn and formal worship.†

SECT. II. *Whether the Words of the Psalms, literally and justly translated, be of Divine Authority? Or whether they exhibit the Form as well as the Matter of the inspired Psalms?*

It has been said, “ that there neither is, nor can be any  
 “ such thing as the inspired forms of the psalms in our lan-  
 “ guage, unless an immediate revelation were made in that  
 “ language: That it is not possible to retain the words and  
 “ phrases of the original in any translation: That as a pro-  
 “ phet is to speak in the language which is suggested to  
 “ him, his words are justly called the words of the Holy  
 “ Ghost; but that whenever a translation of that subject  
 “ is made into any other language, the words of the lan-  
 “ guage,

\* When a portion of Paul’s epistles, for example, is wrought into a psalm or hymn; though the epistle from which the matter of it is taken, be formally divine, we cannot allow the hymn, as such, to be so. The Holy Spirit gave it as part of an epistle, and not an hymn. There is a stamp by which the books of scripture are distinguished from human writings, even in their very form.

† The writer of this dares not flatter himself that the views expressed in this section will meet with the approbation of some who cordially agree with him, that no other than literal translations of some part of the inspired scriptures ought to be sung in solemn worship. With such he is far from wishing to dispute. Such he considers as, in the main, friends to the cause which he endeavours to defend. He thinks, however, that this cause cannot well be supported without allowing, that when we distinguish between the poetical and other parts of scripture, we make no distinction but what the scripture itself makes; and also that the poetical parts have a greater relation to the exercise of singing in divine worship than the other parts.

“ gauge, into which it is translated, are no more the words of the Holy Ghost, than Greek is English.”\*

Answer. There is a manifest want of candor here. It is true, the term *word* is sometimes used for a sound or combination of sounds peculiar to this or the other language. But the objector could hardly be ignorant that *dabar* in Hebrew, *εγμα* and *λογος* in Greek, or *word* in English, is used for the thing enunciated, the particular sound that is employed not being considered. Thus, when it is said, *The words of the pure are pleasant words*, nobody supposes there is any reference here to the particular sounds of one language more than to those of another. Thus, *terminus vocalis*, or vocal term, in logic, signifies an idea enunciated or expressed, without any consideration of the particular sounds made use of in expressing it. So in universal grammar, as well as in that of a particular language, authors treat of words, of their classes, and of syntax or construction. Nor is any body at a loss to understand the distinction between a translation which professes to give us the sense only, and another, in which it is endeavoured, as much as possible, to give the words of the original. Horace says of a writer,

Serpit humi, tutus nimium, timidusque procellæ.

The sense is expressed in the following lines of Roscommon :

Some tim'rous wretches start at every blast,  
And, fearing tempests, dare not leave the shore.

These

\* An Examination, &c. page 21, 22. This pretence, that the words of scripture, when translated, are not the words of the Holy Spirit, has been much employed by some subtle papists to destroy the credit of the scripture, and to drive simple inconsiderate souls to their visible and infallible interpreter, whether that interpreter be the pope, or a council, or the pope and council united. It was urged, particularly by Bossuet and other popish writers in France, in order to pervert carnal and unstable protestants at the time of the revocation of the edict of Nantz. And no doubt their impious sophistry contributed to the bringing forth of that monstrous brood of atheists, who are the disgrace of France and of the present age.

It may be added here, that on the same pretence, papists have often committed translations of the bible to the flames.

These two lines are elegant, but do not give us the words (or each of the particular ideas) of Horace; which we have in the following translation: "Too cautious and fearful of the storm, he creeps on the ground." This verbal manner, it is owned, is often awkward and unnecessary in translating the classics; because the translator, having a competent understanding of the subject, may often express what is meant as well in his own way as in that of his author. But the case of translating the sacred scriptures is infinitely different. There every word is divine. Therefore the translator is not at liberty to alter a single word, or the relation in which it stands to those which go before or follow it. His whole business is to find out the word of the language into which he translates, which, in signification, most exactly corresponds with the Hebrew or Greek word; and to represent with the same exactness, the relation in which it stands to those which attend it.\*

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\* The author of an Examination, &c. p, 21. having quoted a passage of the Discourse on the duty of singing the book of psalms, immediately adds, "This is perfectly self-contradictory. It is absolutely, totally, and universally impossible in the nature of things." To be sure, these words pronounced with vociferation and proper looks and gestures, might have some effect upon an audience; but they must appear very pitiful to a reader, who looks for nothing but cool reasoning. It is hard to account for this paragraph, otherwise than by supposing, that the author had not allowed himself time and composure for apprehending what he here pretends to refute. For, in the first place, what he says about the words of one language not being the words of another, is a mere quibble; for which he found that the ambiguity of the term *words* afforded him some handle. He has another quibble, equally contemptible, about retaining the arrangement of the original in a translation, which he affects to ridicule by a pretended literal translation of Luke vi. 6. He speaks as if a translator's studying in a rational manner to retain the order of ideas in the original, were inconsistent with a due regard to the idioms both of the language from which, and of that into which he translates. In short, the quibbling and misconstruction of terms in which the author deals here, are what the language of the passage which he pretends to refute, had given no just occasion for: No uncommon phrases were used; for every body speaks of verbal translations, and of translating word for word. In the second place, he neither lays before the reader the reasoning that had been used in the Discourse, nor attempts to refute it. He says, indeed,

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The fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh sections of the second number of the Appendix to the Discourse on Singing Psalms, served farther to ascertain what was meant by adhering to the forms as well as the matter of the psalms; namely, that a translator

“ That the very reason why any word is fit, is because it is calculated to represent the idea or express the meaning.” But this is the very reason why a strictly literal translation is, in the Discourse, preferred to a free one: Because, in what is called a free translation, the words do not exactly represent the ideas which those of the original represent; as is plain from the example quoted from Roscommon. The idea of a free translation are supposed, justly or unjustly, to be the same in effect; but they are not pretended to be, as they are in a literal translation, the same formally and taken one by one. Hence it is said, in the Discourse, that he who translates the scriptures literally, shews a becoming regard to the choice which the wisdom of God has made of words to express what he has been pleased to reveal to us. Our author adds, “ If a speaker or writer could communicate his ideas in twenty different forms of expressions, equally answering his intention, it would be perfectly indifferent which of the forms he chose.” But the question is not concerning a speaker or writer in general, but concerning a translator in particular. Were a person to proceed in translating according to what is here said by the author of the Examination, he would attempt to rival his author, rather than to translate him; since, upon that supposition, he might fix on a form of expression which would equally answer the intention of the author with that which the author had chosen; as if one, who had undertaken to translate a dialogue of Lucian, should drop the form of dialogue, supposing that another form might equally answer the intention of the author. His work, in this case, could not with any propriety be called a translation. There is a great difference between translating and explaining or giving the sense of an author. A Greek scholar, who knows nothing of geometry, may translate a proposition of Euclid; but he cannot explain it, like one, who, though ignorant of the Greek, is a skilful geometrician. A Socinian acquainted with the Hebrew language, may translate the 53d chapter of Isaiah very justly; but there is no illiterate serious christian, who has found relief to his soul in the death of his Redeemer, that would commit such gross blunders in giving the sense of it. We may only add here, that one need not hesitate to say, it would be impious for a person, who pretends to translate the scriptures, to use another form of expression than that of the original; alleging, that his own form would equally answer the intention of the Holy Spirit, and, that it is perfectly indifferent which of the forms be chosen.

lator of them ought not to alter the form of discourse; that he should not turn a prayer, for example, into an affirmation; that he should not alter the arrangement; that each verse should be connected with no other matter in the translation, than it is connected with in the original; that no verses or members of verses should be omitted; that he should not leave out or change the metaphors.

We do not say, that the form of any part of sacred scripture is ever so perfect in any translation, as it is in the standard of all the translations of scripture, the original Hebrew of the Old Testament and Greek of the New. Hence the absurdity of putting the Septuagint, the vulgar Latin, the Arabic, or any other translation, upon a level with the Hebrew and Greek original. But we do assert, so far as the words of any translation are, in signification and arrangement, exactly answerable to those of the Hebrew or Greek, not only the matter, but the form is divine: The words are as really the words of the Holy Ghost as the Hebrew or Greek words; and that the contrary opinion is a dangerous error. This doctrine is established by such considerations as the following:

1. The translated words of the Old Testament are called in the New, the *words of the prophets, or the sayings of the Holy Spirit*, John xii. 37. *I hat the saying, or word, ὁ λόγος, of Isaias the prophet, might be fulfilled, which he said, Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Acts xv. 15, 16. *And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this I will return, &c.* Heb. iii. 7. *Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice.* The apostle afterwards calls our attention to the Greek word *Σήμερον* to-day, as no less the word of the Holy Ghost than the Hebrew word *Haiom*, ver. 13. compared with Psal. xcv. 7. Another instance is remarkable, in the 12th chap. of the same book. *Now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, once more, signifieth the removing, &c.* Thus the words of the Old Testament, translated in the New, are called the words of the prophets, and of the Holy Ghost who spoke by them: And this warrants us to call the translated psalms the words of David, and of the Holy Ghost who spoke by him. We speak with sufficient exactness, when we speak with the scriptures.

2. The

2. There is in the words of scripture, exactly translated into any language, a divine propriety or fitness to express the things of the Spirit of God, which it would be blasphemy to ascribe to any other words, and which fully evidences them to be the words of the Holy Ghost; the very words which his infinite wisdom pitched upon for expressing the truth contained in them. This may be illustrated by an example. When I read these words of the apostle, *He hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, I believe, that, by these words, I am taught, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us for our justification; as our sin was imputed to him, that he might make satisfaction for it to the justice of God. This is my poor imperfect way of expressing what is undoubtedly contained in the text. But the text itself expresses this and other truths contained in it with infinitely greater propriety. To this purpose, Dr. Owen in the eighth chapter of his discourse on the causes, ways and means of understanding the mind of God revealed in his word, has these words: "The principal matter of scripture is mysterious, and the mysteries of it are laid up therein by God himself, and that in a way inimitable by the skill or wisdom of men. When we speak or express the same things according to our measure of comprehension; wherein, from its agreement with the scripture, what we say is materially divine; yet our words are not so; nor is there the same respect to the things themselves, as the expressions of scripture have, which are formally divine." "The whole aim," says Witflus in his *Miscellanea Sacra*, "of our comments on scripture should be, not to exchange the words of the Lord for our words, as if we foolishly thought our words better than his; but to manifest the wisdom of the divine manner of expression: Unless we attain this, let us confess our unskillfulness and ignorance of the sacred language. For if we would not overthrow the divine authority of the holy scriptures, we must firmly maintain, that the words thereof are the words of God; and to ascribe to them any inpropriety, which may need correction, is downright profaneness and horrid blasphemy."\*

3. It is necessary to distinguish between the words of scripture and the doctrines which are deduced from them as the sense

sense of them. For example, from John vi. 34. *No man can come unto me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him*; those who hold the Calvinistic doctrine teach, that no one, who partakes of *that sort* of grace which is here called *drawing*, can fall short of saving faith, true holiness, and everlasting salvation. Arminians, on the other hand, maintain, that many who partake of the same sort of grace, shall, in the issue, perish; the saving effect of it being hindered by man's free will. How are we to proceed in judging of these opposite doctrines? Why, in the first place, we must allow, that neither the words of the former of these propositions, nor those of the latter, are like the words of the text, of divine authority. In the next place, in order to determine whether the Calvinistic doctrine be contained in this text, it is necessary to consider whether it be most agreeable to the emphasis of the words, to the context, and to other places of scripture. In the whole inquiry, the principle we proceed upon is, that the words of the text are formally divine; and, in that respect, are to be carefully distinguished from the words we make use of to express what we judge to be the doctrine contained in the text. If christians who are unacquainted with the original languages have not the words of the Holy Ghost; if they have nothing but the sense of translators; then they have no standard by which to judge of doctrines. They may, indeed, judge whether one human sense or interpretation be agreeable to another; but they know not whether any of them be agreeable to an infallible standard; because, upon this supposition, they have no such standard, there being no other than *the words* of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures. Thus those who do not understand the original languages, are incapacitated for exercising any judgment or discretion about the doctrines they hear, or for distinguishing between truth and error. Nor will it be much better even with those that understand these languages. For it is hardly possible for the best scholar, who has been accustomed to think in a modern language, to judge any otherwise of a text, than according to his own translation; and then, it seems, he judges as little according to the words of the Holy Spirit, as the unlearned do. Thus the benefit of revelation is reduced to nothing. We must even take up with our own wisdom or reason, as the only rule

rule to direct us in judging what is truth or what is error. What is called revelation may, indeed, upon this supposition; supply reason with more materials to work upon, which the writings of Plato and Cicero may also do; it supplies a number of doctrines or notions; but no sure foundations to rest upon in believing any of them: For nothing can be such but the words of the Holy Spirit in the scriptures; which, translate them into what language you please, still manifest themselves to be his own words, and constitute one common infallible standard, by which the unlearned, as well as the learned, may distinguish the truth from the most plausible errors, which the wit of men or the craft of Satan can devise.

4. The formal reason of saving faith, or of that persuasion which the Lord works in the hearts of sinners, concerning the truth of a particular doctrine as affording a solid rest for eternity, is just this, That the words in which it is delivered to us, are the words of God, who cannot lie. Hence that representation of saving faith in the first epistle to the Thessalonians, ii. 13. *When ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* Faith is our hearing the voice of the Son of God; our setting to our seal that God is true. Hence in the prophets these words are continually repeated, *Thus saith the Lord, or the Lord hath spoken.* Hereby we are taught that no words can be the foundation of a divine faith, but such as are formally the words of God. “The mind of God,” says Dr. Owen, “being now committed to writing, God is to be regarded by every individual of mankind, to whom the scriptures come, as speaking to him no less immediately, than if he heard his voice, as Adam said he heard it in the garden. Though this voice could not strike the ear but by means of the air in which it was formed, yet it was not improper to call it a voice immediately from God. In like manner, his word may be considered as his immediate voice to us, though it be transmitted by writing. Abraham did not doubt that it was indeed the voice of God which gave the probatory command about sacrificing his son, and therefore without hesitation he set himself to obey it. So the authority of God speaking in the scriptures, the voice therein be-  
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“ing apprehended with irresistible evidence to be indeed  
 “his voice, is found to be the highest obligation to faith  
 “and obedience.”\* Hence the doctor says in another  
 place, “He who applies himself to the study of the holy  
 “scriptures, should, in the first place, have a sense of his  
 “nearness to God deeply fixed in his mind, that he may  
 “be filled with reverence of the divine majesty and author-  
 “ty, with submission and abasement of heart. For in the  
 “holy scriptures, God speaks to the reader no less imme-  
 “diately, than if he spoke by a voice from heaven. He is  
 “despised, unless holy reverence and godly fear possess the  
 “mind of the reader. He dwells with those that tremble  
 “at his word: But a light and desultory manner of reading  
 “the scriptures is the plague of men’s souls, directly tending  
 “to atheism.”†

5. In the saving manifestations that God has made of himself to men by means of the scripture, they have had the clearest views of the words of it being the very words of God. When the Lord is pleased to shine on their souls in the reading of the scriptures, do they not discern something divine in the energy of the words, in the order and disposition of them, and in the richness and suitableness of the metaphors and similies? Do they not find one thing following another in a manner suitable to their case, and to what is manifestly the design of the Holy Spirit in the passage, as fills them with wonder, and convinces them that the very manner of the scriptures is as much superior to the manner of mere human composition, as the fabric of the universe is to any of the works of human art? Some conviction of this may be attained by such a diligent attention to the language and manner of the scriptures as man’s natural understanding is still capable of; a conviction which is sufficient to vindicate the experience of true believers in this matter from the charge of enthusiasm: Though it must be allowed to fall as far short of a divine faith, and the saving experience which accompanies it, as the pleasure of seeing the picture of a man whom we peculiarly esteem, falls short of the pleasure of seeing and conversing with the man himself.

Though

\* Theologoumena, lib. iv. cap. 2. § 6.

† Idem. lib. vi. cap. 9. § 25.

Though all true believers have a deep and abiding sense of the power and authority by which the words of the Holy Spirit are distinguished from all other words ; yet there are various degrees of this experience in different believers, and in the same believer at different times. On some occasions it has been very remarkable and astonishing. Junius gives this account of his conversion : While he was yet thoughtless of the concerns of his soul, having a mind one day, to read something in the scriptures, he opened the book at the first chapter of the gospel of John. He read ; he was astonished ; his mind was filled with an overpowering sense of the divinity of the matter, and of the majesty and authority of the words. During the remainder of the day, says he, I could think of nothing else. Bishop Burnet gives us the following account from the mouth of the Earl of Rochester : “ When Mr. Pearson was reading to him the 53d chapter “ of Isaiah, he felt an inward force upon him, which did so “ enlighten his mind, and convince him, that he could resist “ it no longer ; for the WORDS HAD AN AUTHORITY which “ did shoot like rays or beams in his mind. So that he was “ not only convinced by the reasoning which satisfied his “ understanding ; but by a power which did so effectually “ constrain him, that he did ever after as firmly believe in “ his Saviour, as if he had seen him in the clouds. He had “ made this chapter be read to him so often, that he had “ got it by heart. He would descant upon particular ex- “ pressions in this manner : *Who hath believed our report ?* “ Here, said he, was foretold the opposition the gospel was “ to meet with from such wretches as I was,” &c.

The pious and judicious Mr. Halyburton, in his Memoirs, observes, That though God make use of the words of men for leading into the meaning of his own ; yet when he found the word had done good, it was usually God’s own word in the scripture introduced in his sermons. A remark that deserves the particular attention of both ministers and their hearers.

6. The forms of speaking, such as exhortation, declaration, prayer ; the order and connexion of verses ; the metaphors, in an exact verbal translation of the scriptures, are either of divine inspiration, or they are not. If these be not of divine inspiration in such a translation, then they are not

not so even in the original text ; because it is undeniable, that they are precisely the same in both. And if these be not of divine inspiration, then is the bible, even as we have it in the original languages, not so. For surely whoever is the author of any composition, is the author of the forms of speaking used in it ; the author of the order and connexion of the parts ; of the metaphors and similies. And if God is not the author of the scriptures, then have we no divine revelation. On the other hand, if the forms of speaking, the order and connexion of the verses, the metaphors and similies be of divine inspiration ; then so far as these things, which belong to the form of the scriptures, are accurately preserved in any translation, the very form of the scripture thus translated, is so far divinely inspired ; and the scripture-songs, thus translated, may justly be called inspired songs, in opposition to pretended imitations of them, in which the particulars, now mentioned, are manifestly neglected.

We may argue in the same manner with respect to the words of scripture in general, that they are either the words of the Holy Spirit in an exact verbal translation, or they are not so in the original text : For if the nouns in the translation signify the same persons or things with those in the original ; if the verbs signify the same state of being, doing or suffering ; if the same relations, connexions or qualifications of the nouns and verbs be signified by the prepositions, the adverbs and the conjunctions ; then, so far as this identity has place, the words are precisely the same in the translation that they are in the original : For the modification of sound peculiar to a particular language (as *domus* or *contra*) is in this case intitled to no consideration, but that of a sign signifying a certain thing or relation, which may be no less exactly signified by another modification of sound (as *a house* or *against*.)

When we speak of the order of words being the same in a translation as in the original, we mean the order of them according to the general construction of language ; and not according to the collocation or placing of words, which, in particular languages, may have become customary for the sake of the more agreeable pronunciation. Thus, when one says in English, *The good hate to sin from the love of virtue* ; and in Latin *Oderunt peccare boni virtutis amore* ; it is obvious

to common sense, that the order of words, according to the general construction of language, is the same; as we might demonstrate by the rules of universal grammar.

As to the Hebrew and Greek idioms or peculiar phrases, each of them may be considered as a complex term, and generally a phrase may be found in English, as exactly answerable to it in signification, as one single word is to another. Such idiomatic expressions as cannot be verbally rendered, are so rarely to be met with in scripture, that it will be hard to find any tolerable translations of a Latin or Greek book so literal, as our English translation of the scripture; and competent judges allow, (what indeed, in some measure, appears from the valuable readings in the margin) that it might have been more so with advantage. Mr. Thomas Boston, who was a great adept in Hebrew literature, agrees with Mr. Addison, that the Hebrew idioms run into the English tongue with a particular grace and beauty; that they give a force and energy to our expression, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intense phrases, than any that are to be met with in our own tongue.\*

The account which critics give of the beauties in the style and composition of the scriptures, (which undoubtedly belong to the form of them) is applicable to a literal translation of them, as well as to the original. This may be exemplified by a passage of an excellent preface to Marlorate's Ecclesiastical Exposition of the Psalms, by Henry Stephens. "The expression," says he, "which we have in Deut. xxviii. *The heaven which is over thy head shall be brass,* and the earth that is under thee shall be iron, is an instance, among many, of a style or manner of speaking, *formulae sermonis*, peculiar to the Hebrews and altogether their own. Go now, turn over all the Greek and Latin poets, the heroic, the tragic, the Lyric; will you ever find any thing in them like this? any words so significant, so emphatical, so full of majesty? But why should we wonder that far other words proceed from sacred lips, than from those of profane authors." Rollin's observations, in his

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\* Appendix to Memoirs of Mr. Boston, pag. 15.

Belles Lettres, on the song of Moses at the Red Sea, is an example of this sort of criticism on the language of scripture.

**OBJECTION.** The inspired writers of the New Testament frequently translate portions of the Hebrew scripture into the Greek language, but in doing so, they neither observe the *order* of the original always, nor give a literal translation. To be convinced of this compare the following passages: Matth. ii. 18. with Jer. xxxi. 15. Luke iii. 4, 5, 6. with Isa. xl. 3, 4, 5. Luke iv. 18, 19. with Isa. lxi. 1, 2. Matth. iv. 15, 16. with Isa. ix. 1, 2. Matth. xii. 18, 19, 20, 21. with Isa. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Mark vii. 6, 7. with Isa. xxix. 13. Acts ii. 25, 26, 27, 28. with Psal. xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. Acts iii. 22, 23. with Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19. Acts vii. 42, 43. with Deut. xvii. 15, 18, 19.

**ANSWER.** If the variations in these passages are brought to prove that a translation of the Old Testament ought not to represent the words and phraseology of the Old Testament, then the objector's reasoning must be to this effect: The writers of the New Testament in quoting a passage occasionally, and for a particular purpose, out of the Old Testament, omit some words of the original that were not necessary to that purpose; therefore, such as are not quoting, but translating, and who, in doing so, ought to have no other purpose than that of rendering *all* the words of the Old Testament, may omit some of these words in their translation. It is manifest there is no consequence here. In quoting a passage from any author, we use as many or as few of his words as our purpose requires: Nor is any injury hereby done to the author, provided only that due care be taken to use his words in a manner not disagreeable to his intention. The design of a quotation is to connect some part of an author's words and sense with the sentiments and discourse of him that makes it. The design of a translation is singly to represent the whole of the words and sense of the work or passage which is the subject of it.

We allow, that the paraphrases or explications which the Holy Spirit in the scripture hath given us of his own words, are of equal authority with the words of which they are explications. But this is God's prerogative. A translator may no more put his own glosses and explications in place of the  
word

word of God, than he may lay claim to unerring wisdom and divine authority. Many of these variations are such as serve to explain or amplify the original words of the Old Testament. Thus in *Isai. lxi. 1. To bind up the broken-hearted*, is rendered in *Luke iv. 18. to heal the broken-hearted*. And the last clause of that verse in *Isaiah, The opening of the prison to them that are bound*, is explained and amplified in the words of *Luke, The recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound*. So what is in *Isaiah xxix. 13. Their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men*, is explained in *Matth. xv. 9. In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*. The expressions in *Isaiah xlii. 1, 2. My servant whom I uphold: He shall not cry—and he shall bring forth judgment unto truth*, are in *Mat. xii. 18, 19, 20. My servant whom I have chosen, he shall not strive nor cry, until he send forth judgment unto victory*. What is in *Psal. lxxviii. 18. Thou hast received gifts for men*, is in *Ephes. iv. 8. Gave gifts unto men*. So instead of *beyond Damascus* in *Amos v. 27. Stephen in Acts vii. 43. has by way of explanation, beyond Babylon*. It is to be observed, with respect to these explanatory variations in general, that they are not so much a departure from the original words, as an expression of what is included in the emphasis of them, as has been shewn by many learned writers.

Again, when the sacred writers of the New Testament quote a passage of the Old, they do not always give us an entire sentence; but only some words of one, which, in their genuine sense, are applicable to the matter in hand. Of this what is cited in *Matth. iv. 15, 16. from Isai. ix. 1, 2. is an example. The land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtali—by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, in Galilee of nations. The people, &c.* The evangelist omits the words in the beginning of the 1st verse, and the words between *Naphtali* and *by the way*. Thus in *Mat. xxi. 5. the words of Zech. ix. 9. Just and having salvation*, are left out.

Sometimes a sentence is made up of two or more quotations from the Old Testament. Thus in *Matth. xxi. 5. Say ye to the daughter of Zion*, is taken from *Isai. lxii. 11.* and the latter part from *Zech. ix. 9.* So in *Rom. ix. 33. Behold I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, and whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed*, the first and last part are taken

taken from *Isai. xxviii. 16.* and the middle part from *Isai. viii. 14.*

Sometimes we find the same text cited in several places of the New Testament, and in each of these places some part of it is more particularly applied, according to the text in *Isai. vi. 9, 10.* In *Acts xxviii.* it is adduced to convince the Jews of their obduracy in rejecting the word of the gospel; and therefore the words of *Isai. vi.* are used only so far as they described their character: *Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, &c.* But, in the *xiii. chapter of John,* the scope of the evangelist is to represent the spiritual judgment the Jews were under from God, as what accounted for their unbelief; and therefore the words of *Isai. vi.* are used so far as they represent the holy and righteous hand which God had in the matter: *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, &c.*

Thus, the words of the Old Testament are truly recited in the quotations from it in the New; but such only, and so many of the words, in any particular quotation, as were necessary to the scope or design of the place where it is made. These are rather examples of quoting, applying and comparing passages, than of simply translating.

Upon the whole, it is evident, that, so far as a translation of any part of scripture retains the words of the original, not as to sound, but as to signification, and particularly the metaphors and similes, the form of discourse, the arrangement and division of the matter, it has so far that divinely inspired form of scripture, which, as being immediately from God, is entitled to peculiar reverence. Hence it has been allowed by christians in general to be grossly profane to use the words or peculiar phrases of scripture in a ludicrous manner. Hence, too, our ancestors testified against the stated reading, in the English churches, of passages of the apocryphal books; because, however many useful truths might be found in these books, yet it was accounted a grievous corruption to give human compositions the same place in public worship with the scriptures. "Tho' it should be granted," says the author of *Altare Damascenum,*

maſcenum, “ that the paſſages of the Apocrypha, read in the  
 “ ſervice of the church of England, contain nothing imperti-  
 “ nent or abſurd; yet they are not trumpets, which God hath  
 “ ſanctified, for his prieſts to blow with. The church, in her  
 “ purer times, read no other writings in public worſhip, than  
 “ thoſe of the prophets and apoſtles. In the church of En-  
 “ gland the apocryphal writings are read, ſung, and explained  
 “ as canonical ſcripture.”\*

OBJECTION. The inſpired psalms are not in verſe. Is  
 not the original form of them changed by the verification?

ANSWER. We formerly obſerved, that the particular  
 verification uſed for the conveniency of ſinging, is a cir-  
 cumſtance which is by no means incompatible with a due  
 care to retain the words of the Holy Ghoſt. As the psalms  
 in the original are truly poetical, the buſineſs of the verſifier  
 is little more than putting the words in parcels. Thus the  
 original form is adhered to almoſt equally in the following  
 three tranſlations of the third verſe of the firſt psalm.

And he ſhall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that  
 bringeth forth his fruit in his ſeaſon; his leaf ſhall not wither,  
 and whatſoever he doth ſhall proſper.

He ſhall be like a tree that grows,  
 Near planted by a river,  
 Which in his ſeaſon yields his fruit;  
 And his leaf fadeſh never,  
 And all he doth ſhall proſper well.

That man ſhall be like to a tree,  
 That planted by the running river grows,  
 Which fruit doth bear in time of year,  
 Whoſe leaves ſhall never fade nor root unlooſe;  
 His actions all  
 Still proſper ſhall.

DRUMMOND.†

SECT.

\* Altare Damascenum. Cap. 10.

† It deſerves our notice, that ſeveral reaſons offered for the  
 opinion, that other compositions are more proper to be uſed in  
 our public praifes than the book of psalms, are ſuch as would mili-  
 tate againſt the ſinging of theſe psalms in the original Hebrew,  
 ſuppoſing we were to ſing in that language, fully as much as they  
 do againſt ſinging them in a tranſlation; for they are not more  
 founded upon or connected with the peculiarity of the Jews; nor  
 are

SECT. III. *Whether we are always to consider the Words which we sing in Solemn Worship as our own, and as applicable to our present situation?*

In the Discourse on the duty of singing psalms, it was observed, that it is not always necessary to consider the words we sing in solemn worship as our own, or as applicable to our present situation. This assertion has been represented, with peculiar virulence, not only as erroneous, but “as an excuse for the crime of falsifying before God, and an attempt to change our obligations to truth and sincerity.” The direct contrary of what is asserted in the Discourse must then be the opinion of our opponents, namely, That the nature of the exercise of singing in solemn worship is such as requires the words we sing to be considered as our own, and that it is unwarrantable to sing words that are not applicable to our present condition.

This opinion is justly rejected, because, in the first place, it confounds the exercise of singing in solemn worship with that of prayer. The scripture plainly represents these as two distinct exercises; 1 Corinth. xiv. 15. *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.* James v. 13. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.* Several differences between them were pointed out in the Discourse on singing psalms.\* At present, we only observe, that the words we utter

are they more obscured by allusions to these peculiarities in a translation, than they are in the original. They who offer such reasons, are, therefore, justly charged with preferring mere human compositions to what themselves allow to be the words of the Holy Spirit.

\* Mr. Calderwood, speaking of the practice in some cathedrals of singing prayers, observes, That so far as forms of prayer are sung, they are not prayers; for, says he, *canere proprie non est orare*, to sing is not properly to pray. *Altare Darniscenum*, cap. x; where he also quotes a passage of the learned Casaubon's Exercitations, which blames Borenius, the popish annalist, for confounding these two exercises. The author of an Examination, &c. p. 39. insists, that prayer and singing are the same; “because” says he,

ter in prayer, are still considered as our own, and as applicable to our present situation; but it is not necessary to consider the words we sing as such.\* In prayer the thoughts and affections suggest the words; but in singing, it is just the reverse; for the words we sing, rightly understood, suggest matter of believing meditation; and thus kindle spiritual and devout affections.

We observe, in the second place, that the supposition of our opponents, with regard to the import of singing, has no foundation in the common language of mankind. For if it had, a person's singing verses not applicable to himself would expose him to the reproach of lying. But this was never known to be the case. Who would blame one, that had never heard a nightingale, for singing the following beautiful lines of Milton's *Il penseroso*?—

Sweet

he, "it is allowed that we inwardly pray what we sing." This puts one in mind of the plea of the popish doctors for the worship of images, which was, that, while they *outwardly* kneeled before the image, their *inward* devotion was directed to God; as if such external worship was to be denominated from that inward devotion.

\* To this an objection has been offered, to the following purpose: We use other words than our own in preaching and prayer, as well as in singing. In preaching, the words of others may be quoted: In prayer there is a repetition of promises upon which we plead; therefore the words which we utter in preaching and prayer, may as well be considered as the words of others, as those we utter in singing; and that, in all these exercises, there is the same reason to consider the words we utter as our own.

Answer. It is a common observation, that exceptions establish general rules. So the quoting of the words of others in preaching, and the mentioning of the promises of God in prayer, strongly imply, that the words of these exercises, are, in general, considered as our own. Besides, the question is not about what is actually done in preaching or prayer, but whether it be as agreeable to the nature and design of these exercises to repeat sermons and prayers composed by others, as it is to the nature and design of singing, to make use of a psalm or hymn composed by another. Let the question be determined by the approved examples of these exercises recorded in scripture: There we have examples of singing in the words of David and Asaph; but none of praying or preaching by repeating the prayers or sermons of others.

Sweet bird that shunn'st the noise of folly,  
 Most musical, most melancholy!  
 The chauntress of the woods among,  
 I woo to hear thy even song.

We observe in the third place, that this supposition is contrary to the approved practice of the church of God. The xviiiith psalm, which is expressly directed to the chief musician, was undoubtedly sung by the Levites. But it is plain, that, as David speaks throughout that psalm in the first person, and of his own personal cases and experiences, so the Levites could by no means sing it as their words, or as expressive of their experiences. It cannot be denied, that the book of psalms, from the time of its being delivered to the Jews, continued to be sung in their ordinary solemn worship. Hence they would be frequently singing psalms concerning a prosperous condition, while they were in affliction; and, on the contrary, psalms concerning an afflicted condition, while they were in prosperity. Indeed, we know no system of psalms or hymns used by any church, which, upon the supposition in question, could be sung by church members in general, consistently with sincerity. Let us consider, for example, how every person in an ordinary worshipping assembly is to sing the following words of Dr. Watts' as his own words:

By long experience have I known;  
 Thy sovereign power to save:  
 At thy command I venture down,  
 Securely to the grave.

Hence one is led to think, that the charge of insincerity, brought against us by our opponents, may be justly retorted. For how does it consist with sincerity to consider the words which we sing as our own words, whilst we are conscious to ourselves that they are not so at all? Upon this principle, it seems inconceivable how a person, ordinarily joining with any congregation or family in this part of social worship, can escape the charge of hypocrisy and dissimulation: For he must be sensible, that the frames and exercises represented in the words sung, are often very different from his own.

Perhaps the objector means to excuse this inconsistency, when he intimates, that, whilst the facts represented in a psalm exist any where, a person may sing the words of the  
 psalm

psalm as his own.\* But the facts represented in a psalm, are either represented simply as existing at present, or as existing in the psalmist's experience. If it be unwarrantable or inconsistent with truth to sing psalms in which facts are represented *simply as existing at present, after these facts have ceased to exist any where*, then it was unwarrantable to sing various passages of the psalms in several periods of the Old Testament dispensation. Thus, in the time of the Babylonish captivity, they could not warrantably sing, upon this supposition, the words of the cxxi<sup>d</sup> psalm, *Jerusalem is builded as a city: Whither the tribes go up—to give thanks unto the name of the Lord. For there are set thrones of judgment; the thrones of the house of David.* Nor, after the Babylonish captivity, when they had no king, the words of the cxxi<sup>st</sup>, *The king trusteth in the Lord.* Nor the words of the cxxxii<sup>d</sup>, *Arise, O Lord, unto thy rest, thou, and the ark of thy strength;* the ark being one of the glories of the first temple, which were wanting in the second. Thus there were often, even under the Old Testament dispensation, some passages of the psalms, which, upon the objector's principle, could not be sung consistently with truth. But where have we a single hint in scripture, that there was any passage of the psalms which it would be unwarrantable to sing in any period after they were given to the church? Israel was frequently exhorted to sing psalms; it is no where said, excepting those psalms *which simply represent facts as existing, which have now ceased to exist*: Nor is there any thing said about the psalms, or about the exercise of singing, that implies such an exception. With respect to passages of the psalms, in which facts are represented *as existing in the psalmist's experience*, such as these, *My heart is fixed: I have more understanding than all my teachers*, these, according to the hypothesis of the objector, can, no more than those of the former class, be sung warrantably or consistently with truth, by any who have not, in the time of singing, the very same attainment or experience: For, if a person sing such a passage as his own words, the alleging that, though he is a stranger to such attainments and experiences, they do, in fact, exist somewhere, will not save him from the charge of falsehood, in ascribing them to himself. Thus, according

\* An Examination, &c. page 54, 55.

to the objector's absurd principle, no passage in which the psalmist represents his case as different from what we find our own to be, however full of suitable instruction and admonition, can be warrantably sung by us in solemn worship.

The supposition of its being essential to singing in solemn worship, that we should consider the words we sing as our own, and as descriptive of our present case, though grossly absurd, is the principal reason why our opponents refuse to sing such expressions in the book of psalms as the following: *Blow up the trumpet in the new moon: in the time appointed in our solemn feast day. Blessed is the man in whose heart are the ways of them who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools. Bind the sacrifices with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.* Why are such passages deemed improper to be sung in New Testament worship? Not, it seems, because they are obscure, or afford little instruction; but because church members cannot now sing them as their own words, or as, in their literal sense, relative to their present situation. One should think, however, that no more would be necessary to convince a reasonable person of the absurdity of such an opinion, than to consider, that, while there is a great variety of frames and exercises among church members, there can be no singing, according to this opinion, consistently with truth and sincerity, unless every one have a psalm or hymn of his own; and joint singing be utterly abolished.

Such is the absurd hypothesis of our opponents with regard to some passages of the psalms representing facts as presently existing which we must regard as past events. They cannot understand how they can be warrantably sung. Yet prejudice being removed, few things are more easily understood. Remembering that the words we sing are not ours, but the words of the psalmist, or of the church in his time, (which appears very natural and easy) we may justly consider the scenes of mercy or judgment through which the Lord brought his people in former ages, as set before us in the present tense, that we may contemplate them in a more lively affecting manner: Thus we may, in some measure, attain the end for which they were written, which was, that *we through faith and patience of the scriptures might have hope.* Such passages, considered in this light, and set home

on our hearts by the Holy Spirit, will prove real food to our faith, and encouragement to our hope. This matter is represented with great propriety in the XIIIth Direction of Mr. Marshal's Gospel Mystery of Sanctification. "We are," says he, "to sing such psalms as speak in the first person, though we cannot apply them to ourselves as words uttered by ourselves, concerning ourselves; and in this we do not lie. David speaks of Christ as of himself, as a pattern of affliction and virtue, to instruct others; and we sing such psalms, not as our own words, but words for our instruction. And therein we do not lie any more than the Levites, the sons of Korah, or Jeduthun, or other musicians bound to sing them. Though it be good to personate all the good we can; yet we have so much liberty in the use of psalms, that, though we cannot apply all to ourselves as speaking and thinking the same; yet we shall answer the end if we sing for our instruction." And says another eminent divine, "May we not bless and extol that God in praises, who hath redeemed others from those sins under which we yet groan? and may not the singing of this contribute to the strengthening of our faith and hope of the like redemption? and may not we in the singing of such experiences of others, be raised up to see what an high and rich favour it is to be blessed with such redemption? and cannot all this be done without hypocrisy?" \*

## SECT. I

\* Brown's View of the Quaker's Religion. The author of an Examination, &c. pag. 16. says, "Indeed, had the Sovereign Lord of all made it known by any means, that it is his pleasure we should continue to sing SUCH MATTER, our reason should bow and acquiesce." He means such matter as refers to and describes a case quite different from the present case of the church, and the particular persons who sing. Now, it is plainly the revealed word of God, that Jeduthun and the other Levites should sing psalms referring to and describing various personal cases, which David was in, quite different from what we can suppose all or any one of them to have been in; that the Old Testament church should sing the psalms without exception, when they were in captivity, and deprived of the temple worship, as well as when they had it; and that a whole family or congregation should join together in singing a psalm referring to, and describing one particular

SECT. IV. *Whether the Examples of David, Asaph and others, in making Psalms for the Use of the Church in Solemn Worship, is to be imitated by us.*

OBJECTION. "What shall we say of the more abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ, which we have received, if, with all its fulness, we are in a worse condition with respect to one important part of our worship than the Old Testament church? The children of Israel, from the days of Moses until their restoration from the Babylonish captivity, had persons among them enabled by the Spirit to compose psalms and hymns suitable to their situation and circumstances. And now when a more abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ is acknowledged to be given, christians are wholly incapacitated for composing psalms and hymns to be sung in solemn worship."

ANSWER. This objection proceeds upon the supposition that the exercise of praise is better managed, when we use songs newly composed for the occasion than when we use old ones. But this is not always or necessarily true; because old ones may be as well adapted to the occasion, and in other respects better than new ones. We have no reason to doubt but that the words of David and Asaph were used with as much propriety in the time of Hezekiah, as when they were first composed. Besides, the objection supposes (what is very absurd) that it is impossible for a form of psalmody, though given by the only wise God, to be suitable to both the Old and New Testament dispensation, or even to more than one occasion; for here it is peremptorily asserted, that the church must be in a worse condition, for want of persons enabled by the Spirit to compose psalms or hymns occasionally. Is not this too like a limiting of God as to his manner

particular case, though the congregation or family consist of persons whose cases are as various as their features. All this is proved sufficiently from the appointment of singing the psalms in general; from the recorded example of the Jewish church; and from the nature of singing in social worship. Thus, it is proved, that the Sovereign Lord of all hath made known, that it is his pleasure, that we should sing such matter; and therefore, as the Examiner has well said, "our reason should bow and acquiesce."

manner of ordering the condition of the church? One person might say, with as much reason, that the church is now necessarily in a worse condition, since it had no infallible teachers or writers, like the prophets and apostles; whose new occasional directions about the right understanding and application of word and providence, might be supposed to be as necessary as new poetical compositions. Another might suggest, that the church must now be in a worse condition, since miracles have ceased. There is no end of such suggestions. But we may assure ourselves, that the condition of the church with respect to her public praises is better or worse, not according to the newness or oldness of the compositions she makes use of, but according as her exercise is more or less suitable to the true meaning and spirit of the scripture-forms of psalmody.

**OBJECTION.** “ If the children and people of God have sung his praises upon every new deliverance; if the prophets break out into unusual transports whenever a ray of gospel light dawns upon them; if they foretel and enjoy that the liveliest gratitude should be manifested, and that songs of praise and gratitude should be composed and sung by those that should share its blessings,—what shall we say? Is it possible to resist the force of such examples, or to gainsay and oppose exhortations so reasonable and just?”\*

**ANSWER.** A great deal of declamation on this head might have been spared, being obviously quite foreign to the matter in hand. The duty of singing the praises of God for each of his mercies, and especially for the blessings of the gospel, is not disputed; but the question is, Whether the church, in order to the right performance of this duty, must have hymns or psalms newly composed, and different both in matter and form, from the scripture-psalms? Shall we suppose, that the praises of a person or people are unacceptable to God, however suitable to the ground and occasion of them, merely because they were promoted and expressed by a scripture-song; and that the scripture-song had such a dismal effect, not because it was unsuitable, but only because it was not newly composed?

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\* A Discourse on Psalmody, by Mr. Lata.

We do not question the binding force of scripture-examples. But one must distinguish between examples that are imitable, and those that are not so. We are not to imitate the Israelites in the practice of what is abrogated by the New Testament dispensation. We are not to imitate examples of an extraordinary and miraculous nature; or examples of something altogether dependent upon local and singular circumstances. We allow, that we are to imitate the prophets in the moral duty of praising and giving thanks to God for his mercies. Nor is it unwarrantable to compose a hymn on occasion of some remarkable deliverance wrought for us. But to dictate a form of psalmody to be used in solemn worship, and to be substituted in the place of the scripture-songs, is a different matter. In doing this, a person, without inspiration, has neither precept nor example in the word to warrant him. For the only songs which we have any such precept or example for using in the ordinary solemn worship of the church, were given, like the rest of the scriptures, by divine inspiration.

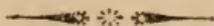
**OBJECTION.** If we may not imitate the examples of the prophets in composing hymns to be used in solemn worship, because they were inspired; then we may not imitate the examples of praying and preaching recorded in scripture: For “we have no scripture-examples of any persons praying or preaching, but such as were inspired.”\*

**ANSWER.** The reason why we say, that we may not imitate the example of giving psalms to be sung in public worship, is not that those who gave them were inspired; but that they gave them by virtue of inspiration; for *all scripture was given by inspiration*. Some things recorded of the prophets and apostles, were done by them as men, in the exercise of their natural faculties; as Paul’s appealing to Cesar: Some things were done by them as partakers of the renewing grace of God, common to all believers; as their believing and praying: Some things were done in the exercise of that official authority which they had in common with the ordinary pastors of the church; as their preaching: And some things were done by them as inspired, or by virtue merely of that extraordinary inspiration by which they  
penned

\* A Discourse on Psalmody, pag. 97.

penned the scriptures or performed miracles. Inspired persons cannot be imitated in things of the last sort: But they may in things of the other three sorts.

Besides, it a manifest falsehood that we have no examples of any persons praying or preaching but such as were inspired. There are examples recorded of persons, whom we have no ground to consider as inspired, praying; as the people of Israel, 1 Kings viii. 36. Psalm lxxx. 4. the woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. 22, 25. the thief on the cross, Luke xxii. 42. the publican, Luke xviii. 13. the christians at Rome, Rom. xv. 30. all saints, Rev. viii. 3.; and also preaching, as Ephraim, Col. i. 7. Archippus, Col. iv. 17. those that were over the Thessalonians in the Lord, 1 Thess. v. 12. the angel having the everlasting gospel in his hand, representing some preachers of the word, Rev. xiv. 6.



### C H A P. III.

*Shewing that the Obligation to use the Scripture-songs is common to the Old and New Testament Dispensation.*

**I**N the Discourse on the Divine Ordinance of Singing Psalms, the following observation was proposed and considered, namely, *That the inspired forms of psalmody were given to the church to be sung in her public worship, till the end of time.* The strange opinions that have been vented in opposition to this observation, render the discussion of the following subjects necessary.

SECT. I. *Of the Argument for the Use of the Psalms in the Solemn Praises of the Church under the New Testament, arising from Scripture-example.*

IT was observed in the Discourse, that the delivery of the psalms to the chief musician plainly intimated that they were to be sung in public worship. Accordingly, it is said in 2 Chron. xxix. 30. *Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord in the words of*

of David and of Asaph the seer: And they sung praises with gladness. Here we may observe, that though the Levites were appointed to officiate in what belonged to ceremonial worship, as in instrumental music; yet it will not follow, that their singing the praises of the Lord in the words of David and Asaph belonged to that worship; since it was ordinary and suitable to the nature of that dispensation, for moral and ceremonial duties to be joined together, both in the injunction and in the practice of them. See an example in the 22d verse of the next chapter: *And Hezekiah spake comfortably to all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord, and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings, and making confession to the Lord God of their fathers.* Now, that teaching the good knowledge of the Lord, and making confession to him are moral duties, in the practice of which the Levites ought to be imitated by us, is what nobody doubts; though they are here connected with the ceremonial observances of keeping the feast and offering peace-offerings, in the practice of which the example of the Levites is now no more to be imitated.\* Besides, the singing of psalms was the duty and exercise, not only of the Levites, but of the whole congregation of Israel. The praises of the people are described in the same terms as those of the Levites, Psal. cxviii. 2, 3, 4. *Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let them that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.* Hence the whole church is called upon to join in the exercise of singing psalms, Psal. xcv. 1, 2. *O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.*

CV. 2.

\* The author of an Examination, &c. may here see that, in order to shew that the consideration of the psalms being directed to the chief musician, operates against the duty of using them in public worship to the end of the world, he should have adduced some other reason than that which he has assigned, p. 13. namely, that the singing of them in the temple was to be accompanied with the circumstance of instrumental music. It is plain, that this is nothing to his purpose, unless the universal proposition were true, That every thing, which was attended with a ceremonial rite, was ceremonial. The falshood of this proposition is here sufficiently shewn.

cv. 2. *Sing unto him ; sing psalms unto him.* There is no reason to think that the people are exhorted in these, and the like texts, to sing any other songs than those which were sung by the Levites.\* The writers on Jewish antiquities agree, that it was the custom of every family at the passover to sing the Hallel, or hymn from the 113th psalm to the 118th inclusive.

OBJECTION. “ This only proves what nobody denies, “ that the Jewish church actually sung the Old Testament “ songs. But this does not prove that there was a divine “ appointment in the case ; this example extends no farther than the Jewish church ; and therefore proves “ nothing as to what the christian church should sing.”†

ANSWER. It is undeniable, that there are cases in which a divine institution may be inferred from an approved example recorded in scripture. Thus, orthodox divines conclude the divine institutions of sacrifices soon after the fall, from the acceptable offering of them by Abel ; that of the christian sabbath, from the examples recorded in the New Testament of the public assemblies for hearing the word and communicating on that day ; that of the form of swearing by lifting up the hand, from the examples of it recorded in scripture. When we find such things practised with God’s approbation, we justly conclude, that they must have been things of his appointment ; no other being acceptable to him in religious worship. In like manner, the divine appointment of the singing of the book of psalms in solemn worship, may be argued from the divinely approved example of the church of God recorded in scripture.

We allow, as has been already observed, that there are examples of the people of God recorded in scripture, which we are not bound to imitate : Such as, examples of their observing the ceremonial and judicial laws ; examples of an extraordinary and miraculous nature, as that of prophesying or dividing the waters of a river ; examples of something

\* When the people of God were exhorted to sing his praise, they were bid not to make, but take a psalm ready made to their hands, Psal. lxxxix. 1, 2. Dr. Gill.

† An Examination, &c. page 23.

thing altogether dependent on local and singular circumstances, as that of going upon the house-top to pray. But the examples of singing praise with the words of David and of Asaph, is different from all these. It is neither an observance of any ceremonial or judicial law; nor is it of a miraculous, extraordinary or local nature; but an example of the acceptable manner of performing what cannot be denied to be a moral duty, an ordinary exercise of God's worship, performed, not by virtue of any extraordinary power or gift, but by means of such ability as God ordinarily affords church members in his service. Nothing can be more false than that the obligation to imitate an example of this kind extends no farther than the Jewish church.

OBJECTION. That the psalms were given to the Jewish church for this purpose is perhaps probable: But is it hereby proved, that they were given to any other church?

ANSWER. This way of speaking is very absurd. For several ages, and particularly from the time that the psalms were given, to the coming of Christ, the Jewish church comprehended the whole church of God upon earth: Those that were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, were then strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. This church is no more confined within such narrow bounds: It is now greatly enlarged by the calling of the Gentiles; but it is still the same church. Hence when the psalms were given to the Jewish church, they were given to the same church which now is: For we are not to consider the church of the Old Testament, which consisted of the Israelites, and the church of the New Testament, though it consists for the most part of Gentiles, as two different communities; but as one kingdom of Christ, who hath made both one, Eph. ii. 14. and who hath inserted us, who were wild olives, into the fat olive-tree, Rom. xi. 17. And therefore the laws, which have once been given by Christ the King and Head of the church, are always binding upon the whole church, unless he declare that he hath abrogated them by another institution.\*

OBJECTION. "I desire the reader to examine the whole chapter, 2 Chron. xxix. and all the history of Hezekiah, " and

\* Witli Oeconom. Fœder. lib. iv. cap. iv. § 33.

“ and he will find, that neither Hezekiah nor the princes  
 “ were prophets; that they do not pretend to be actuated  
 “ by inspiration in the whole business,—— but they acted as  
 “ any other good men would do in similar circumstances.  
 “ Having a variety of psalms suited to the worship of God  
 “ in general, under that dispensation, they judged certain  
 “ compositions of David to be particularly suited to the  
 “ present occasion, and ordered them to be sung according-  
 “ ly. As well might a minister, having pointed out a par-  
 “ ticular psalm to be sung by a worshipping assembly, plead  
 “ that, because he did so, God had appointed that psalm  
 “ to be sung by the whole church to the end of the world,  
 “ as reason in that manner from the command of Hezekiah  
 “ and the princes to the Levites.”

ANSWER. It is absurd to suppose that Hezekiah com-  
 manded any thing in the worship of God, but what God  
 himself had commanded. Hezekiah's character (being *a*  
*king who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,*  
*according to all that David his father had done*) will not al-  
 low us to suppose, that he either practised or recommend-  
 ed any thing in the worship of God, merely because it ap-  
 peared to him to be suitable, or while he had not the war-  
 rant of a divine command for it. The whole of the refor-  
 mation described in this chapter, is declared to have been  
 directed by a divine command: Ver. 15. *The Levites came,*  
*according to the commandment of the king by the word of the*  
*Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord.* Ver. 25. *He set the*  
*Levites in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, with psalteries,*  
*and with harps, according to the commandment of David,*  
*and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for*  
*so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.* Thus,  
 we have good reason to conclude that Hezekiah directed the  
 Levites to sing the words of David and of Asaph, not be-  
 cause they seemed to him to be suitable, but because such  
 was *the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.*

The case supposed by the objector is quite different from  
 that of the text under consideration. What the minister  
 did is supposed to be done without any divine command,  
 merely because it appeared to him to be suitable. But  
 what Hezekiah did, in reforming this, as well as other  
 parts

parts of the order of the temple, was according to the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.

No minister, nor magistrate, has authority to make any thing a rule to the church, or the members thereof, *because he does it*. But the authority of the Most High God makes any example of his church, or of any of his people, a rule to all succeeding generations, by recording it, with approbation, in his own word. Other examples may be useful; but those only that are recorded in scripture are a rule to us. Again, the minister, on the objector's supposition, fixes on a particular psalm; whereas Hezekiah and the princes pointed out, not only, as the objector intimates, certain compositions, but a system of songs, under the denomination of the words of David and Asaph, as what the Levites were divinely appointed to sing.

OBJECTION. " If there was in this example recorded in  
" 2 Chron. xxix. 30. a divine appointment, directing the  
" church in her psalmody, this absurd consequence would  
" follow, that neither the Jews themselves, nor the christian church, should ever sing any psalms, but those which  
" were composed by David and Asaph."\*

ANSWER. This is no better a consequence, than it would be to infer from Peter's exhortation to take heed to *the sure word of prophecy*, that he did not mean that we should take heed to the law of Moses, or the psalms, or the books of the New Testament. Even the whole collection of the inspired psalms may, by an usual figure, be called the words of David and Asaph, because these prophets were the penmen of the greatest part of them. Besides, supposing many of the psalms were not then written, yet this example is obligatory with respect to these also; as David's example in meditating on and esteeming the word, is obligatory with respect to such parts of it as were not given to the church till after his time.

OBJECTION. " Though this may prove that, on that  
" particular occasion, a song of David and Asaph was sung,  
" as being suitable to the occasion, yet it does not prove,  
" that

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 9.

“ that the Jews in their songs of praise confined themselves  
“ to the words of these prophets.”\*

ANSWER. This example shews what was the practice of the Jewish church, or what form of psalmody they made use of in their ordinary public worship. It is not said, as the objector insinuates, that they were to sing a particular song of David and Asaph, but that they were to sing praise *with their words* indefinitely; intimating that their words, or what came under that general denomination, constituted the form of psalmody which was then made use of. It appears, that uninspired persons were not then permitted to add to the church's form of psalmody: Otherwise, why were the Levites so expressly limited, by a direction agreeably to the divine appointment, to such words as were given for the purpose of singing, by divine inspiration, even though these were not new, but composed upwards of two hundred years before.

OBJECTION. This example is defective in respect of the persons who gave the commandment. However Hezekiah and the princes, as being vested with civil authority, might give this command, they were not prophets, and therefore had no authority, as such, to prescribe laws, binding the Jewish church, much less had they a right to give forth laws obligating the christian church to the end of time.

ANSWER. We are to distinguish between a command by which any part of religious worship is appointed and authorized, and a command by which the will and appointment of God concerning any part of religious worship is declared, and the attention of others directed thereto.† If the command of Hezekiah and the princes had been of the former sort, the worship performed in compliance with it, would have been mere will-worship; worship taught by the precept of men, which is condemned in Isaiah xxix. 13. Matth.

\* A Discourse on Psalmody, pag. 94.

† David, as a prophet, immediately directed by the Spirit and by the hand of the Lord upon him, delivered the form of the temple and the distributions of the priests and Levites to Solomon: and Hezekiah did not institute any thing in religion; he only restored what was delivered before by David. *Altare Damascenum*, cap. 12.

Matth. xv. 9. We judge, therefore, that it was a command of the latter sort; intimating the command and appointment of God, and directing the attention of the Levites thereto. The warrant then which we have in this passage for singing the words of David and Asaph, does not lie in the command of Hezekiah and the princes as in the original appointment of it; but it lies, first, in the appointment of God, as it was supposed and implied in the commandment or direction of Hezekiah and the princes; for there is no other worship of God described in this chapter, than such as it became the piety of these princes to countenance, and the holiness of God to accept; that is, such as himself had appointed: And, secondly, in the singing of the praises of God by the Levites with the words of David and of Asaph, being recorded as an acceptable manner of performing an ordinary part of public worship, and therefore an example proper for our imitation.

SECT. II. *Of the Question, Whether the Singing of the Book of Psalms be abrogated?*

IT has been objected, "that the singing of many parts of the book of psalms is abrogated." If we ask, What are these parts? the objector answers, *That the scripture-songs were not designed to be a system to the christian church; nor to be any otherwise used in her psalmody, than as the matter of any of them is suited to the christian dispensation.* If it be further asked, How are we to determine what parts are not suited to the christian dispensation? he gives us two answers: One is, "There are parts of the psalms so founded upon and connected with the ceremonial institutions, that they can have neither being nor meaning beyond the institutions themselves; particularly, those which declare that these institutions still exist; and in singing of which, the worshippers affirm that they will practise agreeably to them; as in these words, *I will offer bullocks with goats.*" The other answer is, "That the late Synod hath given its approbation to a version of psalms, which superseded the necessity of an *expurgatory index.*" The objector calls Dr. Watts' imitation a version, by a *catchrefis* or *abuse of names*: Recte dicimus abusionem, (says Quintilian,)

Quintilian,) quæ non habentibus nomen suum accomodat quod in proximo est.\* Although Dr. Watts' performance could not be ranked among the *non habentia nomen suum*; since the doctor tells us, that what he intended was not a *version*, but an *imitation*.

Such are the parts of the book of psalms, the singing of which, according to the objector, is abrogated. Let us now hear his reasons for this strange opinion. The first is, "That it is impossible to sing them, because it is impossible to retain the form of the inspired psalms in any language but that in which they were originally dictated: and impossibilities are not obligatory." This, one should think, might be sufficient: But it is sometimes necessary to dissuade blind mortals from attempting impossibilities; and therefore the objector proceeds—

The second reason is, "The obligation to any practice continues so long as the reason on which it is founded continues; and ceases, when that reason ceases to exist. Nothing can be more evident than that many parts of the psalms are founded upon, and so connected with the ceremonial institutions, that they cannot have being or meaning beyond the institutions themselves: I mean, particularly, those which declare that these institutions still exist; and in singing of which the worshippers affirm, that they will practise accordingly."†

The third reason is, "That a practice is abrogated, when persons, under the influence of divine inspiration, introduce

\* This figure is rightly used, when a thing has no proper name, and we give it the name of what stands in the nearest relation to it.

† The manner of expression here used by the author of an Examination, &c. is shocking to such as reverence the scriptures as the word of God, the whole of which is designed for the use of the church to the end of time. According to our author here, what Christ says to Peter and John, Luke xxii. 6. *Go and prepare us the passover that we may eat*, has now neither being nor meaning; because in these words he declares, that the observance of the passover did then still exist; and that he and his disciples were to practise accordingly. Nay, there is no speech nor conversation about things past, which has either being or meaning. Thus, according to him, a great part of history, and even of the bible, has neither being nor meaning.

“ duce other modes and forms of worship in the room of it.  
 “ For Paul informs us, (1 Cor. xiv.) that persons were, in  
 “ the first age of christianity, divinely inspired to dictate  
 “ psalms to christian worshippers: the singing of which  
 “ newly dictated psalms came in place of the singing of Da-  
 “ vid’s psalms, according to the practice of the Old Testa-  
 “ ment; as the observation of the first day of the week  
 “ came in place of the observation of the seventh.”\* And  
 further, the objector, to deter *any man* from opening a mouth  
 against him, presumes that such particular observations have  
 been made by him, “ as are sufficient to direct *any man* as  
 “ to what he should sing, provided he has the usual share of  
 “ understanding.”

ANSWER. It may be observed, that among the numer-  
 ous verses of the original psalms omitted in the limitation of  
 Dr. Watts, there are many so far from being founded on the  
 ceremonial institutions, that they do not so much as allude  
 to them. For example, the first twelve verses of the xviith  
 psalm, and the first six verses of the lxxxvith. One has but  
 to open the book for instances of this kind. So that either  
 the objector’s principle must be inadequate, that is, there  
 must be some other reason besides this, for reckoning the  
 singing of so great a part of the book of psalms abrogated;  
 or the expurgatory index, which, we are told, the late Sy-  
 nod and the present General Assembly of the Presbyterian  
 church of the United States of America has given us, must  
 be very erroneous, and calculated to mislead the inattentive.

But let us proceed to some particular consideration of the  
 objector’s reasons for his opinion, that the singing of some  
 of the psalms, or of some parts of many of them, is abroga-  
 ted under the New Testament dispensation. The first is,  
 “ That the singing of them is impossible; because it is ut-  
 “ terly impossible to retain the form of the inspired psalms  
 “ in any other language, than that in which they were ori-  
 “ ginally dictated.”

This appears at first view to be a strange paradox, or  
 rather a glaring falsehood, namely, that it is impossible to do  
 what the church has actually been doing, for more than a  
 thousand years past. It puts one in mind of the philosopher  
 who

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 15, 16, 17.

who affected to display his acuteness, by proving that there is no such thing as motion, and whom Diogenes sufficiently confuted by walking through the room. It has been shewn, that this impossibility of retaining in a translation the form of the inspired psalms, is but a vain pretence. It is true, that the observation of the ceremonial and judicial laws is now impracticable. But is that which renders them impracticable, any way parallel to what is pretended by the objector to render the singing of the psalms so? Is it as impossible to translate the psalms so as to preserve, in some measure, the same form that they have in the original, as it is now for the Jews, dispersed all over the world, to repair three times a year to Jerusalem, or to ascertain the tribe and family to which every individual belongs? It is well known, that there is hardly a book in any foreign language so capable of being translated word for word; or which, by a literal translation, loses so little of its original form, as the bible. Dr. Blair observes concerning our version of the poetical parts of scripture, that, being strictly word for word after the original, it preserves the form and order of the original sentence.

The objector's second reason proceeds wholly upon the supposition, that we must consider the words we sing in divine worship as our own words, and as applicable to our present case and circumstances; a supposition which, as hath been shewn, is very absurd. An observation may only be made here, with respect to the psalmist's expression quoted by the objector, which will apply to similar expressions. It is necessary to distinguish between David's forming of this resolution, *I will offer bullocks with goats*; and the church's singing it in her solemn worship. It is allowed, that David's end in forming such a resolution, must have included in it the practice of the ceremonial law. But the church's end in singing it, is to be instructed and excited to the exercise of faith by David's example. "Such passages of the psalms," to use the words of Mr. Hervey, in the VIth Dialogue of his Theron and Aspasio, "suppose the persons whom they describe, to be convinced of their natural corruption, to be humbled under a sense of their actual guilt, and to live in the conscientious observance of the expiatory sacrifices; all which had an invariable reference to

“ Christ, and derived their whole virtue from his mediation.  
 “ By such sentiments and such a conduct, they reduced to  
 “ practice the very essence of gospel-doctrine; disavowing  
 “ their own deeds, however virtuous or religious; and  
 “ trusting in the STRENGTH of Israel, the Lord our  
 “ righteousness, who was the substance of every purifying  
 “ and of every propitiatory rite.” Supposing this to be the  
 real import, as it undoubtedly was, of such passages, and  
 supposing the instruction and further edification of worship-  
 pers in faith, holiness and comfort, to be the end of the  
 Holy Spirit in recording, and the end of the church in  
 singing them; surely the obligation arising from this end is  
 as great yet as it ever was; that is, church-members have  
 still as much need to sing them for their instruction and  
 further edification, as ever.

With respect to the third reason, it proceeds upon the  
 supposition, that the singing of the psalms of the Old Testa-  
 ment is as inconsistent with the singing of those that are  
 suitable to the New Testament dispensation, as the obser-  
 vation of the seventh-day sabbath is with that of the first  
 day; that is, it is taken for granted, that the Old Testa-  
 ment psalms are quite unsuitable to, and inconsistent with,  
 the observation of some New Testament ordinance; which  
 is in reality the matter in question, the very thing denied.  
 With regard to the passage in 1 Cor. xiv. it may be consid-  
 ered afterward. Only, when the objector talks of psalms  
 dictated in the first age of christianity, the singing of which  
 came in place of the singing of David's psalms, it is natural  
 to ask, what is become of these psalms? The producing of  
 these would go a great way to determine the controversy;  
 because, these must have been such inspired forms of psalms,  
 as we contend for. But this change, from the singing of  
 David's psalms to the singing of other inspired forms of  
 psalms is nothing to the objector's purpose, without another  
 change; and that is, a change from the singing of these in-  
 spired forms, which the objector says were dictated in the  
 first age of christianity, to the singing of uninspired forms, or  
 mere human compositions. It is for this, and not for the former  
 change, that the objector is called upon to shew a divine  
 warrant. While the objector cannot produce any of these  
 inspired

inspired forms of psalms dictated in the first age of christianity, nor yet shew a divine warrant for the transition from the singing of these to the singing of human composures; we must do one of three things; we must either sing the the scripture-songs, or sing what we have no divine warrant to sing, or sing none at all. But we may do neither the second nor the last of these things: It remains, therefore, that we are still bound to do the first.

A candid disputant will never require his opponent to prove a negative; and it would be a very absurd way of managing the controversy with the Jews, to insist, that they ought to prove that the ceremonial law is not abrogated. However, it may not be improper to add some things, serving to shew what a new and strange doctrine is now broached about the abrogation of the singing of the book of psalms.

It is a great presumption against the pretended abrogation of the singing of this book in solemn worship, that the New Testament church has observed the singing of these psalms as a divine ordinance, and church-members have enjoyed sweet communion with God therein, for upwards of seventeen hundred years past, without the least appearance of a scriptural testimony against it. We allow, that for some time after the death of Christ, the practice of some of the ceremonial usages was in itself indifferent, that is, it was neither duty by any law in force enjoining it, nor sin by any law prohibiting it. But it may be observed, that there is no evidence, that, after the death of Christ, these ceremonial usages were ever allowed in the public worship of any christian assembly, as the singing of the book of psalms has constantly been. What was indifferent appears, from the xivth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, to have been the observation of certain meats and days, not by a particular church as such, but by certain individuals in their personal unconnected capacity. Hence the apostle speaks of what one did, and another neglected, just as it pleased him, ver. 2, 3, 5, 6. From this it follows, that the degree in which these legal rites obtained in the church to which this epistle is directed, did not affect the system of the New Testament ordinances. They neither corrupted the whole, nor set aside, nor altered any part of them. They made no part of the worship of the church,

church, nor were connected with it.\* Again, these usages were no more indifferent, after the abrogation of the whole ceremonial law was fully manifested by the destruction of the temple, and the ruin of the political and ecclesiastical state of typical Israel. Till then, the Lord was willing to bear with the weakness of some professing christians. After that event the signification of his pleasure was complete, and the practice of these ceremonial rites became sinful, and no longer an object of christian forbearance. From the resurrection of Christ till that time, they had been dying; but now they became deadly. So that if the singing of the book of psalms was one of these abrogated rites; then it must now be a most criminal and pernicious practice. And can we suppose that, if it were so, the whole church of Christ could have persisted in it upwards of seventeen hundred years, without discovering any sense of the sinfulness of it; but rather accounting it a divine ordinance of distinguished importance, necessity and advantage? How comes it that the abrogation of the singing of the book of psalms was never till now, heard of in the christian church? How could the church, under the clear shining of New Testament light, and with the guidance of the Spirit of truth, who, according to Christ's promise, has all along remained in the church until this day, be so long entangled in such a gross error, as that of mistaking a mere abrogated ceremonial rite for moral worship? Is not this without a parallel or example in the history of the christian church?

It is remarkable, that the collection of psalms, which we have in the Old Testament, is not only called the book of psalms, Luke xx. 42. Acts i. 20. but also the psalms, Luke xxxiv. 44. and on occasion of a reference to a particular passage, we read of the 2d psalm, Acts xii. 33. and another psalm,

\* See this more fully illustrated in Mr. Ramfay's Review. The Relief Scheme considered, by this worthy author, explains with much accuracy the nature of church communion, and rescues the xivth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and many other passages of scripture, which the advocates for latitudinarian schemes attempt to press into their service. It well deserves the attentive perusal of christians at this day, particularly of professed Presbyterians.

psalm, verse 35. intimating that they are still to be known and acknowledged by the church, as they had been under the Old Testament, to be THE PSALMS, that is, the system of songs to be used by the church in her solemn worship.

Further, that the singing of the book of psalms was none of those things which were abrogated, when the New Testament dispensation took place, may be argued from the nature of it. Whatever was abrogated upon the commencement of that dispensation, belonged either to the judicial or ceremonial law. But the singing of the book of psalms belonged neither to the one nor to the other. It did not belong to the judicial law; because that prescribed the civil policy and government of the Israelites, and not matters of religious worship. Nor did it belong to the ceremonial law; because it wants the character of what was a duty, merely by virtue of that law.

For, in the first place, the things *themselves* that were enjoined by the ceremonial law, abstracting from what they prefigured, were carnal and unprofitable. The shedding of the blood of beasts, the burning of flour and incense, the distinction of meats and drinks; these rites, *in their own nature*, are of no religious or spiritual use. Hence the ceremonial law is said to consist of *carnal ordinances, imposed on the Israelites till the time of reformation.* But it would be no less than horrible impiety to speak in this manner of the singing of the scripture-songs. Surely the reading of the word of God is, *in its own nature*, a spiritual and profitable exercise: And the singing of such parts of that word as are called psalms, is an exercise, which, *in its own nature*, could not be less profitable or spiritual, than the reading of them. There is not one of the psalms, the singing of which, according to its true scope and meaning, is not profitable for doctrine, for reproof, or for correction, or for instruction in righteousness; these being the purposes for which all the parts of scripture, (the songs not excepted) are, *in their own nature*, profitable. But nothing that peculiarly belonged to the ceremonial law, and was to be abolished, was, *in its own nature*, spiritual or profitable for such purposes.

In the next place, the numerous and minute observances of the ceremonial law, *in themselves, or abstracting from their figurative use*, were a heavy burden; a yoke, says Peter,

which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear, Acts xv. 10. that is, considered in themselves, and without that prefiguration of Christ, which ceased at the beginning of the New Testament dispensation. But surely, neither the reading nor the singing of the word of God, which is the delight of his people, and their song in the house of their pilgrimage, could ever, *in itself*, be such a yoke or burden.

In a word, the warrant for reading the whole scriptures, and the warrant for singing the psalms thereof, go together; nor will the one cease to be a duty, till the other cease to be so also.

### SECT. III. *Of the Knowledge which the Old Testament Church had of Christ.*

It is observed in the Discourse on Singing Psalms, that the prophets under the Old Testament dispensation declared the name of Christ; that the faith of the saints corresponded with that declaration; that there was no acceptable drawing near to God but in Christ's name. Very opposite, indeed, is the doctrine taught in the following quotation:

“ The mercy of God was revealed from the beginning.  
 “ Salvation by grace—salvation as a free gift—an unde-  
 “ served favour, was the hope of the saints of old. The  
 “ faithfulness of a promising God was the foundation of  
 “ their hope and trust; and it is the ultimate object of  
 “ faith, as well since, as before the coming of Christ. In  
 “ this the faith of the saints agree, and is one and the same  
 “ in all ages. The knowledge of God in a dispensation of  
 “ grace, and a sense of guilt and need of mercy, appear  
 “ to be absolutely necessary in a sinner, in order to his re-  
 “ turning unto God. But *the medium through which that*  
 “ *mercy and grace is communicated, and how the communica-*  
 “ *tion thereof is consistent with the Divine attributes and go-*  
 “ *vernment, appear to be the discovery of the New Testament.*  
 “ With regard to the design and use of types, it is evi-  
 “ dent, they were not intended to reveal their antitypes.  
 “ Without literal information, they could never convey  
 “ *the least idea* of the future things typified. The principal  
 “ end of the prophecies, and the *whole* design and use of  
 “ types, is for the benefit of those who should come after,  
 “ and

“ and not of those who live before the accomplishment of  
 “ the prophecies, or whilst the types exist ; that is to say,  
 “ for the benefit of those among whom the great antitype  
 “ was to make his appearance, and of those who were to  
 “ compose his church to the end of time.”\*

What is denied in the quotation, and what we hold as the undoubted truth of God, is, that the revelation made of Christ in the promises, prophecies and types of the Old Testament, afforded church-members a *real* and *certain* knowledge of his person, of his obedience and suffering, through which grace and mercy have a blessed egress in the communication of all spiritual and saving blessings ; and that this knowledge always belonged to the nature and exercise of true and saving faith. The truth on this head is evinced by such considerations as the following :

1. There was a revelation of Christ in the first gospel promise. God said to the serpent, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* In these words we may observe, 1. The great benefit promised, namely, the putting of enmity between the serpent and the woman, between the serpent's seed and her seed. This signified the removal of man's breach with God, which the devil had occasioned, by justification and sanctification. Enmity with the serpent signified peace and reconciliation with God. 2. The victory and triumph of Christ and of his people, was signified by the bruising of the serpent's head. 3. The way in which these benefits were to be procured, is pointed out in the prediction, that the seed of the woman was to have his heel bruised by the serpent ; for *it behoved Christ to suffer.* 4. The union of the two natures in the person of Christ is here revealed ; for the seed of the woman could not bruise the serpent's head, unless he were God ; and he could not be bruised, unless he were man. 5. Here, too, we have the ground of his people's participation of the benefit of his sufferings ; namely, their union with him as their covenant-head and representative, or their in-being in him. Hence he and they bear the same name : both are called *the seed of the woman.* 6. The mean is also intimated, of their actual union

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 82, 93.

union and fellowship with him, namely, faith or believing; this being the only way of receiving what is here held forth to them in a free and unconditional promise; as the only way of apprehending light is by the eye, or of apprehending sounds is by the ear.

But it will be said, did our first parents understand all this to be included in these words? We answer, there is no reason to doubt but that they understood the benefit promised, to be reconciliation to an offended God, and deliverance from the guilt and power of sin; for nothing else was suitable to what they felt to be their case. Nor can we doubt, that they understood a glorious Redeemer, a divine person, to be here revealed, who was well able to bruise the serpent's head, and to bring about their reconciliation to God. And if they put any meaning at all on the divine person's designation as the seed of the woman, and on the bruising of his heel, they must have understood, that he was to have a human nature wherein he was to suffer. That these words were spoken to the serpent for the sake of our first parents, for their consolation, is certain; and it is as little to be doubted, that, in order to answer this end, they must have apprehended the true meaning of them. We do not say how *clearly* or *distinctly* this meaning was apprehended by them, but only that it was *really* so.

This promise is a key to all that follows in the Old Testament. It is presupposed in all the gracious revelations which were afterwards made to the church. Was any blessing promised? It was to be bestowed for the sake of the seed of the woman. Had church-members any hopes or confidence that God would accept their persons and services? It was wholly founded upon the revelation of the seed of the woman. Was any ceremonial institution observed? It was ever considered as referring to the seed of the woman; to the bruising of his heel, or to the bruising the serpent's head, or to the benefits resulting from it. Were they called to put away the evil of their doings, or to perform any duty? They were to set about it no otherwise than by a believing application of this promise. For we cannot suppose, that church-members, in after periods, unless when they were chargeable with an utter neglect of the appointed means, and had fallen into grievous error and corruption, would have

have less (but rather more) knowledge, than our first parents had, of this blessed and blessing seed.

2. We may argue from those places of scripture which represent Christ as the only way of salvation that ever was revealed to, or apprehended by faith. To this purpose is Act. iv. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other: For there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.* It is here laid down as a truth of absolute universality, a truth under the Old Testament as well as under the New, *That there is no salvation in any other.* According to this text, if the fathers knew not Christ, neither did they know that salvation which never was, nor could be truly known otherwise than as in him, as included in his name, as wrought out by him. To the same purpose are the words of Christ in John xiv. 6. *I am the way, the truth, and the life: No man cometh to the Father but by me.* This is a proposition of the same universal extent. Coming to God by Christ, must include in it the knowledge of Christ as the way; for how can a person be said to come God by Christ as the way, while he is ignorant of Christ? Nor can any one be said to know Christ as the way, unless he knew, that Christ is the only true and proper propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of men; a sacrifice which is, indeed, *a favour of rest.*

3. That church-members, under the Old Testament, were acquainted with the justice-satisfying righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the ground of their pardon and acceptance with God, is evident from the account which the scripture gives of their justification; particularly in the examples of Abraham and David. In Gen. xv. 6. it is said, that *Abraham believed God, as promising the blessed and blessing seed, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.* It is the scope of the ivth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, to represent Abraham's justification as the exact pattern of ours: So that if we are justified before God by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and apprehended by faith, so was Abraham. Now, says the apostle, *it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* But, as

Dr. Guise on the place justly asks, How can this be the same sort of faith with Abraham's, unless he had a respect to Christ and to what should be done by him, according to the notices he then had of these things? The apostle in the same chapter, shews, that David, in the 1st and 2d verses of the xxxiii psalm, *describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works.* And what is that righteousness which is imputed to believers for their justification, and which admits none of their works, or inherent righteousness, to share with it in that matter? It is the same which is described in the iiiid chap. of this epistle, *even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe;* that righteousness of which our Immanuel said when he was dying, **IT IS FINISHED.** To these examples we may add the declaration of the apostle Peter, **ACTS x. 43.** *To him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth on him should receive remission of sins.* In these words, it is represented as the uniform doctrine of the prophets, that remission of sins or justification, is received in the way of believing in Christ, or in his name. And if we would know what is that name through which we are to receive remission of sins, one of the prophets answers, *This is the name whereby he shall be called,* **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

4. We may argue from the consideration which church-members must have had of the sacrifices under the law. It is often expressly declared, that these were to make atonement for the sins of the offerer. One thing was undeniably taught the Israelites by the appointment of sacrifices, namely, that *some atonement or satisfaction was necessary in order to the forgiveness of sin: Heb. ix. 22.* *Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* This being supposed, the offerer of a sacrifice must have considered that sacrifice either as a real and sufficient atonement for his sin, or as a sign and figure of that which is so. But no church-member, who had any right apprehensions of God or of the evil of sin, or who attended to the word of God, or compared one part of it with another, could be supposed to entertain so absurd a thought as this, that such sacrifices could make a real and proper atonement for their souls: *For it is not possible that*  
*the*

*the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.* Besides, many things, such as the Lord's declaring that he did not desire sacrifice, the frequent repetition of their offerings for the same sins, the experience they had of their unprofitableness for purging the conscience, served sufficiently to intimate, that they were not the real atonement, but appointed as signs or figures to direct their meditation and their faith to that which is indeed the real atonement. Nor could they err in their inquiry after it, if they duly remembered the divine person revealed in the first promise, who was to have his heel bruised, that he might bruise the head of the serpent. The Lord the Spirit enabled true believers among them to *look to the end of that which was to be abolished*; or to carry their views along the continuation of the legal sacrifices to the ending of them in the true atonement, in that offering and sacrifice, which is, to the justice of God and to the conscience of the sinner, *a favour of rest.* By the sacrifices of the Old Testament, Christ was not only represented, but sealed and applied to believers.

5. We may argue from the frequent accounts in the Old Testament, of the Angel of the covenant, or the Goel, that is, the Kinsman-redeemer, who could never, with the least colour of reason, be understood of any other than that divine person, the Son of God, who was to bruise the head of the serpent by means of his own sufferings; or who, through death, was to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. This was the Angel of Jehovah, who wrestled with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 24, 30. who called unto Abraham out of heaven, Gen. xxi. 15. who spake with Moses out of the bush, Exod. iii. 2, 6. Deut. xxxiii. 16. who conducted the Israelites into the land of Canaan, Exod. xxxiii. 20, 21. who is called the Angel of the Divine Face or Presence, Isa. lxiii. 9. and the Captain of the Lord's host, Josh. v. 13, 14, 15. In these passages, such things are ascribed to this Angel, as cannot, without blasphemy, be ascribed to any one who is not the Most High God. The modern Jews, having apostatized from the religion of their ancestors with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of the Messiah, are as much puzzled with the passages now referred to, as the Socinians are with any

any declarations of Christ's divinity in the New Testament. See the XIVth Chap. of Buxtorf's History of the Ark of the Covenant. One Rabbi owns, that he is constituted Guardian and Preserver of the world and of Israel, and that all things are subject to him. Another owns, that his name is as the name of God, and that all intelligent and spiritual beings are dependent on him. How, or in what manner, says Buxtorf, all these things agree to any created angel, it behoves the Jews to determine; but surely these concessions afford arguments against them for the divinity of this Angel, and his equality with Him that sent him.

The evidences of Christ's divinity are, it seems, so clear, in the Old Testament, that they cannot be evaded by the bitterest enemies of christianity. Thus the person of Christ could not be unknown to those under the Old dispensation, who received the love of the truth; and, knowing his person, they could not fail to understand, in some measure, what is predicted concerning his sufferings and his glory. They could not but know him as the medium of all the gracious and saving communications of God to sinners of mankind.

Here we may take notice of that illustrious passage in the sixth chapter of the book of Job: *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body; yet in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.* These words are such as cannot well be understood of a temporal deliverance; and Job intimates the peculiar importance of them in this introduction: *Oh, that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!* Job had, at that time, no prospect of his restoration to a prosperous worldly condition, Job vi. 8, 9, 11. vii. 7, 8. x. 20. 21. xvi. 22. xvii. 1, 15. and even in this chapter, ver. 10th, he says, *God hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: And mine hope hath he removed like a tree:* But he had the greatest certainty of the redemption here spoken of. His expression, *I know*, is parallel to that of the apostles, *We know and are sure*, John vi. 69. 2 Cor. v. 1. He speaks of it as a redemption that was sure

to be consummated at the last day, after his body had been the prey of worms and mingled with other dust; consummated by the seeing of God in his flesh, by the beholding of his Redeemer. Thus it was not a temporal, but a spiritual and eternal redemption, to be consummated in the glorious resurrection of the body, that he meant. The living Redeemer, therefore, whom he knew, was not a Redeemer from temporal adversity, but a Redeemer from the guilt and power of sin, even the same who had long before been promised under the name of *the Seed of the woman*, our Lord Jesus Christ, who *shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*, as a triumphant conqueror, having put all his and his people's enemies under his feet. The Goel, under the law, was one who was to act a generous part towards his poor kinsman; particularly to redeem his inheritance, if it was mortgaged or sold, by paying a price; to avenge his death if he was slain, and to marry his widow. And who, but our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Redeemer whom Job knew, and who would come up to the full import of this name? who would, by paying a price, redeem the inheritance of eternal life, which Job, as well as other children of fallen Adam, had forfeited; who would avenge him of his infernal adversary by bruising his head, and who would betroth him to himself for ever.

6. We might reason from an induction of the particular predictions concerning the person, the humiliation, and exaltation of Christ; predictions which no art can accommodate to any other person or events; such as, Deut. xviii. 15. Psal. cx. Isai. ix. 6. liii. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Dan. ix. 24. Mic. v. 2. Zech. vi. 12, 13. That these prophecies were intended to be certainly understood of Christ, by those to whom they were first delivered, (though not so fully as they may be understood by church-members now under the New Testament) cannot reasonably be denied; if it be considered, that each part of the scriptures of the Old Testament was delivered to church-members, for the purpose of affording that reproof, correction, instruction or consolation, which their case at that time required: And it is evident, that no part of the word could answer any of these purposes, but in so far as it was understood. Hence it is so necessary, to the right understanding of particular passages in scripture, to

attend to the occasions on which they were first delivered. For example, in the prophecy which we have in Isa. vii. 14. *Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emanuel*; the birth of Christ was given as a sign to confirm and encourage the faith of the Lord's people as to the deliverance of Judah from the present designs of their combined enemies. But it is manifest, that it could not answer that end to those who did not truly understand the birth of Christ to be meant in these words.

7. The believing regard of the Old Testament saints to Christ, is often taken notice of in the New Testament. Thus in John viii. 55. Christ says to the Jews, *Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad*. The day of Christ, which Abraham saw, was the day of his appearing to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: Nor does it seem to have been peculiar to Abraham, but was rather common to him, with all that walked in the steps of his faith. Abraham would, no doubt, impart his knowledge of Christ to his family and others. Again, in Heb. xi. 26. Moses is said to have *esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt*. The apostle here evidently teaches, that it was the knowledge of Christ, of his person and grace, that made Moses consider the reproach he met with, as the reproach of Christ, as what he suffered in the way of communion with Christ and for his sake, and therefore more desirable than all the treasures of Egypt.

8. We may argue from this, that Christ and his apostles constantly referred their hearers to the Old Testament scriptures, as containing the same doctrine which they taught. Thus Christ says to the Jews, concerning the Old Testament scriptures, in John v. 39. *They are they which testify of me*; that is, of my person and offices, as Mediator. Nor was any new outward revelation necessary to their discovery of these things concerning Christ in the Old Testament scriptures; nothing more, in the way of outward means, was necessary, than searching the scriptures with a diligence becoming those who professed their dependence on them for eternal life. To the same purpose is our Lord's affecting exhortation with the two disciples, in Luke xxiv. 25, 26. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his*

*his glory?* From this sharp expostulation it is a necessary consequence, that it was revealed in the words of the prophets that Christ ought to have suffered these things; and revealed so plainly, as to render the ignorance thereof in the disciples, and others who read or heard these words, utterly inexcusable. So our Lord reprov'd the Sadducees for their inattention to the evidence of the resurrection in the words which Moses heard out of the bush; for nothing less can be meant in our Lord's saying, that *Moses shew'd that doctrine in the words he heard out of the bush*, and in his declaring that the error of the Sadducees arose from their inexcusable ignorance of *the scriptures*, as well as of the power of God. Remarkable to the same purpose is that which Paul declared before Agrippa, Acts xxvi. 22, 23. *Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day; witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead.* Here two things are manifest: 1st. That the doctrines taught by the apostle were no other than what were to be found in the scriptures of the Old Testament; and particularly, that what he taught concerning the sufferings of Christ as actually accomplished, was no other than what had been taught by the prophets concerning them as things to come. 2dly. That they were taught in the Old Testament so plainly, that neither Agrippa, nor any other attentive reader of it, could deny them to be there; for this is the import of the apostle's appeal to Agrippa, ver. 26, 27.

9. We cannot admit this opinion, that the Old Testament predictions of the person, the sufferings and glory of Christ, were not understood by church-members under that dispensation, on account of the consequences with which it is attended. Such as, that a great advantage is hereby given to the Jews in our controversy with them, when we allow that Christ and his apostles put such a meaning upon certain passages of the Old Testament scriptures, as answered their purpose; and such as none before them either had or could have discovered. Besides, according to this opinion, the faith which views the promises, as the promises of God out of Christ, of God exercising mercy without any satisfaction to his law, or suitable demonstration of his justice,

rice, holiness and hatred of sin, may be saving faith ; and the Socinians may be right in supposing no other faith to be necessary : For if men were justified and saved by such a faith under the Old Testament, why not under the New ? It is of no avail to say, that the New Testament revelation requires a new sort of faith ; for the question is about the faith which is suitable to the sinful and miserable state of man. And if men might be justified and saved by a faith in God absolutely considered, there was no necessity either for the New Testament, or for the new faith which it is supposed to require.\* Further, according to this scheme, we cannot understand how there could be any more obscurity in the Old Testament revelation than in the New : For, according to it, the Old Testament saints had as clear a revelation of all that their faith respected, as the New Testament saints have of what their faith respects. The doctrine about the obscurity of the Old Testament, that has been usually taught in the Reformed churches, proceeds upon the supposition, that saving faith under the Old and New Testament is the same ; that it is of the same nature ; that it had the same object ; that it always had the same real respect to the obedience and death of Christ : And that the same covenant of grace is set forth, more obscurely in the one, and more clearly in the other. We may add, what was hinted in the Discourse on Singing Psalms, that the supposition, that sinners could come unto God under any dispensation, without the knowledge of Christ's name, leads into the  
 opinion

\* We might go further, and assert, that, if men may have saving faith without any view of the blood of Christ as the only sufficient ground upon which they can draw near to God ; then that blood is not really such a ground : For the ground of drawing near to God, which faith apprehends, must be a sufficient ground ; otherwise it would not be faith, but presumption. Hence, if faith ever apprehend a sufficient ground of drawing near to God without any view of the blood of Christ, then it follows, that his blood is not the *only* ground ; some other is sufficient : And therefore, the blood of Christ is not necessary to our drawing near to God, and we might have been saved without it. How shocking is this to christians, who have been taught, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins, no drawing near to God by any of fallen mankind.

opinion of salvation being attainable by the heathen, without ever hearing of his name, or of salvation by his blood; an opinion which manifestly tends to the total subversion of the christian religion. Upon the whole, we conclude, that there was under the Old Testament a real revelation of the same Redeemer, of the same justifying righteousness, of the same plan of salvation, which are revealed under the New.

SECT. IV. *Shewing that the Church's knowledge of Christ under the Old Testament Dispensation, is consistent with the differences between the Old and New Testament Dispensations.*

IN general, the difference is wholly in *the manner* of exhibiting Christ, and of administering the covenant of grace. That which was exhibited or administered is one and the same. But more particularly, the following differences are to be observed :

1. Under the Old Testament dispensation, the condition of the promise, or covenant of grace, was set forth as *not yet actually fulfilled*, in the obedience and death of Christ; and under the New, it is set forth as *already fulfilled*.

2. Under the Old Testament dispensation, church-members were led to the knowledge and application of Christ and his benefits, by *the practice* of types and figures: But they are led thereto under the New, *without* the practice of them. The church has now no more occasion for a way of learning suited to a state of childhood, by *the practice* of types and figures; as one that has learned to read has no more occasion, in order to come at what he reads, to spell the words, and divide them into syllables.

3. Though the things exhibited to faith under both dispensations be the same things, they are exhibited *more clearly and fully* under the New, the canon of scripture being now complete.

4. The Lord's way of instructing his people in spiritual and evangelical things, by shadows of them in outward and temporal things, and by the practice of the ceremonial law, made *the outward appearance* of the Old Testament dispensation *less spiritual and evangelical* than that of the New.

5. Though it is the duty of church-members under the New Testament, as well as it was so under the Old, to

make such a solemn profession, as the people of Israel made at Sinai, of renouncing the covenant of works, and of taking the Lord for their God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, and of being his willing people by virtue of that everlasting covenant, *in the way of publicly and jointly entering into a covenant of duty and gratitude*; yet there was much in *the matter* of the national covenant of the Israelites, that was peculiar to the Old Testament dispensation; particularly, their adherence, in that covenant, to the practice of the ceremonial and judicial laws, and their acknowledgment of the connexion between their adherence to these laws and their comfortable possession of the land of Canaan.

Hence two circumstances followed: *One* was, that there were extraordinary and peculiar dispensations of providence, as to the temporal condition of their nation as such, subservient to the observation of their covenant-engagements in profession and practice; which have no parallel in the case of any particular nation, as such, under the New Testament. Such, for example, was that dispensation of providence, by which they suffered no disadvantage from their lands lying untilled every seventh year. *The other* was, the restriction of the visible church, till the death of Christ, to the land of Canaan, and to the people of Israel; whereas, under the New Testament, the church is gathered out of all nations on the face of the earth.

6. The more plentiful out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, is a principal advantage of the New Testament dispensation above the Old. Here it is to be observed, that we do not speak of the extraordinary attainments of some of the most eminent saints under either dispensation; but of the ordinary allowance of church-members under both.

But the knowledge of Christ, of his righteousness and salvation, which we have ascribed to the Old Testament believers, is perfectly consistent with all these differences: With the first; for Christ and the fulfilment of the condition of the everlasting covenant, revealed in the words of promise, might be apprehended as truly before as after his incarnation:—With the second and third; for the knowledge of Christ, as the propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and as the Lord our righteousness, might be attained, by a way of learning  
more

more adapted to the state of childhood, as really, as by that which is more adapted to a state of manhood :—With the fourth ; for, amidst all those legal and carnal appearances in the Lord's way of dealing with his church under the Old dispensation, the things then taught, with regard to the way of salvation, were in reality the same spiritual and evangelical things which we are now taught under the New Testament dispensation :—With the fifth ; for setting aside the peculiarity of *the matter* of their engagement, with respect to the ceremonial and judicial laws, their engagement itself was an adherence to the covenant of grace, to the Lord as their God in Christ, which was of the same nature with the profession (which, on proper occasions, may still be made by swearing) of the New Testament church :—With the sixth ; because the same Spirit of Christ who is now in the church, was in it then, carrying on the same blessed work ; the difference is only in the measure, not in the nature of his operations.

SECT. V. *Shewing, that Believers under the Old Testament Dispensation, apprehended Christ as exhibited to them in the Types.*

WHILE men effect to make a type of every thing they meet with in the history of the Old Testament, in which there appears to be any analogy or resemblance to spiritual things, they are in danger of turning the sacred history into an allegory or fable, of utterly losing sight of the true and determinate sense of scripture, and of neglecting the solid knowledge and power godliness. Hence judicious divines agree, in cautioning us against the itch of multiplying types.

Yet that there were, under the Old Testament, persons and things appointed of God to be types, figures or shadows of him that was to come, is undeniable ; and therefore it behoves us diligently to inquire concerning them.

We may observe, in the first place, that the types were shadows or signs of Christ, or of what is in Christ : Col. ii. 17. *These are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ.*

In the second place, they were shadows of Christ as to come. Thus, in Heb. x. 1. the ceremonial law is described

as having a shadow of good things to come; such as, Christ's making atonement for sin by his blood, his entering by his blood into the holy place not made with hands, and his appearing in the presence of God for us.

Hence we see the absurdity of the notion, that the signification of the ceremonial institutions was wholly unknown, till the New Testament dispensation took place; for in that case it would follow, that they were never to be considered as types at all. They could not be types, upon this supposition, under the Old Testament; since it is plain, that one thing cannot be considered as a type or shadow of another thing to come, unless there be a real knowlege, less or more, of that other thing, and particularly, that it is future. Nor are they types to us under the New Testament, to whom the good things, of which they were shadows, are not things to come, but things present or already come. These shadows, indeed, are most frequently denominated *types*, from what they were to the church under the Old Testament dispensation; the apostle, however, in Gal. iv. denominates the history of Sarah and Hagar, from what it is to us under the New, calling it an allegory.

Hence, too, we may observe the difference between sacraments and types. Both are signs. But sacraments are signs chiefly of what is past or present; types, of what is to come.

In the third place, a type is not to be considered as representing the antitype absolutely, but only in some particular respect. Thus, the offering of a sacrifice, under the law, represented, that Christ should suffer unto death, and that his sufferings should be of a vicarious nature. But it could not represent Christ, our great high priest, offering himself. Moses and Joshua might be called typical saviours; but they afforded no representation of Jesus Christ, procuring salvation by the price of his own blood.

In the fourth place, we are not to consider any thing as a type, unless it appears from the word of God, that he hath appointed it to be so. Sometimes a person, a thing, or a class of things, is expressly declared to be typical. This is the case of the following particulars: Jonah's being three days and three nights in the whale's belly; Melchizedec's priesthood, Psal. cx. 4.; the Levitical priesthood, Heb. viii.

4, 5.; the tabernacle with its appurtenances, Heb. ix. 9.; the sacrifices that were offered there, Heb. ix. 13, 14, 23. That such a person or thing is a type, is sometimes the native consequence of what is expressly declared in scripture. Thus, when we find a singular and peculiar event recorded in the Old Testament, not only alluded to, but expressly made use of to represent or set forth our Lord Jesus Christ, we may conclude that it is a type. Such is the case of the brazen serpent, John iii. 14. and of the manna, John vi. 32. Again, persons or things, bearing the same names with our Lord Jesus Christ, may be justly considered as types, provided that communication of names be manifestly on account of some analogy or resemblance in them to the character of the great Antitype, as the Mediator of the new covenant, or the Saviour of his people. Thus the successor of Moses bears the name of Joshua or Jesus, because he was like our Lord Christ in bringing his people to the promised rest, Heb. iv. 8. Christ is several times called David, because the covenant of royalty, made with David, was a shadow of the covenant of grace and promise made with Christ, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. and xxxvii. 24. Hof. iii. 5. Thus, because the paschal lamb was a type of Christ, he is called our Lamb, and Pass-over, John i. 29. 1 Cor. v. 7. He bears the same name with the mercy-seat, Rom. iii. 25. compared with Heb. ix. 5. in the original Greek. Again, when the words which the Holy Spirit employs in describing the eminence or dignity of a person in the Old Testament, are manifestly too emphatical and sublime to be restricted to him, and the very same words are used in the New Testament in setting forth the excellency of our Lord Jesus Christ, we may warrantably conclude that person to have been a type of Christ. Thus, by comparing Isa. xxii. 22. with Rev. iii. 7. it is evident, that Eliakim was a type of Christ. We shall only add here, that nothing ought to be considered as a type, but such a prefiguration of something belonging to Christ as was always, from the time of its institution, conducive to the faith and piety of the church of God.

Here it is objected, "that we, having been from our  
 " childhood, instructed in the way of salvation through a  
 " Mediator, are also early taught to apply the prophecies  
 " and types of the former dispensation to this Mediator;  
 " but

“ but the Jewish church was in vastly different circumstances.  
 “ The Jews had no light into the mediatorial and vicarious  
 “ character of the Lord Jesus Christ, but what Old Testa-  
 “ ment scriptures, by themselves, would afford. Nay,  
 “ during the far greater part of their church’s continuance,  
 “ they had little more than the five books of Moses.”\*

Answer. That the faith of the saints under the Old Testament had the same living Redeemer, the same justifying righteousness for its object, that it has under the New, has been shewn to be a revealed truth, which we are to believe, even though we should never be able to say particularly, how or by what means, or in what degree the Lord was pleased to bring them to that knowledge. We are not to seek to be wise above what is written. Some things, however, may be observed on this subject, without incurring this censure.

The ancient Israelites did not attain the knowledge of Christ by the *Cabalistic art*, by which the Jews pretend to extract the knowledge of mysteries from superstitious observations on words and letters; nor by their oral law, which they pretend Moses did not deliver to their fathers in writing, but by word of mouth. These are supposed to be among *the fables and vain babblings*, against which the apostle cautions Timothy. By these the Jews have hardened themselves in their apostacy.

But in general, that the Lord was leading them, by these types and figures, to something of an infinitely higher and more important nature, might be understood by such as seriously considered to what purpose such a variety of outward and carnal things, so much bodily exercise about sacrifices and purifications, was enjoined. They were taught then, as well as now, that God is a spirit, and that he must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. They understood, that it would be blasphemy once to imagine, that the Infinite One stood in any need of such bodily services, or that, in themselves, they were any gratification to him. True believers must then have been persuaded, that the Lord utterly re-  
 rejected

\* The writings of Samuel, David and Solomon, were not a little, but a good deal more than the five books of Moses. Now, the period from Solomon to Christ is far greater than that from Moses to Solomon.

jected their ceremonies and sacrifices, however elaborate and costly, unless, in these, they had a regard to things that were couched under them, or represented by them; to spiritual things, agreeable to the spirituality and purity of the divine nature. Psal. l. 13. *Will I eat the flesh of bulls; or drink the blood of goats?*

Let us seriously consider to what conclusions such thoughts must have led a pious Old Testament worshipper, instructed in the true knowledge of God, and of the Seed of the woman, who was to bruise the serpent's head, while he was bringing his lamb or kid, to be offered as an atonement for his sin, and as an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to the Lord.

But, more particularly, we observe, in the first place, that there is no reason to doubt, that the patriarchs and prophets taught, in some measure, the meaning of the types, as pointing to Christ and his salvation. Surely Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness, and Abraham, who is particularly commended for his care in the instruction of his children and his household after him, would not fail to inform their respective families, of the meaning and design of the sacrifices they offered. As to the prophets in general, it was their work and office to call the attention of the people to Christ, as set forth in the types and prophecies. *To him gave all the prophets witness.* They could not be silent with regard to that salvation, of which (we are told in 1 Pet. i. 10.) *they enquired and searched diligently.* *Their lips kept knowledge;* and the people *received the explication of the law at their mouth.* The same knowledge of the true meaning of the ceremonies and sacrifices, seems to have been taught in the schools where the sons of the prophets were educated. The usefulness of the ancient prophets, in this respect, to the Old Testament church, was, probably, one reason why they are called *prophets* in the New Testament who exercised their extraordinary gifts in opening and explaining the prophetic visions of the Old; in which gospel truths are emblematically set forth.

*Secondly.* The careful and attentive consideration of the types, was another mean of attaining the knowledge of what was prefigured by them. Believers, under that dispensation, did not rest in the external part or surface of these observan-  
ces;

ces ; an evil which has been one principal cause of the apostacy and incorrigibleness of the Jews. Informed by the patriarchs and prophets, that such and such things were to be regarded as types, an Old Testament believer would be sure to consider them carefully, to view them on all sides, to ponder the reference they had to him who was to come, till he entered into the spirit and evangelical import of them.

*Thirdly.* Saving and spiritual illumination was also necessary to a profitable discernment of what was couched under the types. It was not every member of the visible church that attained this peculiar knowledge of divine mysteries ; but they only to whom the Lord was pleased to give ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand. *The secret of the Lord was always with them that feared him.* To them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

*Fourthly.* The last mean we shall mention, was fervency and perseverance in prayer. The peculiar difficulty of knowing the mind of God in the types and prophecies, would make believers incessantly pray with the psalmist, *Open mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.\**

SECT. VI. *Whether Psal. xix. 14. lxxxiv. 9. and Dan. ix. 17. be instances of the use which the Saints under the Old Testament made of Christ's Name in Prayer.*

IN the Discourse on Singing Psalms, the last verse of the sixth psalm, was adduced as an instance of the use which believers made of Christ's name under the Old Testament. To this it has been objected, " That the term Redeemer, is  
 " often applied in the Old Testament to Jehovah the God  
 " of Israel, without any reference to the Messiah ; and it is  
 " thus applied on account of deliverances, public and private, which God had wrought for his people, Deut. vii. 8.  
 " Psal. lxxviii. 35. Jer. l. 34. And there is no reason to  
 " understand it any otherwise here. David prays to God  
 " under the character of his Redeemer, as he had often delivered him from imminent danger. Besides, whoever  
 " was the person he addresses, in the name of another, he  
 " does not plead with God for Christ's sake, or with the  
 Father

\* Saldeni Otia Theologica.

“ Father in the name of the Son, according to the Saviour’s  
 “ direction ; and therefore is nothing to the purpose.”

Answer. The temporal deliverances of the church, particularly that of Israel out of Egypt, are called *redemptions*, *improperly and figuratively* ; as they were fruits and effects of that redemption, strictly and properly so called, which is effected by our Lord Jesus Christ ; and *those* might well serve to lead the minds of the Israelites to the believing contemplation of *this*.\* And therefore, while it is allowed, that the church, and particular believers, under the Old Testament, took occasion from temporal deliverances to celebrate God in Christ as their Redeemer, we can by no means admit, that the worker of such a temporal deliverance was all that they meant by that name : 1. Because this is not adequate to the proper meaning of the word, which, it cannot be denied, refers to a payment of a ransom. 2. Because here and in other places of the Old Testament, the Lord is called the church’s Redeemer, absolutely, without reference to any temporal deliverance. 3. Because a merely temporal Redeemer was not such a one as the sinful and miserable case of man required. 4. Because whatever occasion a temporal deliverance might give a person or people to look to God as their Redeemer ; yet it does not follow, that this was the adequate reason of the designation. Were a beggar to receive alms from a king, the incident might induce the beggar to call him a good and bountiful king ; but it would be strange  
 for

\* “ The redemption of Israel from Egypt, was not wrought,” says Turretine, “ without regard to the ransom which Christ gave. For, as it is certain that all the special promises and deliverances granted to the ancient people of God, proceeded upon the general promise of the Messiah to come, (they having no ground to look for any such favour and help from God, otherwise than as he was propitious and reconciled to them in Christ) so it is not to be doubted, that the fathers obtained this great and remarkable deliverance thro’ Christ” *De Satisfactione Christi, Part I. Sect 35.* “ When the God of Israel,” says Vitringa, “ is called Goel, that is, Redeemer, it is always with regard to that atcanum, or mystery of the divine essence, which is properly the great mystery of faith ; namely, that there is in God, and with God, a glorious person, to whom God has committed the redemption and salvation of his chosen people ; a person who performs for them the part of a kinsman-redeemer, according to the law of such redeemers under the Old Testament. *In Esaiam, xli. 15.*

for any person to infer, that the beggar called him a king, merely because he had given him alms.

In this verse of the sixth psalm, it seems plain, than in the names that the psalmist gives to God, of *his Strength*, and *his Redeemer*, he saw the ground he had to pray and hope, that the words of his mouth and the meditation of his heart would be accepted of God. He had acknowledged himself a poor sinner, chargeable with innumerable errors and secret faults; and therefore, he could not see the ground of his acceptance with God in himself; he could see it only in Christ, his Strength and his Redeemer.

Nor is it any objection, that he, whom the psalmist calls his Strength and his Redeemer, is no other than he to whom this prayer is addressed; for, by faith, the psalmist saw Christ as his Strength and his Redeemer in the Father, and the Father in him, according to what Christ says in John xiv. 9, 10. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father: Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and Father in me.*

In the Discourse on Singing Psalms, the 9th verse of the lxxxivth psalm was quoted as an instance of the regard which Old Testament saints had to Christ in their worship: To this an objector opposes the following paraphrase: “Cause the light of thy gracious countenance to shine  
“ again on the face of thine anointed—who now breathes  
“ his earnest request before thee. Hast thou not caused  
“ thy sacred oil to be poured on my head, and thereby  
“ designated me to be the ruler of thy people: and wilt  
“ thou not grant me the privilege which the meanest of  
“ thy people enjoys.”

Answer. The objector appears to have no good reason for dissenting from so many valuable commentators, who understand the expression, *Look on the face of thine anointed*, of God's looking on the face of Christ, whom the psalmist regarded as his Mediator and Advocate: 1. Because our Lord Jesus was, even then, God's anointed one, the Christ, as the undertaking Head and Surety of the new covenant. So he is called by David in the second psalm, *Why do the people imagine a vain thing against the Lord and against his anointed?* Where is also a manifest correspondence between the phrase here used, and that of the apostle in 2 Corinth. iv. 6. *the face of Jesus Christ.* 2. The phrase, *to look upon*, here signifies,

to regard with acceptance and complacency, as a similar expression, is used in 2. Kings iii. 14. Surely David, who said, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*, would be far, very far from thinking that he was acceptable *in himself*, before such a holy Lord God. The psalmist was deeply sensible, that, for God to look upon him in himself, as a child of fallen Adam, covered with the guilt and pollution of sin, would have been to him utter destruction: For he will by no means clear the guilty. 3. This view of the words agrees best with the context; for the words, *look upon the face of thine anointed*, may well be considered as the psalmist's plea for the hearing and the answering of prayer. We have no reason to suppose, that the psalmist would ground his suit upon any thing short of Christ: For the anointing of David to be king over Israel, was but a type or shadow of Christ's mediatorial office, and the psalmist's remembrance of the former could be no otherwise useful to him in his dealing with God, than as it served to promote and encourage his faith in the latter. But it is more unreasonable still, to suppose that the whole church would make David's appointment to a temporal kingdom, without any regard to Christ, their plea for the hearing of prayer; for this is the language, not only of David, but of the whole church militant: *Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.\**

The Discourse on the Singing of Psalms has been censured for representing Christ to be meant in Dan. ix. 17. *for the Lord's sake*; and it has been objected, "that, if we take this  
" in connexion with the following context, it will not appear that Daniel had any reference to the Saviour in it;  
" for, speaking more explicitly in this respect, he says, in  
ver.

\* "He (the psalmist) has an eye to the Mediator; for of him I  
" rather understand these words, *Look upon the face of the Messiah*,  
" thine anointed one, for of his anointing David spake, Psal. xlv.  
" 7." *Henry on the place. Respiciere faciem Christi*, Psal. lxxxiv. 9.  
qui Mediator noster et Salvator noster est, et propter quem sibi  
benefieri David petit optatque, vocans eum Servum Domini,  
1 Paralip. xvii. 19. et Verbum Domini, 2 Sam. vii. 21. Glassius.  
Quibus verbis docemur non aliter nobis propitiari Deum, quam  
ubi Christus in medium prodit, cujus aspectu discutuntur omnes  
vitiatorum nostrorum nebulæ. *Calvinus in locum.*

“ ver. 18 and 19. *We do not present our supplications before*  
 “ *thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord,*  
 “ *hear, O Lord, forgive, O Lord hearken and do, &c.* But  
 “ if we should even suppose that Daniel had here a view to  
 “ the Messiah, yet the name Lord, which he uses, is a gen-  
 “ eral term; it imports dominion in general, and is perfect-  
 “ ly consistent with an ignorance of Christ’s mediatorial  
 “ and vicarious character, as revealed in the New Testament,  
 “ and according to which christians are to use his name ex-  
 “ plicitly in pleading with God.”\*

Answer. With the christian church in general, we believe,  
 that *for the Lord’s sake*, means for Christ’s sake: 1. Because  
 we have a plurality of divine persons here intimated. The  
 prayer is formally directed to God in the person of the Fa-  
 ther, for the sake of the Lord, the second person of the glo-  
 rious Trinity, the Mediator. Christ is frequently called  
 THE LORD, Psal. cx. 1. John xx. 2<sup>o</sup>. Luke ii. 11, &c.  
 2. Because Christ was always the church’s way of coming  
 to God, and of obtaining salvation, as hath been shewn from  
 John xiv. 6. and other places. *For the Lord’s sake*, that is,  
 says Mr. Henry, “ *for the Lord Christ’s sake; for the sake*  
 “ *of the Messiah promised, who is the Lord. So the most*  
 “ *and best of our christian interpreters understand it. For*  
 “ *the sake of Adonai. So David called the Messiah, Psal.*  
 “ *cx. 1.; and mercy is prayed for the church, “for sake of*  
 “ *the Son” of man, Psal. lxxx. 17. and “for thy words*  
 “ *sake,” 2 Sam. vii. 21.”†*

The objector’s interpretation makes the expression, *for the*  
*Lord’s sake*, to be put instead of *for thy own sake*; hereby  
 the phrase is supposed to be catachrestical, or a departing  
 from the usual propriety of language, without any necessi-  
 ty; for the *proper* sense is perfectly agreeable to the con-  
 nexion here, and to what is taught in other places of scrip-  
 ture. The name Lord, or Adonai, which is here used, is  
 given to Christ as Mediator, in Psal. cx. 1. and has a par-  
 ticular

\* Examination, &c. pag. 82, 83.

† In Psal. lxxx. 15, *Ve gail ben*, (for which, in our translation,  
 we have, *and the branch*) is rendered by Junius and Tremellius,  
*and for the sake of the Son*; and by the Chaldee Paraphrase, *and for*  
*the sake of the King Messiah. See Pool’s Synopsis.*

ticular respect to that property in and dominion over his people, which is founded in his purchase of them with his own blood. When Daniel sought the turning away of the Lord's anger from his church and people, and the manifestation of his special favour for the sake of the Messias, he surely hoped that God would grant his request for the sake of the Messias as the Mediator and Surety of his people; because, abstracting from his mediatorial office, he was no Messias, and there was nothing more in him that could be a ground of hope to his people, than there was in God absolutely considered. Sinners had nothing to expect for his sake, otherwise then as he was Mediator and Surety; and therefore Daniel, who is here confessing his own sin, and that of his people, must have considered him as the Mediator and Surety of himself and his people: Otherwise he had no ground to seek or expect mercy and salvation for his sake. All this was manifestly inconsistent with absolute ignorance of his mediatory office and vicarious righteousness.

The expression in the next verse, instead of leading us away from Christ, leads us to him; because all the saving mercies, that God has for any of Adam's ruined family, are wrapt up in Christ; they are sure mercies of David, or of our Lord Jesus Christ, Isa. lv. 5. compared with Jude 21. So that the expression, *for thy great mercies*, must be understood as implying, *for Christ's sake*, or, *for his righteousness sake*.

SECT. VII. 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9. Rom. xvi. 25. and Heb. ix. 8. *considered.*

OBJECTION. "The gospel in general is called a mystery, " hidden till the age of the apostles, in 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9. " The prophet Isaiah, whose words the apostle quotes, al- " though he had given the clearest predictions concerning " the Messiah of any of the prophets, declares, that these " did not give a clear view of the gospel; as if he had " said, From all that hath been revealed as yet, just con- " ceptions of that sublime plan, and of the method by which " it is to be accomplished, cannot be obtained. But, says " the apostle, the Spirit of God, who alone penetrates and " knows the deep things of God, the profound mysteries " of his counsels and his gospel, hath revealed them unto

“ his apostles. Perfectly to the same purpose is his declaration to the Romans, (xvi. 25.) *The revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest, &c.*”

ANSWER. If the objector means, that the expressions, *hidden or kept secret*, should be understood absolutely, he agrees with the Socinians; who deny that any promise of eternal life was ever made to the people of God under the Old Testament.\* For surely eternal life is one of these things prepared for them that love God, or rather the sum of them. From Rom. xvi. 25, 26. the Socinians draw this inference, that the gospel was hid in the times of the Old Testament, and was not at all revealed.† Thus, if the expression *hid or kept secret*, in these passages, be taken absolutely, and without restriction, they will prove all that the Socinians maintain; and will contradict what the objector seems to allow, namely, that the Old Testament church had the promises of everlasting salvation. So that the objector himself cannot, consistently with his own concessions, insist upon these expressions being taken absolutely. Considering then what restriction the analogy of faith, and the coherence of the apostle's words require, we conclude, that the mystery being kept secret since the world began, signifies, that many ages passed away before the predictions concerning the death of Christ and the calling of the Gentiles were fulfilled; before the mystery of Christ was revealed in that clear and distinct manner wherein it is revealed under the New Testament dispensation, and before the revelation of it was extended to the Gentiles. The last of these particulars seems to be chiefly intended in Rom. xvi. 25. as agreeing best with these words, *by the scriptures of the prophets, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith*. From these words we learn two things: 1<sup>st</sup>, That the gospel was revealed to the Old Testament

\* Bonum æternæ vitæ, (says Smalcius) nusquam in veteri sædere populo aperte promissum fuit.

† Juxta revelationem mysterii sæculis temporum taciti. Ergo evangelium temporibus veteris Testamenti latuit, et nulla ratione revelatum fuit. (Hoornbek answers) Hoc contra ipsam hunc textum est, quo dicitur, evangelium per scripta prophetica manifestatum. *Compend. Socinianismi Confut. lib. ii. cap. i.*

Testament church; because it *is made known by the scriptures of the prophets*; and 2dly, That the gospel is made known to us Gentiles, as well as it was to Israel of old, *by the scriptures of the prophets.*

We may further observe, that the scope of the apostle in 1 Cor. ii. is to represent the wisdom of God in the gospel, as opposite to the wisdom of this world, and as what neither is nor can be known by natural man; not even by the princes of the world, or those who are supposed to possess the greatest share of worldly wisdom; such as Herod, Pontius Pilate, the chief priests and scribes, who crucified the Lord of glory. From the scope of this chapter it is also evident, that the revelation of these things spoken of in ver. 10. is to be understood not only of what was peculiar to Paul as an apostle, but also, and chiefly, of what was common to him with all true believers: For there is a heavenly revelation by the Spirit of grace, an internal and supernatural illumination of the mind, which is necessary to the production of saving faith, whereby *we know the things that are freely given us of God.* This doth not distinguish the Old Testament dispensation from the New, but regenerate from unregenerate men. The apostle says, in the name of all true believers, *God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit.*

As to the passage quoted from Isaiah, it cannot be inferred from it, that either the spiritual blessings of the covenant of grace, or the sacrifice of Christ as the channel of their communication, was altogether unknown under the Old Testament; but only that the greatness and excellency of both these are what natural men cannot have any just conceptions of, and what believers themselves, though they truly know them, cannot fully comprehend, 1 John iii. 1, 2. Psalm xxxi. 19. The objector himself will hardly deny, that the things that God hath prepared for them that love him, such as, perfect likeness to God, and uninterrupted communion with him, were really known and hoped for by the people of God under the Old Testament dispensation.

OBJECTION. "The extraordinary dispensation of the Spirit, mentioned John xvi. 12, 13, 14. proves that these things had not been revealed before, namely, *all the truth, and the things of Christ.* Paul, in unfolding the typical meaning of the Old Testament institutions, Heb. ix. expressly

“ presly asserts this truth in the 8th verse; for after giving  
 “ a relation of the tabernacle furniture, priesthood, offerings,  
 “ &c. he says, The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the  
 “ way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest,  
 “ while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: As if he  
 “ had said, by the very frame and constitution of the Jew-  
 “ ish ritual of worship and ordinances, the Holy Spirit, in  
 “ fact, intimated that the grand scheme was not yet disco-  
 “ vered, and that it was not to be known whilst that œcon-  
 “ omy continued.”

ANSWER. We must distinguish between a *more clear and illustrious* manifestation, (denoted by the original word *πεφανερωσθαι*) of the way into the holiest of all, and some *real* discovery of it. The want of the former, while the first tabernacle was standing, is, we allow, asserted by the apostle, but by no means the want of the latter.

The passage in John xvi. 12, 13, 14. points out the end for which the Spirit is given to believers, both under the Old and New Testament dispensations; for that he was given to believers under the Old dispensation, is undeniable, Numb. xiv. 25. Hag. ii. 5. Psal. li. 11, 12. and cxliiii. 10. Now it was always the work and office of the Spirit towards his church and people, to guide them into all the articles of truth revealed in his word, to teach them the things of Christ, the things which Christ had spoken unto them. We allow, that our Lord's words have respect to the more plentiful effusion of the Spirit under the New Testament, and to his giving believers more clear and distinct views of Christ's obedience unto death, as the only way of their access to God and acceptance with him. But this is nothing to the purpose of proving that, under the Old dispensation, they had no just or determinate views of that matter at all.

In fine, to use the words of a judicious writer, “ the gift  
 “ of righteousness, and salvation through the promised Mes-  
 “ siah, was as really brought near to all within the pale of  
 “ the visible church during the patriarchal and Mosaic, as  
 “ they are to us now under the christian œconomy. Though  
 “ still it must be acknowledged, that this latter dispensation  
 “ of grace, is far more clear, glorious and extensive, than  
 “ the former.”

SECT. VIII. *Of the Knowledge which the Disciples had of Christ during the time of his Humiliation.*

THEY greatly err, who measure the faith of the Old Testament church by the ignorance which prevailed at the time of Christ's coming. The prophetic doctrine was then obscured and almost buried in the thick darkness of ignorance and human traditions. The interpreters of the law had taken away the key of knowledge, Luke xi. 52. They propagated an opinion concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, which was diametrically opposite to the faith of God's ancient people. It is as absurd to estimate the measure of the church's faith under the whole of the Old Testament dispensation, by the state of it at the time now referred to, as it would be to estimate the measure of her faith under the New, by those sparks of knowledge, which, before the Reformation, remained amidst the thick darkness of popery, when the doctrine of the gospel was only not quite extinguished. Our judgment of the measure of faith that was delivered to the Old Testament saints, ought to be regulated by the prophetic doctrine, which, as it is expressed in the scriptures of the Old Testament, is able, according to the apostle, 2 Tim. iii. 15. to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Hence it was, that Christ imputed the ignorance of the disciples as to his sufferings and entrance into glory, to their foolishness and slowness of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken, Luke xxiv. 25, 26.\*

The ignorance of the disciples, who accompanied our Lord in the course of his personal ministry, has been offered as an objection to the doctrine we have delivered concerning the faith of the Old Testament saints. But surely, as hath been just now observed, our judgment in this matter ought to be regulated by the prophetic doctrine, and by the examples of the exercise of faith recorded in the Old Testament. And there are three things which ought to be attended to in the case of the disciples. 1. The Jewish church was then sunk into a state of gross ignorance and corruption. On this account,

\* Cloppenburgii Schola Sacrificiorum, pag. 89.

count, we may well suppose the disciples to have been very ignorant, and possessed with many prejudices, (such as, that with respect to the temporal grandeur and dominion of the Messiah) when they began to follow Christ; and he was pleased to bring them out of that state of ignorance, not all at once, but by degrees. This is undoubtedly one reason why the measure of their knowledge appears so small, during his state of humiliation. 2. It seems improper to estimate the measure of knowledge, which the disciples really possessed, by some things which they uttered in peculiar cases of darkness and temptation. Such was the case of the disciples going to Emmaus, when they said, *We trusted it had been he who should have redeemed Israel.* When Peter took Jesus, and began to rebuke him, saying, *Be it far from thee Lord; this shall not be unto thee;* it appears from what our Lord said to him, that he was under the prevailing influence of a temptation of Satan, Mat. xvi. 22, 23. Sometimes the knowledge which they really had, was not in exercise, or so much overpowered with contrary darkness and unbelief, that they were ready to deny that they had such knowledge. Of this we have a remarkable instance in John xiv. 4, 5. Christ says, *Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* Thomas saith unto him, *Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?* 3. There was a peculiar dispensation in the case of the disciples, whereby their knowledge of the mystery of Christ was stinted to a small measure, till after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, or till the eminent outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Some passages intimate, that there was sometimes in their case a peculiar withdrawing of the enlightening influences of the Spirit, which were necessary to a right apprehension of our Saviour's words, Mark vi. 52. *They considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their hearts were hardened.* Luke xviii. 34. *And they understood none of these things: And this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.* Hence it is said, that, *when he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered what he had spoken about raising the temple of his body; and that they believed the scriptures, and the word which Jesus had said.* This is not to be understood as if they had not truly believed before; but that their knowledge and faith had been formerly

merly very indistinct, and much mingled with contrary prejudices.

Here it may be proper to take notice of an objection, which hath been made, to what is said in the Discourse on Singing Psalms, concerning John xvi. 24. *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name.* "Our Lord's expression," says the objector, "cannot be referred to any personal exercise " or occasional weakness of grace in his disciples; because " he tells them, the deficiency would be removed in the day " of Pentecost, by illumination. *The time cometh, when I " shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall " ask in my name.* But if the view of our Lord's words in " the Discourse on Singing Psalms be just, the cure must " have been by sanctifying quickening grace, and not by " illumination, as the Saviour saith."\*

Answer. It was shewn in the Discourse, that the negative particle is, in scripture, often taken comparatively; and surely it cannot be taken absolutely here; for there could be no acceptable asking of the Father without coming to him; and no coming to him but by Christ, or, what is the same thing, in the name of Christ. So that if the disciples had hitherto made no use at all of Christ's name in asking, they had never come to the Father, nor put up one acceptable petition to him; they had never once called upon God in truth; a supposition which every one must allow to be grossly absurd. But what our Lord intends is, that the use which they had hitherto made of his name in asking, was little or none, compared with what they would be enabled to make of it, through the distinct and clear views of it, which they would obtain, when the Holy Spirit should be poured out abundantly upon them. The objector speaks strangely, as if he imagined, that the influences of the Holy Spirit poured out on the day of Pentecost, were enlightening, but not sanctifying quickening influences. But surely, though some formalists might, even then, have a sort of illumination of their natural understanding which was not sanctifying; yet there was an illumination in the knowledge of Christ undoubtedly included in our Lord's promise, which the apostles and other true believers were partakers of,

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 84.

of, in its own nature quickening and sanctifying; an illumination, which, according to the measure of it, would make them act faith, and dispose them to ask largely in Christ's name. Of this he said to the woman of Samaria, *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that said to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.* And again to the same purpose, *Every man that heareth and learneth of the Father cometh unto me. Beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image.*

SECT. IX. *Inferences from the Church's Knowledge of Christ under the Old Testament Dispensation.*

FROM what has been advanced concerning the reality of the church's knowledge of Christ, it is evident, that it was one and the same covenant of grace, which, under the Old Testament, was exhibited in word, sacraments, ceremonies and sacrifices, and which is now under the New, more clearly exhibited in the word and sacraments only. The proper condition of that everlasting covenant, namely, Christ's obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, was then as much present to God, as it is now; and was made present to the faith of worshippers in the typical sacrifices. All the promises were, then as well as now, *yea and amen in Christ Jesus to the glory of God.* Thus the gospel, or covenant of grace, exhibited or preached unto the fathers, was the same which is preached to us, as the apostle declares, Heb. iv. 2.

Hence we see the error of those who represent the religion of the Old Testament and that of the New as two different religions, saying, that Moses was the founder of the one, and Jesus Christ of the other. All the truly pious, from the beginning of the world, were, upon the matter, christians. The fact, that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch, does not imply that there were no christians under the Old Testament dispensation; but that the disciples at that time were enabled to be remarkably explicit and particular, as a church, in professing their adherence to the cause of Christ, and in bearing testimony against the gross apostacy of the Jews from the religion and hope of their fathers.

Hence,

Hence, too, it appears that the church of God, under the Old and New Testament dispensations, is one. It was the same church, which was formerly under an obligation to the practice of the ceremonial law, and which is now freed from that obligation; as the same person may be called to the performance of several duties in one situation, which he is not called to in another. Jesus Christ was King and Head of the church under the Old Testament as well as under the New. Zech. ix. 9. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh; he who is, and hath been thy King from the beginning of thy church-state.* The person of Christ was the foundation on which, as, revealed in the first promise, the church was at first erected; on which, as farther declared by the prophets and apostles, it has stood all along; and on which it will stand to the end of the world; according to that remarkable word, *On this rock, namely, my divine person, will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* The building upon this foundation consists of believers; to whom Peter says, *Ye are built up a spiritual house.* It is an invariable maxim in the church of Christ, from the beginning to the end, that it should have no other doctrine than that which is taught in the divine word; no other form of worship or of government than that which is delineated and appointed there. Hence it must be directly contrary to the welfare of the church, under the New Testament dispensation as well as under the Old, to attempt to change the ordinances, or to introduce something into the form of the worship or government of the church, which God never appointed, however plausible it may seem to human wisdom.

When the Gentiles were called to the faith of Christ, they became one body with the Old Testament church; they became *fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God*; making the same profession of faith with Abraham, David and other saints, recorded in the Old Testament, and being thus brought into the same house or family with them, Eph. ii. 14, 19. Believing Gentiles are not represented as forming a new church, but as *ingrafted into the stock* of the Old Testament church, Rom. xi. 17.

In the Old Testament, the worship of the New is often predicted under the names of ceremonial usages, as in Mal.

i. 11. *From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name and a pure offering.* In the viith chapter of the Revelation, the New Testament church is represented as consisting of the twelve tribes of Israel. And the entrance of the Gentiles into the New Testament church, and their attendance on its ordinances, are represented by the prophets as the gathering them to Jerusalem, Jer. iii. 17. Nothing less seems to be implied in these passages, than that, in substance, the same spiritual and evangelical worship, with the addition of typical rites, was truly offered to God under the Old Testament, which is now offered to him without those rites; and that persons under the New Testament, by their attendance on gospel ordinances, wherever administered according to the divine appointment, profess themselves members of the same church with the Israelites of old, who went up to worship at Jerusalem.

From what has been said concerning the unity of the Old and New Testament church, we learn, that to adhere stedfastly to the approved examples, under the Old Testament dispensation, of what the glorious Head of the church hath not abrogated in the form of religious worship, is, by no means, to Judaize; but, on the contrary, is indispensably necessary, as an evidence, that we truly belong to that church of Christ, which has been one and the same ever since the giving of the first promise; and as a suitable testimony against the present apostacy of the Jews from that church, to which they once did, and we now do belong.

From what has been advanced concerning the reality of the church's knowledge of the obedience and death of Christ, the futility is manifest, of what is so much insisted on by our opponents, namely, that church-members under the Old Testament, being ignorant of the obedience and death of Christ, as the medium or channel through which spiritual blessings are communicated, the psalms, which were suitable to their worship, cannot be suitable to ours. We have seen that there was no such invincible ignorance of that medium under the Old Testament, as they imagine; and therefore the conclusions drawn from it are not to be admitted.

Farther,

Farther, since the saving knowledge and faith of church-members had the same objects, and were of the same nature under both the Old and New Testament dispensations, it appears, that the psalms which have not spiritual and evangelical truth for the matter of them, were never calculated for the edification, nor suited to the worship of the church under either of these dispensations. Hence, when our opponents argue, that the psalms had not such truth for the matter of them, their argument would prove too much: It would prove that they were not fit for the worship even of the Old Testament church; and therefore it proves nothing.

When a writer, in opposition to the use of the scripture-songs in solemn worship, tells us, that “the Old Testament church had no access to God, but through priests and sacrifices,” he seems to assert a gross falsehood, namely, that the Old Testament church regarded the outward forms of the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices, as truly and properly the way of their access to God. The falsehood of this assertion is sufficiently evident from the consideration of the true nature of these outward observances, which were only shadows of good things to come, and signified the regard which the worshippers had to Christ as the only Priest and Sacrifice, by whom they could have access to and acceptance with God. Thus the typical nature of the priests and sacrifices of the Old Testament worshippers, leads to a conclusion just the reverse of what the writer now mentioned would draw from it; namely, that the Old Testament church had no access to God, nor communion with him, but through Jesus Christ. Priests, altars, sacrifices, belonged indeed to the instituted form of worship; and a steadfast adherence to them, while they were not abrogated, was indispensable duty: But it is no less absurd to say, that the Old Testament church had no access to God but through priests and sacrifices, than it would be to say, that the New Testament church has no access to God, but through bread and wine, because these are appointed to be used in the outward form of New Testament worship.

SECT. X. *Whether our continuing to sing the Book of Psalms infers our preference of the Old Testament Dispensation to the New.*

“ SHALL any man,” says a writer against the singing of the book of psalms, “ prevail upon us to return to the shadows  
“ of good things to come, when we have the things them-  
“ selves? Shall we light a lamp, when the sun shineth in  
“ his strength? Having attained to the knowledge and full  
“ understanding of manhood, shall we return to learn after  
“ the elements and rudiments of children.”

Answer. Declamation of this sort is a mere *petitio principii*, or a begging of the question. For there is no returning to the Old Testament dispensation in singing the book of psalms, unless the singing of it be like circumcision, sacrificing, the annual observation of feasts, abstinence from blood and other food that was ceremonially unclean; that is, unless it be a ceremonial and abrogated rite, peculiar to the Old Testament dispensation. The practice of the ceremonial law, considered as a mean of coming to the understanding of the psalms, may be compared to a child's manner of reading by spelling and dividing the syllables; while our coming to the understanding of them, by the superior light arising from the canon of scripture now complete, is like a person's manner of reading who is considerably advanced in learning. Thus, the purifying rites prescribed under the Old Testament, might assist a person in endeavouring to apprehend the import of such an expression as this, *Purge me with hyssop*; but we have far better means of attaining that knowledge by the completion of the canon of scripture. Whatever childishness there might be in some of the means used by church-members under the Old Testament dispensation, for coming to the understanding of the psalms, there never was nor is any thing childish in the psalms themselves, or in the singing of them.

But, says the objector, “ of what advantage can the New  
“ Testament scriptures be to us in our psalms, hymns, and  
“ spiritual songs, if it is unlawful for us to teach and ad-  
“ monish from them? Of what use can a light be in a place  
“ where we dare not introduce it? How can the typical  
“ observances

“ observances and figures in the book of psalms be compared with the light of the New Testament revelation, when every departure from the matter or form in which these psalms were written, implies a reflection on the Spirit, and a corruption of the worship of God ?”

Answer. The objector speaks as if the light of the New Testament were no otherwise of advantage to us, with respect to our psalms, hymns or spiritual songs, than as it may enable us to compose them. Unless he means to confine the use of this light, with regard to our hymns, to the making of them, he must allow it for our direction in singing them. Now if this light affords us direction in singing human compositions, why may it not do so in singing the scripture-psalms ? As the scriptures have been all dictated by the same Spirit, and form one harmonious whole ; so we are aided in our endeavours to understand one part of them by the understanding of other parts. Hence our understanding of the New Testament must be conducive to our understanding of the psalms. Indeed, New Testament light must heighten our esteem of the very form, as well as of the matter of the psalms ; causing us to discern a divine propriety in the form of discourse, in the metaphors, in the method chosen by the Holy Spirit. As the wing of a butterfly, and various other works of nature, seen through a microscope, appear far more delicate and finely proportioned, than they do to the naked eye ; while, on the contrary, the finest cambric and other works of art, when viewed by that curious instrument, appear coarse and deformed. So if the inspired forms of the psalms, and the most celebrated hymns of human composition, be both viewed in New Testament light, and considered with relation to their fitness for promoting the exercise of grace and spiritual affections, it will be found, that the latter will not bear a comparison with the former.

SECT. XI. *Whether the Scripture-songs be inadequate to the Knowledge and other Attainments of Church-members under the New Testament Dispensation.*

It is farther objected, that “ the language of the psalms in the Old Testament is not adequate to our views of the glorious things of the gospel. Do we not know more of God and of his works, both of nature and grace, than was

“ revealed to the Jews? Do we not know more of the Fa-  
 “ ther, Son, and Holy Spirit; and of their respective work  
 “ in the salvation of sinners? Do we not know more of the  
 “ love of Christ in dying, the just for the unjust, that he  
 “ might bring us to God? Are not our souls possessed with  
 “ a variety of warm affections, when we contemplate our  
 “ chief Beloved hanging on the cross, with the load of all  
 “ our sins upon him, and giving up his life for rebels and  
 “ enemies? And must we never sing a new song for re-  
 “ demption actually completed, nor otherwise than under  
 “ the veil of sacrificed bullocks, goats, &c.? We are enabled  
 “ to look far into a future state,—life and immortality are  
 “ brought to light by the gospel, &c.”\*

Answer. To admit this method of proving the warrant-  
 ableness of singing human compositions in solemn worship, is  
 exceedingly dangerous. For this is the purport of it:—It  
 seems to us highly proper, convenient and eligible; and  
 therefore it is warrantable. How many rites of human  
 invention will be introduced into religious worship, if plau-  
 sible reasoning about the fitness of them be allowed, as the  
 proper way of making out a warrant for their introduction?  
 And on the other hand, how many divine ordinances, in  
 which men see no fitness or usefulness, will be laid aside?  
 It is a protestant principle, that no particular mean or way  
 of worshipping God is warrantable, which cannot be proved  
 to have been divinely instituted, either by the express words  
 of scripture, or by consequences necessarily deduced from  
 them: Divine revelation being the only rule and standard  
 of all that religious worship which is acceptable to God.  
 Without adhering to this principle, we cannot preserve the  
 ordinances of our holy religion pure or entire.

2. When the objector signifies, that the doctrines he men-  
 tions, are not contained in the psalms, he seems to insinuate,  
 that they are not to be found in the Old Testament; for we  
 cannot allow, that there is an article of evangelical doctrine  
 in any other part of the Old Testament, which is neither  
 expressed nor implied in the psalms; these being a summary  
 of what is contained in the other scriptures. Herein the  
 objector contradicts a protestant principle, which used to be  
 held

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 104, 105.

held by orthodox divines against papists and Socinians, namely, the perfection of the Old Testament asserted by itself, Psal. xix. 7. *The law of the Lord is perfect. Partes integrales*, says a very estimable writer,\* *in doctrina legis et evangelii, non modo in universis Testamenti utriusque libris, sed etiam in Penteteucho Moſis; item in libris prophetarum absque Novi Testamenti auxilio deprehenduntur, utpote quo verbum εγγραφον clarius, non perfectius, est redditum*: That is, “the  
 “ integral or constituent parts, consisting of the law and  
 “ the gospel, are found not only in all the books of either  
 “ Testament; but even in the Penteteuch, or five books  
 “ of Moſes, alone; likewise in the books of the prophets,  
 “ without the addition of the New Testament; which ad-  
 “ dition is to be considered as rendering the written word  
 “ more clear, but not more perfect; that is, it adds no  
 “ new article to the substance either of the law or of the  
 “ gospel.”

3. The objection seems to be contrary to another protestant principle, namely, that not only the truths which are found in the express words of any part of scripture, but those also which are deducible therefrom by necessary consequence, are justly reckoned to be taught in that part of scripture. Thus our Lord assures us, that the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was taught by the words which were spoken to Moſes out of the bush, Luke xx. 37. Thus, many truths, besides what are formally expressed in the words of a psalm, are deducible from them by necessary consequence. The death of Christ is a plain consequence from these words, *Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*. That Christ is the true God, follows from these words in the second psalm, *Kiss the Son*. Admitting that whatever is thus deducible from the express words of a psalm, is taught in it, a person must surely have a consummate knowledge of the force and connexion of every word in the book of psalms, who can say with certainty, that such an article of evangelical truth is not contained in any part of that book. Hence, it is evident, that they who complain of any penury of evangelical matter in the psalms, or  
 who

\* Henricus Altingius, whose works, as Mr. Hervey observes, are more precious than gold.

who suppose there is more of it in some human composures, only betray their inattention to the scriptures, and the perversion of their taste as to spiritual things.

4. Though the Old Testament church, in general, had not such outward means and advantages, as we now have; yet we are by no means thence to conclude, that the spiritual attainments of those particular eminent saints, whose exercises are recorded in the psalms, were inferior to ours. The lively exercises of faith represented in the xxiiiid and many other psalms, the evangelical exercise of godly sorrow for sin as exemplified in the li<sup>st</sup>, the xxxiid, and cxxxth, the disinterested zeal for the welfare of the church of Christ expressed in the cxxxiid, and the cxxxviith, and the rich experience of spiritual profit by the word set forth in the cxixth, may well make the best christians among us blush to talk of the language of the psalms not being adequate to their attainments. Surely no matter can be fitter to be sung by the church in her solemn worship, than the infallible examples exhibited in the psalms, of solid piety and of the lively exercise of the true grace of God.

OBJECTION. "Our Lord declares, *For I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater than John the Baptist; but he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.* The kingdom of God, or, as Matthew, in a parallel passage, records it, the kingdom of heaven, is but another expression for the gospel dispensation; which is evident, both because our Lord almost always uses it in this sense, and because the following verse, in Matthew's gospel, confines it thereto. John Baptist neither wrought miracles nor predicted future events to any such degree, as many prophets that had risen before him; consequently, the only point in which he was superior to them all, was, his superior knowledge of gospel mysteries; and if the least in the kingdom of God, the weakest true christian, under the full light of the gospel, be greater than John, it must be in the same sense; that is to say, he is acquainted with many things in the plan of salvation, which were not revealed to John himself, and therefore such a christian knows more of these glorious things, than the greatest Old Testament prophet."

ANSWER.

ANSWER. It is necessary to distinguish between what was actually discerned in the inspired writings of the Old Testament, by church-members, and even by the prophets, under the Old dispensation, and what is discernible in those writings under the New. Hence, though the knowledge that church-members attain under the New Testament be superior to what was actually derived from the books of the Old Testament, by church-members under the Old dispensation, yet it will not follow, that their knowledge is superior to what may be derived from these books under the New. No superiority of knowledge, attainable in this life, can set church-members above the use of any part of the scriptures. Hence were it even supposable, that a christian knows more of the gospel than David, it will not follow, that he knows more than is contained in the psalms of David; because David was only the penman, while the Holy Spirit was the author of them; and gave them not only for his use, but for that of the church in all succeeding ages. The objector himself cannot consistently disapprove the distinction now made; since he gives it as the true meaning of 1 Pet. i. 12. that "it was revealed to the prophets, that their predictions concerning the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, were not for their learning; and that, in uttering them, they were only ministering, or performing services to the christian church." Upon this supposition it follows, that David, Asaph and others, in penning the psalms, ministered or performed a service, not so much to the Jewish, as to the christian church; and consequently, the psalms are more serviceable and suitable to the latter, than they were or could be to the former.

With respect to the text quoted, it may be observed, that the superiority of John the Baptist to the prophets, and other church-members under the Old dispensation, is not in respect of knowledge, holiness, and the like attainments; but merely in respect of office. In the foregoing verses, our Lord describes John as a prophet; and not only so, but as his harbinger, in whom the prophecy of Malachi, *Behold, I send my Messenger before thy face, was fulfilled.* In this respect, his ministry excelled that of all the prophets that had gone before him. While they spoke of Christ as not yet come, John, in his ministry, pointed him out, as already come.

come. Yet is the office of John inferior to that of the least minister regularly called and sent, according to the order of the New Testament church; the office of such a minister being to declare, that *Christ hath finished the work which the Father gave him to do; that he who was dead is now alive and lives for evermore, and hath the keys of hell and death.\** But to say that a new Testament minister has a greater honour and privilege conferred upon him, in respect of some particular part of his office, than was conferred upon the greatest prophet under the Old dispensation, is a quite different thing from saying, that the weakest true christian under the New Testament dispensation has more knowledge of the plan of salvation than the greatest prophet under the Old had, and it is more widely different still from what the objector's purpose required him to say, namely, that the knowledge which the weakest true christian has of gospel-mysteries is so superior to all that is contained in the inspired writings of the prophets, as to render the use of them, and particularly the singing of the psalms, a poor, mean, low thing, to which it does not become him to stoop.

The truth is, New Testament light is derived not only from the books of the New Testament, but also from the better understanding and fuller use which may now be had of the books of the Old Testament; of the book of psalms

as

\* If it be objected to the sense here given of the text, that, while we understand the word *greater* as respecting a public office, the word *least* is considered as respecting personal qualifications; it may be answered, that in similar phrases it is necessary to consider the words which are opposed to one another as respecting different things: Thus the apostle says of himself, and his fellow-labourers in the work of the gospel, *That they were poor, yet making many rich*, 2 Cor. vi. 10.; that is, poor as to the things of this world, and yet instruments in Christ's hand of making many rich in faith, rich towards God, and in good works. Some judicious commentators, by *the least*, or, as it may be rendered, *the lesser*, or *younger*, in the kingdom of God, (as one of the apostles is called, *James the less*, Mark xv. 40. that is, *the younger*, in respect of James the son of Zebedee) understand Christ himself, who might be so called, because he was younger, and later in entering upon his public ministry than John. See *Witsius Oecon. Fœd. cap. xiii. lib. iv.*

as well as of any other. Hence we may conclude, that New Testament light, being true and genuine, can have no tendency to lessen, but rather to increase the use of the psalms in the reading and singing of them.

SECT. XII. *Whether our having the Scripture-songs for our forms of Psalmody, excludes the due Commemoration of the Benefits God hath bestowed on his Church, since the coming of Christ, from a place in our praises.*

OBJECTION. " Shall christians, in all their songs of  
 " praise, be silent respecting the beneficent acts of the blef-  
 " sed Jesus? Shall they say nothing of his opening the eyes  
 " of the blind, of his unstopping the ears of the deaf, of his  
 " causing the lame to leap as the hart, and the tongue of  
 " the dumb to sing, of his healing obstinate diseases by a  
 " touch or a word, of his walking on the water, command-  
 " ing the winds and waves, raising the dead to life, feeding  
 " thousands with a few loaves and fishes, turning water  
 " into wine, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree,  
 " spoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over  
 " them, and ascending into heaven as our forerunner, of  
 " his calling the Gentiles, &c.?"

ANSWER. The psalms are not silent as to these particulars. We sing the praises of Christ's miracles in such words as these, Psal. lxxii. 18. *Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone doth wondrous things,* and cxlvi. 7, 8. *The Lord giveth food to the hungry: The Lord looseth the prisoners: The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: The Lord raiseth the bowed down.* Of his incarnation, Psal. xl. 6. *Mine ears hast thou opened;* compared with Heb. x. 5. *A body hast thou prepared me.* Of his sufferings, wherein he bore our iniquities, in the lxxixth and cxxiith psalms. Of his glorious exaltation, in Psal. cxviii. 22. *The stone which the builders rejected is become the head-stone of the corner.* Of him in respect of his divine nature, Psal. ii. 7. *The Lord said unto me, Thou art my Son: This day I have begotten thee:* cx. 1. *The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.* Of him in respect of his human nature, Psal. xxii. 9. *Thou art he who took me out of the womb: Thou didst make me hope when I was on my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb. I am*  
 poured

*poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint, &c.* Of his priestly office, Psal. cx. 4. *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* Of his prophetic office, Psal. xxii. 22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren: In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.* Of his kingly office, Psal. ii. 6. *Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.* Of his blessed work in the calling of the Gentiles, Psal. xcvi. 23. *The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewn in the sight of the heathen. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.* Of the irresistible power which he displays in the conversion of sinners, Psal. cx. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power:* xlv. 3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.* Of the riches of his grace in our justification, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. *Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth no iniquity; and in our sanctification, Psal. xxiii. 3. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* These few, out of a great many instances, may serve to shew how far we are, in singing the psalms, from being silent with regard to the beneficent acts of the Lord Jesus.

Besides, it is to be observed, as a principal consideration here, that there is no pious exercise of the soul, to which the Lord is calling any, that there is not a form of words, in one or other of the psalms, proper to promote and express. For this purpose it is not necessary, that the particular explications of doctrines, which we have in other places of scripture, or formal narratives of facts, which may be the immediate occasion of our present exercise, should be introduced into our spiritual songs: It is enough that the words thereof are so applicable to the occasion, as to express the sentiments of admiration, gratitude and praise, which ought then to possess our minds.

SECT. XIII. *Whether the Language of Prophecy be necessarily obscure and unintelligible before the Accomplishment of it ; and whether it be a sufficient Objection against our Singing the Psalms, that they were written before many of those glorious Events, which are among the principal Subjects of our Praise, had taken place.*

IN speaking against the singing of the psalms in our solemn worship, strange things have been thrown out concerning the obscurity of Old Testament predictions. "Prophecy," it has been said, "is involved in such obscurity, that it cannot be understood but by the accomplishment. Prophecy MUST be obscure, because the moral agency of man is concerned in bringing to pass the predicted events. If the prediction was so clear as to give an adequate view of the subject, either the event would be frustrated, or the moral agency of man must be over-ruled so as to destroy his accountableness."

Answer. The far greater part of the psalms being representations of the exercise of the grace of God in the souls of his people, are not affected by the objection. Nor has it any force against the singing of those parts of them respecting Christ and his church, which may be considered as prophetic, now when they are fulfilled ; since it is allowed, that the fulfilment may take away the obscurity of prophecy. Nor is the doctrine here taught concerning the obscurity of prophecy, to be admitted without limitation. Some prophecies are more plain ; as that in 1 Kings xiii. 4. about Josiah's overthrow of the altar at Bethel, and that about the term of the Babylonish captivity, in Jer. xxv. 11, 12. and xxix. 10. Nor is the plainness of such prophecies inconsistent with the free agency of those who are instrumental in fulfilling them, as is manifest from the examples of the prophecies concerning Hazael's cruelties, 2 Kings viii. 12. concerning the betraying of Christ, John xiii. 21. concerning Peter's denial of him, Luke xxii. 34. and of many others. Some prophecies are more obscure, as the prophecy of Christ concerning his death and resurrection, in John ii. 19. This obscurity is ordered for the incitement of the godly to the diligent study of the scriptures, and to earnest prayer for that

spiritual illumination which is necessary to the understanding of prophecy, as it is indeed for the understanding of the other parts of scripture, Dan. xii 10. *None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.* Though the obscurity of many prophecies be well ordered, as for other purposes, so for that of depriving men of all pretence for excusing sinful actions, as if their rational liberty were infringed by such actions being foretold; yet it does not follow, that, if such a prophecy had been clear, the excuse would have been just; because no divine prophecy as such, was ever delivered to men as the rule of duty. And it is evident that men, in performing actions that were most clearly foretold, have acted as freely, that is, as much according to their disposition and choice, as in performing any other. For example, what could be more clearly foretold than the betraying of Christ by Judas, and the denial of him by Peter? Yet it does not appear that the prediction, in either of these cases, destroyed, or even lessened the moral agency, or the accountableness of the actors?

The opinion, that divine prophecy in general is so obscure as to be unintelligible till it be accomplished, seems to be inconsistent with the nature of prophecy, as it is a revelation or foreshewing of things to come. For a future event cannot be said to be foreshewn, by a speech which cannot be understood before the event takes place. Surely the saints, before the coming of Christ, were instructed by the prophecies of him: But how could they be so, if these prophecies could not be understood but by the accomplishment? When Micaiah foretold that Ahab should go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead, could this not be understood but by the accomplishment? When our Lord said to his disciples, Peter and John, *Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; must we allow, that the disciples could not understand these words, till they actually met the man with the pitcher? The truth is, divine prophecy may be obscure, but is not always or necessarily so; and there is reason to believe, that it is never so in such a degree that it cannot be understood but by the accomplishment.* Even the light thrown upon a prophecy by the event, shews how that prophecy might have been understood before the event, by directing the attention to  
some

some circumstance which had been overlooked. All explanations of divine prophecy, which imply, that it could not be understood without the existence of something which did not exist when it was delivered, may, on that account, be rejected. It is well known, that many divine prophecies are full of allusions to persons, places, customs and facts, which were familiarly known at the time when they were delivered. Hence it is not improbable, that some of them might be better understood at the time of their delivery, than they were afterward. The accomplishment of a divine prophecy is not such a correspondence of something with the tenor of it, as superstitious people are continually discovering between their dreams and this and the other occurrence: It is something which might have been foreseen before it took place, by the light of that prophecy. Thus, the ascendancy, which Rome antichristian was to gain over the kings of the earth, might have been understood from the xviiith chapter of the Revelation, compared with the character of the man of sin, drawn in the 2d epistle to the Thessalonians, even at the time of John's writing the Revelation.\*

On the whole, we cannot conclude, *a priore*, that the psalms describing Christ's humiliation and exaltation are obscure,

\* With respect to the expression concerning the prophets in 1 Pet. i. 12. *Not unto themselves, but to us they did minister*, it is well known, that the word *not*, is often taken elliptically, for *not only*, or *not chiefly*, as in Gen. xxxii. 28. 1 Sam. viii. 7. Acts v. 4. So here it is put for not only, or chiefly to themselves, &c. The same apostle in Acts ii. 30, 31. represents David as knowing the resurrection of Christ; which implies, that he had the knowledge of his death and of the glory which was to follow. The prophets knew, that the word which they were directed to deliver, would be a light to the church, not only in their own times, but in all succeeding ages; a light which would continue to grow brighter unto the end of time. The author of an Examination, &c. pag. 97. says, "The predictions uttered by the Old Testament prophets, were so far from being intelligible, that the prophets themselves were engaged in a scrutiny and diligent search into them." One should think it would have been more natural to have said, that judging their own prophecies to be intelligible, they were engaged in a diligent search into the import of them.

obscure, because they are prophetic; since prophecy may be plain as well as obscure.

OBJECTION. In singing the Old Testament psalms, we sing of Christ as not yet come; of his humiliation and exaltation, and the consequences thereof, as if they had not yet taken place.

ANSWER. We are here to remember, what has been already proved, that it is not necessary, as in prayer, to consider all the words which we sing as our own words, and as applicable to our present situation; and that we are to be directed to the right understanding and application of the psalms which we sing, by comparing them with the New Testament and other parts of scripture. On this principle, it is plain, that we cannot be suitably exercised in singing such words as these, *Then said I, Lo I come: Thou hast ascended on high: The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand,* without praising and blessing God for Christ as having already come, as having already ascended, and sitten down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

It is obvious, that in these and the like expressions, Christ is spoken of as already come: It may be said, that the figurative style of the prophets is here used, which often puts the past for the future. But why should we not allow, that the Holy Spirit, who dictated the psalms, as he did the other scriptures, for all succeeding generations, made choice, in these instances, of that figurative manner of speaking, with a view to the time when these expressions were to be justly used, and applied properly, or as plain language?

In the next place, we observe, that the events, salutary to the church, which have taken place since the end of the Old Testament dispensation, are chiefly our Lord's obedience unto death, and deliverances which are fruits of it. With respect to his obedience unto death, faith, even under the Old Testament dispensation, viewed it as present in the word of grace and promise; and, in regard that the saints were then enjoying the fruits of it, faith viewed it, in its virtue and efficacy, as if it had been already past. If this be duly considered, it will not be surprizing, that we should sing of the death of Christ in the same words wherein the Old Testament church sung of it. With respect to deliverances, which are fruits of the death of Christ, ours and theirs are

so much alike, that they may well be celebrated in the same songs. The deliverance which believers then obtained from the law as a covenant of works, from sin, Satan, the world and death, is materially the same with what they now obtain; so that the same songs of praise for the personal deliverances of believers, may well be continued in our solemn worship. And as God's relation to the church in general, and his care of it, are the same under both dispensations; so the signal appearances, which he made for his church under the Old dispensation, are recorded as patterns and pledges of the appearances which he will make for it under the New; Isa. li. 9. *Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon?* Mich. vii. 15. *According to the days of the coming out of the land of Egypt, will I shew unto him marvellous things.* There being such a similarity between the appearances of God for the church under the Old dispensation, and his appearances for it under the New, why should it be thought strange, that we should be appointed to use the same psalms in praising him for the latter that had been used in praising him for the former? Hence, in the xvth chapter of the Revelation, the New Testament church, upon occasion of the outpouring of the vials upon antichrist, is represented as singing, in the language of the Old Testament psalms, the song of Moses the servant of God 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. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: For all nations shall come and worship before thee: For thy judgments are made manifest.* Psal. lxxxvi. 9. cxlv. 17.

SECT. XIV. *Whether we exclude the Gospel from our Solemn Praises by the Use of the Scripture-songs.*

OBJECTION. "Those who sing David's psalms, dishonour that gospel in which they profess to glory, by leaving it entirely out, in their songs of praise, where gratitude for it should always constitute a principal part. Shall the gospel have no share in our songs of praise and gratitude to God?"

ANSWER. The word gospel, like many others in scripture, is taken in different senses. If any one should insist, that the New Testament dispensation is sometimes called the gospel, on account of the more clear exhibition of the gospel, the canon of scripture being now complete; it would not be necessary to oppose him; provided he allow, that the gospel, strictly taken, which signifies good news of pardon and salvation, given freely to poor sinners for the sake of Christ Jesus, is the common doctrine of the whole bible. The doctrine of the Old Testament gets this name as well as that of the New: Gal. iii. 8. *The scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham. In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* Heb. iv. 2. *Unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them.* 1 Pet. iv. 6. *The gospel was preached to them that are dead.* It seems to be called the *everlasting gospel*, because it has been the same gospel ever since the giving of the first promise on the back of the fall, and will continue the same to the end of time. The law and the gospel, properly so called, are not exhibited in separate books of scripture; but both run through the whole of it; the one being taught in subservience to the other. So Mr. Erskine justly says:

When we the sacred record view,  
Or divine Test'ments Old and New;  
The matter in most pages fix'd,  
Is law and gospel intermix'd.

To the gospel belong all such passages in the psalms as these already quoted, concerning the person and offices of Christ; all the declarations of the Lord's mercy and forgiveness, Psal. lxxxvi. 15. *Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.* cxxx. 4. *But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.* All such declarations of the Lord's mercy exercised towards poor sinners, as that in Psal. cvi. 8. *Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.* Most of the arguments with which the psalmist enforces his petitions, Psal. xxv. 7, 11. *According to thy mercy remember me for thy goodness sake, O Lord. For thy name's sake pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.* cxix. 53. *Be merciful unto me according to thy word.* All such

such promises as these in Psal. xxii. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. *All ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, &c.* and in Psal. lxxxix. 4, 21, 37. All the representations of the spiritual blessings which believers partake of in this life. Psal. ciii. 2, 3, 4. *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and be not forgetful of his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.* Or in the life to come, Psal. xvii. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.* All intimations of the ground of faith, or confidence in the Lord's name, Psal. xxxvi. 17. *How excellent is thy loving kindness! therefore do the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.* lxxv. 5. *Thou art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are a-far off upon the sea.* All the examples of the exercise of faith, Psal. cxlii. 5. *I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.* Though there is no verbal mention of Christ in many of the psalms; yet he is still to be understood as the sure foundation on which the psalmist proceeded in all his dealings with God, in all his spiritual exercises; as is evident from his disclaiming all pretensions to any righteousness of his own, upon the footing of which he could stand before God, Psal. cxxx. 3. cxliii. 2. from his resolution to make mention of the divine righteousness only, Psal. lxxi. 16. In the psalms, the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, are, for the most part, rather supposed, than particularly explained; and the exercises of godly fear, love to God and his ways, zeal for his declarative glory, and other graces, arising from the faith of those doctrines, are exemplified.

These are some instances of the gospel, with which the psalms are richly furnished. Well may they be called gospel psalms, hymns and songs.

To represent church-members as not singing the gospel, when they sing the psalms of David, is just as reasonable, as it would be to say, that a person does not read the gospel, when he reads the epistles of James, John and Jude; because the word *gospel* is not to be found in any of them.

It recommends the practice of singing the book of psalms, that hereby we acknowledge that the church of God was,  
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under the Old dispensation, and is now, edified by the same gospel,

Which from the first has shone on ages past,  
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last.

SECT. XV. *Whether it be the case, that, in Singing the Psalms of David, no distinct regard is expressed to the Three Persons of the Godhead.*

THE opposers of the singing of the scripture-songs, deny that, in singing the scripture-songs, we express a distinct regard to the Persons of the Godhead.

With how little reason they do so, will appear from the following observations:

In the first place, if the scripture-forms of psalmody expressed no distinct regard to the Persons of the Godhead, then they would have been improper even under the Old Testament dispensation; for then, as well as now, the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed and believed. Here we may not overlook a dangerous opinion, advanced in opposition to the scripture-forms of psalmody, in the following words: "If you ask why no such distinct worship was paid to Jesus Christ under the Old Testament? The answer is easy. It is because God is chiefly praised there for the works of creation and providence, in which the several Persons of the Trinity were jointly concerned, and no special and distinct manifestation being made of their glory, there was no necessity of any distinct mention of them."\*

In opposition to these words we observe, 1. That a Three One God is the only true God: Any worship, therefore, which is not a worship of the Three-One God is idolatry; or the worship of that which is not the true God; the worship of an idol. 2. That God cannot be truly worshipped by fallen man, without the faith of a Mediator. But that faith cannot be without the knowledge and belief of the Three Persons in the unity of the Godhead. If these Three Persons be known and believed, they must be regarded and acknowledged in divine worship. And, therefore,

\* A Discourse on Psalmody, by Mr. Lata, pag. 107.

fore, they must have been so regarded and acknowledged by true and acceptable worshippers of God under the Old, as well as the New dispensation. 3. That the doctrine of the Trinity is taught in the Old Testament. This has been often shewn in the writings of orthodox divines, against the Jews, the Arians and Socinians. A plurality of Persons in the Divine Essence is plainly intimated in the account of man's creation, Gen. 1. 26. *And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.* Some have supposed, that God here speaks improperly, after the manner of kings and princes; while there is no evidence of any such manner being in use, when Moses wrote: Nor indeed can any tolerable account be given of this expression without allowing a plurality of Persons in the Godhead. God frequently speaks of himself in this manner; Gen. iii. 22. *And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us.* Gen. xi. 6, 7. *And the Lord said, Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language.* Isai. vi. 8. *And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send? and who shall go for us?*

It has been generally allowed among christians, that the Three Persons in the unity of the Divine Essence, are intimated in the threefold repetition of the Divine name, in the sacerdotal benediction recorded in Numb. vi. 24, 25, 26. *The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.* The name Jehovah, as Mr. Henry observes, is here three times repeated, and each of them with a different accent in the original. The Jews themselves think there is some mystery in this: And certainly it can be no other than this, to denote Three distinct Persons, each of which is Jehovah, answerably to the apostolical benediction, in 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

But there are various other texts in the Old Testament, in which the doctrine of a Trinity is still more clearly held forth: Isai. lxiii. 7, 9, 10. *I will mention the loving kindness of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: In his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them; and he bare and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled*

belled and vexed his Holy Spirit. Hence Three Divine Persons are plainly mentioned : The first is, *the Lord*, whose great goodness to the house of Israel is spoken of : The second is *the Angel of his face or presence* : This is the uncreated Angel of the covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ, Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. Mal. iii. 1. The third is *the Holy Spirit* ; who is represented as grieved and vexed, agreeably to the expression of the apostle, Eph. iv. 32. Another passage in which we meet with this doctrine, is Isai. lxi. 1, 2. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.* Here also are Three Divine Persons plainly revealed : The person speaking, namely, *the Messiah*, who is represented as doing what none can do who is not truly God ; as binding up the broken hearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, the opening of the prison to those that are bound : Another person, who is evidently distinguished from the Messiah, as anointing and sending the Messiah, namely, *the Father* ; and a third person, *the Spirit of the Lord God*, who is said to be upon the Messiah ; for *God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.* To the same purpose is that which we have in Isai. xlvi. 16. *And now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent, or, rather, as it ought to be rendered, the Lord God hath sent me and his Spirit.* Also Hag. ii. 4, 5. *I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts. With the Word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt, and my Spirit remaining among you unto this day.* By *the Word*, which the Lord covenanted or promised to be with them, we are to understand the uncreated Angel of the covenant. See Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

These are a few (out of many) passages of the Old Testament, in which the doctrine of the Trinity is taught. The proofs that were formerly adduced, of the knowledge which the Old Testament church had of Christ, may all be added to this purpose ; because the knowledge of the Trinity is necessarily supposed in the knowledge of Christ.

The following words of the objector being so remarkable for inaccuracy, confusion and error, require some animadversion. “ God is chiefly praised in the Old Testament for  
“ the works of creation and providence, in which the several  
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“ ral Persons of the Godhead were jointly concerned, and  
 “ and no special or distinct manifestation being made of  
 “ their glory, there was no necessity of any distinct mention  
 “ of them.”

In the first place, it is not true, that God is chiefly praised for the works of creation and providence in the Old Testament: 1. Because our Lord represents it as the principal scope of the Old Testament scriptures to testify of him, John v. 39. *Search the scriptures—they are they which testify of me:* It was the great scope of the law and prophets to set forth his justifying righteousness, Rom. iii. 21. *Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.* 2. Because God is chiefly praised in the Old Testament as the God of salvation: But he is not known to be the God of salvation by the works of creation and providence. 3. Because God is chiefly praised in the Old Testament for his peculiar love to the church, and for the peculiar deliverances thereof. Hence that remarkable apostrophe, Isai. xlv. 23. *Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout ye lower parts of the earth: Break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.* The raising up of Zion, however much overlooked by worldly wisdom, is represented as surpassing the works of creation and common providence, and as above them in the climax of the divine praises; as in the following words: *Thus saith the Lord thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself: That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof.*

In the next place, it is very incautious and improper to represent it as peculiar to the works of creation and providence, “ that the several Persons of the Godhead were jointly concerned in them;” as if there were some of the divine works in which the Three Persons are not jointly concerned.

Tho' there is an order of working among the Persons of the Godhead, according to the order of subsistence in the Godhead, yet they all perfectly concur in every divine operation *ad extra*.\* What cometh from one, cometh from all, John v. 2. *The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. For what things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise.* It is true, that distinct parts are ascribed to these Persons in the work of redemption; yet they are all jointly concerned or concur in each of these parts. There can be no consideration of them as acting separately *ad extra*, consistent with the absolute unity and simplicity of the Divine Being.

Farther, we are told concerning the Persons of the Godhead, that there was "no distinct manifestation made of their glory." What can be meant by a distinct manifestation of the glory of these Persons? Surely they are not distinguished in respect of glory; the glory of one is the glory of all; the glory of a Three-One God. With respect to the assertion, that "there is no distinct mention of them in the Old Testament," the falsehood of it appears from what has been already said: And it will farther appear from

The last thing we have to observe on this section, namely, that the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly set forth even in the scripture-songs. Thus with respect to Psal. xxxiii. 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth;* several judicious and orthodox divines have observed, that here we have distinct mention of Three Persons concurring in the work of creation, Jehovah the Father—the Word of the Lord, that is, his Personal Word, the eternal Son—and the Breath of his mouth, or the Holy Spirit, called in Job xxxiii. 4. *The Breath of the Almighty.* We have the personal properties of the first and second Persons of the Godhead pointed out in the iid psalm, *The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son: This day, or from eternity, have I begotten thee.* For  
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\* An act of God *ad extra*, is an act which has something without God, some creature for its object, such as creation; in opposition to his acts *ad intra*, which are immanent and eternal, considered as terminating within the Godhead, as the eternal generation of the Son.

it is the personal property of the Father, eternally to beget the Son; and that of the Son to be eternally begotten of the Father. Again, these persons are distinctly represented as parties contracting in the covenant of grace; one of them undertaking a glorious work; on condition of which another makes many great and precious promises. So, in the xlth psalm, the Son is brought in saying to the Father, *Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O my God: Thy law is within my heart.* In the lxxxixth psalm, we have many promises of the Father to Christ, *I have made a covenant with my chosen One. Thy seed will I establish for ever, &c.* The several parts which are ascribed to these persons in the work of our redemption are distinctly pointed out. Thus, the part of the Father, in investing the Son with his mediatorial office, is plainly declared, Psal. ii. 6. *Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.* xl. 6. *Mine ear hast thou opened.* cx. 4. *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec.* The part of Christ in purchasing redemption, is represented in the account we have of his sufferings in the xxiid and lxixth psalms. The part of the Holy Spirit in the application of the purchased redemption, is intimated in such expressions as these: Psal. li. 11, 12. *Take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Uphold me with thy free Spirit.* Psal. cxliiii. 10. *Teach me to do thy will: For thou art my God: Thy Spirit is good: Lead me to the land of uprightness.* The Son and the Spirit are distinctly represented as entitled to the same worship with the Father; being possessed of the same infinite perfections. Psal. ii. 12. *Kiss the Son, lest he be angry. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* Psal. cxxxix. 7. *Whether shall I go from thy Spirit, whether shall I flee from thy presence?\**

SECT.

\* In this, and some preceding sections, we have an easy answer to the queries, which the author of the Discourse on Psalmody, so often repeats—“If christians were to be restricted in their psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, to any part of the Old Testament, how comes the apostle, in the beginning and progress of his epistle to the Colossians, to direct them to very different grounds of praise and thanksgiving to God? Are no songs to be sung for the  
“ grace

SECT. XVI. *Of the Obscurity of the Psalms.*

OBJECTION “ Though it should be allowed, that these  
 “ evangelical truths are, in some degree, revealed in the  
 “ Old Testament, yet the whole language and ordinances of  
 “ the Old Testament are in themselves obscure, and were in-  
 “ tended to veil the subject. It must be very unfuitable, not to  
 “ say more, to confine ourselves to these forms, and to this  
 “ language, now when all the glorious things which they  
 “ but darkly and imperfectly represented are revealed in so  
 “ full, so clear, and so explicit a manner, that he may run  
 “ who reads; and worship not in the letter, but in the spirit.  
 “ Must we never celebrate these glorious things in songs of  
 “ praise, but in language that is not adequate to our know-  
 “ ledge or views? Nor must it be forgotten, that such con-  
 “ finement will be injurious to our souls. In singing of  
 “ burnt-offerings, bullocks, rams, goats, feasts, and the like,  
 “ we cannot avoid thinking of these ordinances and services.  
 “ Nay, the idea of them will first strike our minds, and we  
 “ may not get rid of them so soon as we would wish.”

ANSWER. If by the obscurity of the psalms, through the  
 mention of the Old Testament observances, and by the whole  
 language of the Old Testament being intended to veil the  
 subject, be meant that the psalms, literally translated, are not  
 adapted to convey instruction, concerning the way of salva-  
 tion through the obedience and sufferings of our Redeemer,  
 to the hearers of the word; we deny that the Old Testa-  
 ment, and particularly the psalms, are at all chargeable with  
 such obscurity. And herein we tread in the steps of our  
 protestant ancestors, and mak use of their arguments for the  
 perspicuity of the holy scriptures, against the church of  
 Rome.

“ grace that is come to us by the incarnation, life, death, and  
 “ resurrection of David’s Lord? Are we never to address a song  
 “ of praise to him who made us kings and priests unto God?” &c.  
 For, in these sections it is shewn, that we cannot sing the psalms  
 without praising and blessing God for all the parts of our salva-  
 tion, according to what is ascribed distinctly to each of the per-  
 sons of the Godhead, and that the same blessings are the grounds  
 of praise and thanksgiving in the psalms, as under the New  
 Testament.

Rome. If it be said that the papists charged obscurity upon the whole scriptures; we answer, that some of them used to speak much in the manner of those who now oppose the singing of the scripture-songs. Gordon, a Jesuit quoted by Glassius, asserts, "that the causes of ambiguity which he enumerates, have place in the style of the Old Testament only, and acknowledges, that the style of the New Testament is plain, perspicuous and free from ambiguity." And as it is manifest, that no book of the Old Testament is plainer, or better adapted to the general use and edification of church-members, than the book of psalms; the charge of obscurity brought against it, must be equally against every other book of the Old Testament. Protestants have usually refuted the papists by shewing, that the scripture asserts its own perspicuity. Now it is evident, that the texts which they quote to this purpose, have a direct and immediate respect to the books of the Old Testament, many of them being from the Old Testament itself; such as Deut. xxx. 11. *For this commandment which I command thee this day is not hidden from thee, (from thy understanding) neither is it far from thee, or unsuitable to thy capacity; for so the phrase, as Glassius tell us, is used by the Hebrew writers. To the same purpose is Prov. vi. 20. 23. where Solomon, in ver. 20, 21. exhorts to the study of the divine word; and to move us thereto, gives a most engaging representation of what it is found to be in the experience of such as obtain a saving knowledge of it, ver. 22. And then, lest any should complain of obscurity, adds, For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, ver. 23. Psal. cxix. 105, 130. Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. The entrance of thy word giveth light: It giveth understanding unto the simple. Psal. xix. 7, 8. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. Even the passages produced out of the New Testament for the vindication of the perspicuity of the scriptures, have a direct reference to those of the Old Testament; such as, 2 Pet. i. 19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts. So long as we are in this world, which is, in the esteem of true christians,*

tians, a dark, and, as the Greek word here signifies, a polluted place, (the Lord having said to them concerning it, *This is not your rest, because it is polluted*) and so long as any of the darkness and filthiness of it remains with us, we must make use of the prophetic word, that is, of the Old Testament as well as the New; attending to it, as to a light that gives sure and infallible direction, till the day of glory dawn; till *φωσφορος*, that which bringeth light, arise in the perfection of heaven, or of that manifestation of the bright and morning Star, which is already begun in our hearts. Again, the argument for the perspicuity of the scripture, arising from the declared end for which it was written, concludes strongly for the perspicuity of the psalms, Rom. xv. 4. *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.* The scripture is given to make the simple wise unto salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Our opponents object the Hebrew idioms and figurative expressions. The papists objected the same things against the perspicuity of the scriptures. Protestant divines, and we, with them, answer, that there is no Hebraisms but what may easily be understood by a person that is daily exercised, as christians ought to be, in the attentive reading of the scriptures; and that as to figurative expressions, they are used not to obscure divine things, but to express them more emphatically and forcibly.\* The papists asked, why we explain the scriptures? and our opponents, on the same account, why we explain the psalms? The answer that used to be given by protestants is sufficient in the present case, namely, that the perspicuity of the scripture is such as does not at all supersede the necessity of the inward illumination of the Spirit, or of interpretation and other means of promoting our attention to the scripture, and our improvement of its perspicuity. Nor will it avail our opponents to say, the papists were against the *reading* of the scriptures; whereas the question at present

\* Henricus Altingius observes, (in answer to the papists,) Hebraismos frequenti et attenta lectione scripturæ facile observari, et tropos adhiberi non ad obscurandas res divinas, sed ad eas tum significantius exprimendas, tum efficacius persuadendas *Loc. Commun. Part 2d.*

present is only about *singing*. For it is evident, that the necessary perspicuity of the psalms is denied, when they are represented as so obscure, that church-members cannot be supposed ordinarily to attain such an understanding of them, as is necessary for the purpose of singing them to edification. We allow, that some places of scripture are more difficult than others; and that, even in the psalms, there are texts that may be said to be such. Yet the book of psalms, compared with the other books of scripture, must rather be ranked among the more plain, than among the more difficult. This must be evident to one that compares the Psalms with Ecclesiastes, the Song of Solomon, Ezekiel, Daniel, and other books. Besides, what was obscure in the psalms to church-members under the Old dispensation, is, in a great measure, become plain, and easy to us, by our having the complete canon of scripture, and through the more abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ.

The objector represents the allusions in the psalms to Old Testament ordinances as tending to distract the minds of worshippers. But this representation is contrary to common experience, with respect to the effect of figurative language.

These words of the psalmist, *I will go into thy house with burnt-offerings*, being understood as a profession of faith and a purpose of obedience, no more distract the mind with the thought of Old Testament ordinances and services, than these words of the apostle to the Romans, *I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God*. Nor are we more distracted by the figurative expression in either of these passages, than we are by that in the words of our Lord, *My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven*. How ridiculous would it be to complain of the figurative expression here used in this manner! That when we read it, we cannot avoid thinking of bread; and that we cannot get rid of the thought of bread as soon as we could wish.

But if it be said, that, in the expressions quoted from the psalms, the principal object is not revealed; and, while we have the accessory only, it cannot be instructive: We must still answer, that, upon this supposition, such expressions were unprofitable to church-members even under the Old

Testament: For neither the practice of the ceremonial law, nor references to it in the psalms, could be of any use to the souls of men, but as they were means of directing their faith and hope to the principal object, our Lord Jesus Christ. But that the principal object, which was ultimately designed, and which alone could ever afford saving or spiritual instruction, was by no means kept out of view, is evident from what has been said concerning the knowledge which the Old Testament church had of Christ, and of the things of Christ. Particularly in relation to the figures or allusions in the psalms, the great object intended to be thereby set forth, might be understood by the promise of Christ, which had been given to our first parents, and more clearly afterwards to Abraham and others; by the emphasis of the expression, by the scope and connexion of the places wherein they occur, and by comparing them with other parts of divine revelation. With respect to us under the New dispensation, it is not denied by our opponents, that the thing signified by such figurative expressions or allusions is clearly revealed. Hence the case of these figures and allusions in our songs of praise is quite different from that of a parable relating to a subject altogether unknown; the grand subject of the typical allusions or figures, having been really revealed in the Old Testament, and being now more clearly revealed in the New. Nor can it be denied, that, though our Lord's parables might, in the righteous judgment of God, be an occasion of increasing the blindness of the Pharisees, and others who hated instruction, (as Christ himself is said to be for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, *Isai. viii. 14.*) yet the most proper and direct end of them was, by similitudes taken from earthly things, to render the apprehension of spiritual things more easy and familiar to us.\* This way of communicating instruction,

\* *Parabala clara et aperta hominibus non plane rudibus, sed bene attentis; petita a rebus communibus et nemini non familiaribus. Licet enim quandoque fiat, ut quidam eam non intelligant, non tamen tam vitio parabolæ id sit, quam audientium, non tam medii seu objecti culpa, quam subjecti. Otia Theologica Saldeni, pag. 695. Henry on Psal. lxxviii. 2. observes, that the things*  
here

struction, says Erasmus, however low and puerile it appears to the wise men of the world, seemed good to Eternal Wisdom, as being the best adapted to the rude and ignorant. Our Lord preferred this simple and condescending method, to the artful syllogisms of the philosophers, to the rounded periods of the rhetoricians, and to the abstruse speculations of the Pharisees. We may add, that parables serve to kindle in us a desire to know what is contained in them; and frequently afford a sweet experience of our Lord's condescension in making use of earthly similitudes to introduce us, insensibly and before we are aware, to the contemplation of heavenly and spiritual things.

The objector intimates, that we should discontinue the singing of the scripture-songs, that we may worship not in the

here spoken of are called dark sayings, not because they are hard to be understood, but because they are greatly to be admired and carefully to be looked into. Parables, or similies, may be dark in relation to the knowledge and capacity of particular persons; and yet, a certain degree of knowledge or information in the hearers or readers being supposed, they may contribute to make the subject, upon which they are used, be more easily understood. Thus we may conceive how our Lord's parables might be dark to many, who heard him deliver them; and yet to his disciples, when they had received suitable instruction, as *Mr. Calvin on Mat. xiii. 10.* observes, the figurative way of speaking used in parables, might not only be more efficacious to move the affections, but also more perspicuous. Thus, also, we may understand, that many of our Lord's sayings, even when he was speaking by way of parables, might, for some time, appear as proverbs or enigmas to his disciples, according to *John xvi. 25.* For, as the same judicious commentator observes, Christ did not speak enigmatically or obscurely to his disciples: On the contrary, he used an easy and familiar manner of expression. But his sayings appeared to them obscure, from their small degree of knowledge and aptness to apprehend spiritual things. Hence it is evident, that no argument can be drawn from the metaphors and allusions in the psalms, against our continuing to sing them in solemn worship, unless it could be proved, that the knowledge and information, necessary to the understanding of them, are not so attainable now as formerly: For it appears, that the necessary knowledge and information being pre-supposed, these metaphors and allusions, instead of obscuring, render the psalms more perspicuous.

the letter, but in the Spirit; alluding to the expression of the apostle in Rom. vii. 6. *That we should serve in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.* To serve God in the newness of the Spirit, is to serve him according to the spiritual and evangelical principles by which men are influenced in a renewed state; whereas to serve him in the oldness of the letter, is to be understood of that constrained service which is only according to the principles of their old unrenewed state. We are sure, that David's exercises, represented in the psalms, are examples of serving God in newness of spirit. How then can persons be justly charged with worshipping or serving in the letter, on account of their singing psalms representing those exercises; or on account of their singing psalms indited by the Spirit of God, and designed by him for promoting the worship or service that is in the newness of the Spirit?

We are much reproached as preferring psalms in Old Testament language, to those in New Testament language. But the true state of the case is, that we only prefer inspired forms of psalmody to those of human composition, and the appointment of God as to what particular songs should be used in solemn worship, to the dictates of men's wisdom in that matter. Could any other inspired forms of psalms be produced, about which it is as plain and certain, that they were given to be sung in the solemn worship of the church under the New Testament dispensation, as it is, that the book of psalms was given for that purpose under the Old, we would as readily use the former in solemn worship, as the latter. But no other inspired forms of psalms, delivered to the church for that purpose, are to be found. We therefore conclude, that they were not necessary; and that the psalms, which we have in the Old Testament, are still to be used in solemn worship.

With respect to the language of the Old and New Testament, there is much truth in the following words of a sensible writer:\* Who, having observed, that the term Son was applied to a Divine Person under the Old Testament, adds, that "the Jewish rulers could not have entertained an idea of the Son without admitting an idea of  
"the

\* President Forbes, in his *Thoughts of Religion.*

“ the Father, which must have made that term also familiar  
 “ to them. So that in this instance it is, as, in almost every  
 “ other, it will, on a careful examination, be found to be,  
 “ the New Testament speaks the language of the Old ; the  
 “ principles and sentiments are the same.” The author of  
 an Examination, &c. pag. 100. indeed represents those who  
 are capable of believing that the language of the Old and  
 New Testaments is the same, as ignorant, and him who asserts  
 it, as shameless. But how he has succeeded in attempting  
 to support this hard sentence, by the following instances of  
 pretended opposition between the language of the Old Tes-  
 tament and that of the New, the reader may judge. “ In  
 “ the Old Testament,” says he, “ transgressors are command-  
 “ ed to bring certain offerings specified, according to the  
 “ particular case ; and with regard to each, it is said, the  
 “ priest shall make atonement for his sin, and it shall  
 “ be forgiven him. In the New Testament the apostle says,  
 “ It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take  
 “ away sin.” But surely he might, as well, have set the  
 Old Testament in opposition to itself: For it, no less than  
 the New, represents the pardon of sin as not to be pro-  
 cured by the most costly oblations of slain beasts. Mic. vi.  
 6, 7. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my-  
 self before the High God? Shall I come before him with burnt-  
 offerings and calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased  
 with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?  
 Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, or the fruit of my  
 body for the sin of my soul? Psal. lx. 6. Sacrifice and offering  
 thou didst not desire: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou  
 not required.* But in truth there is no real opposition here:  
 the offering of bulls and goats could never make any real  
 atonement, as the one text says; but it might make a typi-  
 cal one; that is, might be a shadow of the real atonement,  
 as the other certainly means. Again, “ in the Old  
 “ Testament it is said, that the uncircumcised man child  
 “ shall be cut off from the people. The New Testament  
 “ says, that if we be circumcised Christ Jesus shall profit us  
 “ nothing.” But there is as little real opposition in this in-  
 stance as in the former. For these two texts speak of cir-  
 cumcision in different seasons: the one refers to a season in  
 which it was a standing ordinance; the other to the season in  
 which

which it was abrogated. They also speak of it in different respects: the one regards the right use of it, as a commanded duty, and as a seal of the righteousness of faith; the other, according to the true scope of the epistle from which it is taken, regards an abuse of it, to the support of the opinion of self-righteousness, in opposition a single dependence on the righteousness of Christ as the only ground of our justification before God. Once more; "In the Old Testament the Jews were commanded to kill a lamb, roast it with fire, and eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, as the Lord's passover. The language of the New Testament is, Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." It is hard to say, what our author means to place in opposition here; as the expression of the apostle, which he quotes, only tends to lead us to the spiritual import of the passover. Perhaps he means, that there is no representation of Christ in the Old Testament corresponding with the passover. But this is a mistake. There were two things principally remarkable in the passover; there was an offering or sacrifice; and there was something to be eaten or fed on. But Christ is set forth to us in the Old Testament under both these notions: Isa liii. 10. *Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin*; and lv. 2. *Eat ye that which is good, or the Good One*; for so the Hebrew word is used in 2 Chron. xxx. 18. *Jehovah the Good One*. Here, by the way, it may be observed, that it is not, as our author seems to think, peculiar to the New Testament, to shew the meaning and assert the abrogation of types. The meaning of the ceremonial offerings may be gathered from such an expression as that now quoted from the liiid of Isaiah; and the meaning of David's typical royalty from such a declaration as that which we have in Isai. ix. 6, 7. *His name shall be called, the Mighty God—the Prince of Peace—upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom*. The abrogation of sacrifices is also intimated in the Old Testament, Dan. ix. 27. *In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*. It is not requisite here to enter into a particular discussion of the evidence which the Old Testament affords of the abrogation of the practice of the ceremonial law. But surely, to allow that it affords none at all, is, in a great measure, if not entirely, to give up the cause of Christianity to the Jews. Thus, our author

makes

makes but a poor hand of it, when he attempts to set the language of the Old Testament and that of the New at variance. That they are indeed the same, is a principle upon which we proceed in making use of the Old Testament for ascertaining the sense of the most important words and phrases of the New: Such as, atonement, offering, propitiation, justification, prophet, priest, believing in God, walking before him, &c. The truth of this principle is also evident from the canons for the interpretation of scripture, as they are laid down by Glassius and others, being applied indiscriminately to both the Old and New Testament.

After all, there is reason to apprehend, that this objection against the use of the scripture-psalmody in our worship, namely, that the allusions to the ceremonial law render it obscure, cannot be the principal objection of our opponents, though it is much insisted on, as being plausible and popular. For, in the first place, the passages of the psalms, wherein such allusions occur, are far from being numerous. It is obvious, that the bulk of the psalms have an immediate reference to that practice and experience of godliness which has been, in all ages of the church, and ever will be the same. And, in the second place, a multitude of verses of the original psalms, which have no such allusions to Old Testament rites, are left out or altered in the new psalmody corrected by Mr. Barlow. The attempt to thrust any one of these verses out of the place, which it possessed in the public and solemn worship of the church, needs a solid and weighty reason to justify it. And the question comes home to the conscience of every follower of the new scheme of psalmody, Why dost thou refuse to sing such a verse of a song which the Spirit of God has been pleased to give thee in his word?

SECT. XVII. *2 Cor. iii. 12, 13. considered.*

OBJECTION. " Though we should allow the things of  
 " the gospel to be truly contained in the book of psalms,  
 " yet the Old Testament, and consequently the psalms of  
 " it, are represented as a veil, which hides a person's face,  
 " so that he cannot have a just conception of it, 2 Cor. iii.  
 " 12, 13. *Seeing then that we use great plainness of speech,*  
 " and

“ and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished. The veil on the face of Moses represented the obscurity of the Jewish dispensation. In a following verse the apostle asserts, that this veil, or obscurity, is done away in Christ; his manifestations in the flesh, and the New Testament discoveries of the whole scheme of salvation through him, has thrown such light on that dispensation, as to dispel the mist in which it was enveloped.”

ANSWER. The objector here grants, that the mist or obscurity, in which the Old Testament dispensation was enveloped, is dispelled by the New Testament discoveries: He must, therefore, allow, that the obscurity of the psalms, so far as it arose from the obscurity of that dispensation, is also expelled. The light, then, which is here allowed to be thrown on the Old Testament dispensation, has removed that obscurity from the psalms, which is all the objection here offered against the singing of them in our worship.

It must, however, be owned to be unwarrantable to say, that the Old Testament was a veil that hid the face of Christ from the members of the Old Testament church, so that they could not have just conceptions of it. For it is plain, that we have just conceptions of an object, so far as we have any certain knowledge of it at all. But we have seen that there was such a revelation of Christ in the Old Testament scriptures, as was a sufficient outward mean of attaining a certain knowledge of Christ before his incarnation; and consequently of attaining just conceptions of him. As the testimony of the Old Testament scriptures concerning Christ is undoubtedly just, so were the conceptions which believers had of him corresponding with that infallible testimony.

With regard to the text in 2 Cor. iii. 13. we cannot allow, that according to this passage, the veil on the face of Moses signified, that it was directly the design of the Old Testament dispensation to veil Christ, or to hinder the Israelites from looking to the end of that which was to be abolished, because this does not agree with the following verse, which teacheth us, that what hindered the Israelites from looking to the end of that which is abolished, was the blindness of their minds; which appears to be the thing

thing signified by the veil of Moses. The supposition, that a double veil, (one objective in respect of the obscurity of the types and figures, the other subjective in respect of the blindness of their minds) was signified by the veil which Moses put over his face, seems to be without sufficient ground in the text; for the veil upon the hearts of the children of Israel, is not said, in ver. 14. to be another, but the very same veil (the apostle expresses it with great precision, as if he meant to guard against any mistake in the matter, το αυτο καλυμμα) of which that on the face of Moses was a sign.\* The principal objection that occurs to this view of the passage is, that the Greek words, in ver. 18. rendered *with open face*, may be read *in the unveiled face*, [that is, of Christ]. But as the veil of ignorance and unbelief renders the face of Christ veiled to us, in like manner as it renders him a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; so the Holy Spirit, as a Spirit of illumination in the knowledge of

\* “ The shining glory of Moses’ face did not prefigure or signify the glory of Christ; but the glory of the law given to the Israelites as the covenant of works, the glory of the ministration of death, ver. 7. The veil which Moses put on his face, keeping the Israelites from beholding the glory of it, signifies, that their minds were blinded, ver. 14. not perceiving the glory of the law, given to them as the covenant of works. And hence it was, that the children of Israel *fastened not their eyes*, Luke iv. 20. Acts. iii. 4. *on [Christ] the end of that which is abolished*, 2 Corinth. iii. 13. Greek. For had they seen that glory to purpose, they would have *fastened their eyes on him*; as a benefactor at the stake would fix his eyes on the face of one bringing a remission. And this is the veil which is upon Moses’ face and their hearts unto this day, ver. 14, 15. which nevertheless, in the Lord’s appointed time *shall be taken away*, ver. 16.” *Mr. Bosson’s Notes on the Marrow of modern Divinity; second chapter, sect. 5. §. 5.* Here we may add Glassius’ paraphrase of the 14, 15, and 16 verses. “ As the Israelites saw not the splendor of Moses’ face for the veil put over it, so the carnal Jews understand not Christ Jesus the Saviour, the great end and scope of the writings of Moses, by reason of the wilfully contracted blindness of their minds, which, like a veil, comes between their hearts and the right understanding of the law, and which cannot be taken away, but by their conversion to the Lord.” *Rhetorica Sacra, Tractatu primo, cap. 21.*

of Christ, in removing our ignorance and unbelief, may well be said to unveil his face; as, in external vision, from which the apostle's metaphor is taken, when a film, which had rendered a person blind, is removed from his eyes, the beauty or glory of the face of nature may be said to be unveiled to him.

But though, with some valuable commentators, we should here admit the supposition of a double veil; yet this passage, even according to their sense of it, makes nothing for the *present* obscurity of the psalms; which is the obscurity about which we enquire: For these commentators allow, that the objective veil is now removed from the Old Testament writings by the coming of Christ, and by the clear explanations of the New Testament.\*

The objector confounds the Old Testament scripture with the Old Testament dispensation. But there is an obvious difference between them. The former are the word of God, which endureth for ever, revealing the covenant of grace, or the plan of salvation through a Redeemer; all things contained therein being either essential or subservient parts of that plan; and continuing a standard of the church's faith and practice, till the end of the world. The latter is commonly understood to be what was peculiar in God's way of dealing with his church before the coming of Christ; particularly, in prescribing the temporary practice of the ceremonial and judicial laws. Though it should be allowed, that the Old Testament dispensation, abstractly considered, was in some sense, a veil; yet it would not follow, that the Old Testament scriptures, according to their true meaning, were ever so; as they contain much that tended to shew the true and spiritual meaning of the typical observances which belonged to that dispensation.

SECT. XVIII. *Whether the Old Testament be still a Rule of Faith and Practice.*

IT is undoubtedly the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, that both are the rule of our faith and practice; and that, in point of authority and obligation, there is no difference between them: 1. Because the whole scripture

is

\* See Dr. Guise on this passage.

is represented as such a rule to us, 2 Tim. iii. 16. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness.* Surely the Old Testament could not answer these ends, unless it were a rule of faith and practice to us. 2. Because, in the New Testament, we are frequently referred to the Old as the rule of faith and practice, Luke xvi. 29. *They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.* 2 Pet. i. 7. *We have a more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well that ye take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place.* 3. Because Christ and his apostles continually appealed to the scriptures of the Old Testament, as the rule and warrant of their doctrine and practice, John v. 39, 46. *Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me.* Acts xviii. 28. *He mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ,* Rom. iv. 24. *It was not written for his sake alone, but for us also.* If the Old Testament were not a rule of faith and practice to us under the New Testament dispensation, the Bereans would not have been commended for examining the doctrine of the apostles by it, Acts xvii. 2. *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily; whether these things were so.* 4. The New Testament, instead of abrogating, confirms and establishes the authority of the Old, declaring its perpetuity, Mat. v. 18. *For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall, in no wise, pass from the law till all be fulfilled.* And representing the church as built upon the Old Testament as well as upon the New. Ephes. ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*

OBJECTION. We have what is sufficient for salvation in the New Testament.

ANSWER. This expression is ambiguous; for if by being sufficient for salvation, be meant, what the Holy Spirit may, in a way of sovereignty, bless as an outward mean of salvation; in that sense, all that is necessary is in the five books of Moses. But if by sufficiency be meant a sufficient rule

rule of all that measure of faith and practice which God had declared he will have his church brought to, and which, in that case, it is criminal and pernicious to neglect, we maintain that, in this sense, the New Testament, without the Old, is not sufficient. The New Testament, continually proceeding upon and referring to the Old, could not well be understood without it. Some matters of faith and practice are revealed in the Old Testament alone; as the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, by which the covenant of works was broken, and the degrees of kindred within which marriage is forbidden. Some things are far more fully revealed in the Old Testament; as the creation. There also we have a greater variety of the precious promises, which the Lord hath adapted, with great particularity, to the various cases of his church and people.

**OBJECTION.** If we hold the Old Testament to be a perpetual rule of faith and practice, then we ought to observe the ceremonial and judicial laws of Moses.

**ANSWER.** This will by no means follow. For the same comprehensive rule may require different duties to be performed, in different seasons and circumstances, and on different accounts and occasions. This is necessary to be attended to, in order to the right use of the New Testament itself as a rule. We are not now bound to the formalities of abstaining from blood, of washing one another's feet, or of anointing the sick with oil, however the observation of them was prescribed as necessary for a time. With respect to the ceremonial and judicial laws, they obtained their end fully in the coming of Christ; the ceremonial law being a shadow of him that was to come; and the judicial being designed to preserve the genealogies and distinctions of families, till the promise made to David, that he, in whom he believed as his Lord, would in due time be his Son, should be fulfilled. Both the ceremonial and judicial laws then ceased of course. They were abrogated by the Old Testament itself; Gen. xlix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* Jer. iii. 16. *And it shall come to pass in those days, saith the Lord, that they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember*

*remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more.* Dan. ix. 27. *And he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.* Accordingly, in the epistle to the Hebrews, the ceremonial law is shewn to be abrogated from the Old Testament itself: See, among other places, Heb. viii. 13. xii. 27.\*

Since the Old Testament is our rule, as well as the New, we are bound to imitate an approved example of the observation of any ordinance of God's worship, which is not ceremonial, though it be found in the Old Testament only. And therefore, unless the singing of the book of psalms could be shewn to be a ceremonial institution, (a thing which never can be shewn) we are bound to imitate the example of it recorded in the Old Testament.

SECT. XIX. *Whether the Churches planted by the Apostles were unacquainted with the Books of the Old Testament, and particularly with the Psalms.*

OBJECTION. "Can it be conceived, that the members of a church, the body of which were Gentiles, and wholly unacquainted with former revelations, would understand by *the word of Christ*, any of the books of the Old Testament. And from the scarcity of the copies of the scriptures in the early ages of christianity, it may be concluded, that the churches among the Gentiles were unacquainted with the books of the Old Testament, and consequently with the psalms."†

ANSWER. To suppose a christian church without any acquaintance with the books of the Old Testament, is to suppose it ignorant of its own foundation;—for, according to Ephes. ii. 20. true church-members are built upon the foundation

\* This paragraph shews, that the abuse with which the author of an Examination, &c. pag. 7. entertains his readers, is as groundless, as it is low and unmanly. A little reflection might have convinced him, that the Old Testament might be a perpetual rule to the church of God on earth as well as the New, tho' the practice of various duties enjoined in it was limited to a certain season; especially, if he had observed, that the passage, which he was abusing, represents both these Testaments as concurrent to make one consistent rule.

† A Discourse on Psalmody, pag. 24.

foundation of the prophets, as well as of the apostles. We have reason to believe, that, in the churches of Rome and Corinth, as great a proportion of the members were of Gentile extraction, as in the church of Colosse, or any other to which Paul directed his epistles; and yet we find him, in his epistles to the Romans and Corinthians, quoting the Old Testament scriptures, and particularly the psalms, in a manner which plainly supposes the people to whom he writes, to be acquainted with them. Rom. iii. 10, 11, 12, 13. iv. 6, 7, 8. xi. 9, 10. xv. 9, 11. 1 Cor. xiv. 21. 2 Cor. iv. 13.

With respect to the question, How those that lived among the Gentiles could be acquainted with the scriptures of the Old Testament? we observe, that there were three things, among others, that, in the course of providence, served eminently to prepare the way for the propagation of the gospel among the Gentiles: One was, the dispersion of the Jews by the Babylonish captivity: Another was, that, in consequence of the conquests of Alexander, the Greek language was commonly understood through a great part of Asia, as well as Europe: And the third thing was, the translation of the Old Testament into the Greek language, which was made upwards of 280 years before the Christian æra. The Jews, called Hellenists, who were dispersed in most of these Gentile countries, wherein the apostles preached, had the Greek translation of the Old Testament read in their synagogues every sabbath. Hence it appears, that the people of these countries had a good opportunity of getting an acquaintance with the writings of the Old Testament. Besides, when Justin Martyr is giving an account of the ordinary public worship of the primitive christians, he says, "The memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, according as the time allows,"\* By these means the primitive christians could not fail to have some familiar acquaintance with the Old Testament, and particularly with the book of psalms, which the New Testament quotes more frequently than any other book of the Old Testament.

## CHAP.

\* Justin Martyr, quoted by Lardner in his *Credibility of Gospel History*, vol. 11d. pag. 122.

## C H A P. IV.

*Shewing that no other than the Scripture-songs ought to be sung in the Solemn Worship of the Church.*

HAVING shewn our warrant for the singing of the inspired psalms in solemn worship, from their being so given of God for that purpose, as no other ever were; from the example of the use of them in the church under the Old dispensation; and from the futility and error of the objections which have been offered against the singing of them under the New dispensation; it follows, as a corollary, that the scripture-songs are the only forms of psalmody that ought to be made use of in the public and solemn worship of the church.\* This proposition was defended in the Discourse on Singing Psalms, by some arguments: We shall review them in order, and consider the exceptions that occur.

SECT. I. *Whether there be any Scripture-warrants for Singing Hymns of Human Composure in Solemn Worship.*

WE argue, in the first place, from the silence of scripture with respect to the use of any other than the scripture-songs in the ordinary solemn worship of the church.

Col. iii. 16. being much insisted on as a warrant for the singing of human composures in the ordinary solemn worship of the church; some observations may here be added to what was said in the Discourse, concerning that text.

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\* This the author of the Examination, &c. will hardly oppose; for he says, pag. 84. "If this foundation," viz. that God designed the psalms to be a standing form of public psalmody, both under the Old and New Testaments, "were established, then it would have this corollary contained in it, that they are the best adapted to that use; and consequently, that they are rather to be sung than any other."

With respect to the three names here given such compositions as are proper to be sung, namely, Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, it may be observed, in the first place, That there is no reason to infer from these names, that any part of the book of psalms is unfit to be sung in the solemn worship of the New Testament church, or that it is not a sufficient system for that worship. There might be some ground for such an inference, if the apostle had mentioned a sort of songs quite different from any that are to be found in the book of psalms. But there are many in that book of each of the sorts here mentioned. As to psalms, there can be no dispute. With respect to hymns, the book is called *Sepher Tehillim*, a book of praises, or hymns. Many of them are eminently hymns, or songs of praise, such as the cxlvth and following psalms. With respect to songs, the Hebrew name *Sbir* which is prefixed to many of the psalms, is always rendered a song. And they may well be called spiritual songs, whether we consider the Author of them, the Holy Spirit, the subject of them, namely, what respects the case of the soul, or the use of them, which is to promote our spiritual good. No human compositions are so well entitled to that epithet.

Hence it appears very strange, how the author of a Sermon on the Duty of Christians in Singing Praise to God,\* could assert,

\* Page 8. He observes, “ that many suppose, that the apostle, “ by all these various terms, meant nothing more or less than the “ book of psalms contained in the Old Testament.” But he ought to have been at some pains in stating the sense, in which these words are understood by those whom he pretends to confute: For they consider the apostle as referring christians to the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs contained in the word of Christ; not such as they might form out of the matter of it, by the exertion of a genius for poetry, but to such as they might find in it having the form and designation of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. It is as if the apostle had said, Be familiarly acquainted with the whole word of Christ, contained in the holy scriptures, and take particular delight in the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, which you will find there, and which you are not only to read, as you are to do the rest of the scriptures, but also to sing, as affording spiritual instruction, and a divine pattern for the exercise of gracious affections. The question is not, as this author absurdly states it, “ Whether the “ the book of psalms is called by all these various names in the  
“ New

assert, that "there are no authentic records, sacred or profane, which prove that the psalms of David bore these various titles;" since these are the very titles which accompany the psalms; and the Greek words which are rendered *psalms, hymns and songs*, are all found in the Septuagint translation of the titles of the psalms.

## OBJECTION.

"New Testament?" but merely, Whether forms of composition, bearing these names, and fully answering the import of them, be found in the book of psalms. The apostle says, *Ye have forgotten the word of exhortation, which speaketh unto you, as unto children, My son, despise thou not the chastening of the Lord.* Our author's reasoning here is, as if one should deny, that, by the word of exhortation here, is to be understood a passage in the book of Proverbs; on pretence that it could not be shewn, that the Proverbs are called words of exhortation in any other part of the New Testament. It is as plain, that there are psalms, hymns and songs, in what is called the book of Psalms, as that there are words of exhortation in the book of Proverbs. This is plain even from his own account of these names. As to psalms, there is no dispute. With respect to an hymn, he says, "it is a poetical composition made to celebrate some person or action, or, to bewail some mournful event; and although it may be accompanied with an instrument or the voice, yet these are not necessary to its original design." What he means by saying, that it is not necessary to the original design of a hymn, that it be accompanied with the voice, seems hardly intelligible, except perhaps to a connoisseur in the art of music. For, a common reader will be apt to think, that the reciting or singing of a hymn must be by the voice; and that it is the original design of such a composition to be recited or sung. But, passing this, he cannot deny, that the cxth psalm is a composition celebrating the person and actions of the Messiah; or that the xcth bewails a mournful event. As to the songs here meant, our author says, "they are songs on spiritual subjects, calculated to give religious instruction, and to raise and quicken devotion in the soul." That we have such songs in the book of psalms, it is hoped he will not deny. Josephus, who must be allowed to have known very well what names were usually given to the compositions in the book of psalms, calls them, as the apostle does here, songs and hymns. *Jewish Antiquities, Book vii. Chap. 10.* But the truth is, it is sufficient to our purpose, that the three Greek names used by the apostle are exactly answerable to the three Hebrew names above mentioned in the titles of the psalms. Nor is it any question among commentators, critics, and lexicographers, whether these Hebrew and Greek names be exactly parallel, and may be rendered

OBJECTION. "Our songs of praise should be composed of the matter which the New Testament reveals; because the apostle exhorts us to teach and to admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, from the rich indwelling of the word of Christ, which has a peculiar reference to the New Testament."\*

ANSWER. We have already seen, that the church has no new matter to sing of in the New Testament, which it had not at all before in the Old.† The christian religion is not a new

ed by one another: This is a point in which they are agreed, and this is sufficient to shew, that we need not go farther than the book of psalms for all these three sorts of composition. The argument does not require that we should give ourselves any trouble about the different glosses of divines.

It may be added, that our opponents allow, that by the psalms here we are to understand the book of psalms. They cannot deny, then, that the apostle enjoins us to sing that book in solemn worship; consequently, according to him, the singing of that book cannot be, as they represent it, improper and unwarrantable under the New Testament dispensation.

\* Examination, &c. pag. 6.

† The author of a Discourse on Psalmody, in a note, p. 118, 119, 120. after a quotation from Witsius de Oeconomia Fœderum, concerning the advantages of New Testament believers above those under the Old, represents the doctrine of that excellent divine, as contrary to what is here taught. But most unjustly. For, 1. In this very place, Witsius represents the spiritual privilege of adoption as having been materially the same under the Old Testament dispensation, that it is under the New. "There is no doubt," says he, "but that all believers were at all times the sons of God. What we have already said of the foundations of this glorious state is applicable to the Old Testament saints. A new life was given them by regeneration, and they were created again after the image of God. They were also espoused to Christ, Hof. ii. 19, 20. Their Maker was their Husband, Isai. liv. 5. And the Old Testament church is called the married wife, in the first verse of the chapter. Who are Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, Rom. ix. 4; and in a word, they were heirs of all things, Gal. iv. 1. heirs of divine grace in this life, Psal. xvi. 5. and of divine glory in the life to come, Psal. xvii. 15." From these words, which are immediately followed by the quotation above mentioned, it appears, that the differences mentioned in that quotation, between believers under the Old and those under the New dispensation, do not respect

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a new religion, broached by Christ and his apostles. The Old Testament, as one justly observes, "implies and contains the New; and the New is but the explanation and confirmation of the Old." Even the word of Christ, in the New Testament, dwelling in believers richly and in spiritual wisdom, so far from prejudicing them against the singing of the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs in the Old Testament,

"*the matter of adoption, but the manner or the degree in which it was experienced and enjoyed under the two dispensations. The same privilege was held forth in the psalms and other places of the Old Testament; but the understanding, which Old Testament believers had of these places, was but obscure, compared with the understanding of them which may be attained under the New Testament.* 2. The principles of Witsius on this head are stated and vindicated in the iiii chap. of the 3d book. "We maintain," says he, sect. 2d. "agreeably to the holy scriptures, 1. That all the elect, in whatever period they live, have one and the same eternal life promised them; 2. That they have one and the same Author and Giver of salvation, even Jesus, exhibited to them; and, 3. That they never were partakers of him in any other way than by a true and lively faith in him. The demonstration of these three things will make it evident, that the covenant of grace, *quod ad rei substantiam attinet*, as to the matter or substance of it, was, from the beginning, one only. For if there was all along the same salvation, the same Author of salvation, and no different way or mean of fellowship with him, surely there could be no diversity in the covenant;" that is, in the matter of it. Such are the sentiments of that valuable writer. And these agree well with the expression condemned by the author of the Discourse on Psalmody. The church has properly no new matter to sing of in the New Testament, which she had not at all in the Old; for all the matter she has to sing of is comprehended in the covenant of grace. But what the Discourse asserts in the same place, "That the incarnation, life, death, ascension, and glorification of our blessed Lord, are new matter," as being altogether unknown under the Old Testament, will never agree with Witsius, who teaches, that Noah preached "the righteousness or obedience of the Messiah; that righteousness by which the ungodly are justified, which is of God, and is opposed to our own righteousness." *Oecon. Fœd. lib. iv. cap 2d, § 7;* who also teaches, "that from the psalms of David may be learned almost all the articles that are necessary to be held concerning the person of Christ, concerning his offices, state, and benefits." *De Prophetis et Prophetia, cap. xviii. § 15.*

Testament, will make them prize them more highly, and sing them more judiciously, and with more spiritual profit and delight. Nay, this spiritual wisdom attending the inhabitation of the word of Christ in believers, will discern such divine excellencies in the very frame and texture of the scripture-songs, as set them far above the choicest mere human compositions.

But why must this phrase, the word of Christ, in this particular text, be understood as having a peculiar reference to the New Testament? Not surely, because the phrase, in itself, is such as it would be improper to apply to the whole scriptures. It is a certain evidence of Christ's divinity, that the word, contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is his word. It is properly called his word, 1. Because it was dictated by his Spirit; for the Spirit that was in the prophets was the Spirit of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 11. 2. Because Christ is the great subject and scope of the scriptures, John v. 39. *They are they which testify of me.* The phrase may sometimes be limited by the words which accompany it, as in Mark viii. 38. *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me or of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, &c.* Where it must necessarily be understood of such words, doctrines or commands of Christ, as church-members in that generation were, more especially, in danger of being ashamed of, Rev. iii. 8. *Thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name;* where it is evident, that the word of Christ was something that church-members in Philadelphia were under a temptation to deny, which is called, in ver. 10. the word of Christ's patience. An examiner tells us, "That the whole context leads us to understand the word of Christ, in these texts, as referring to the profession and practice of christianity in general." To this we reply, That it is not denied, that a renunciation of the profession and practice of christianity in general, would be the most flagrant instance of being ashamed of Christ's word, or of denying it; but will he say, that the denying of a particular article of divine truth, as, that Jesus is the true Messiah, or, that that he is the only true God as well as the Father, or, that there shall be a resurrection of the body, would be no denial of the word of Christ? Or will he say, that no particular

cular point of truth or duty is referred to, when the church of Philadelphia is commended for keeping the word of Christ, the word of his patience? Or will he say, that persons need be apprehensive of no danger from the threatening against those that are ashamed of *the words of Christ*, on account of their being ashamed of any particular articles of that word, or any particular *words*, provided they be not ashamed of the profession and practice of christianity in general? \* What we meant by adducing these instances, is, that if *the word of Christ* is not taken,

\* The reader has here a vindication of a remark which was made on Mark viii. 38. and Rev. iii. 8. in the Discourse on Singing Psalms. The author of an Examination, &c. pag. 78. says concerning that remark, "I have mentioned this purely to shew his method of interpreting scripture. Nothing can be more groundless than to limit the phrase in these texts to some particular article of faith; the whole context leads us to understand it as referring to the profession and practice of christianity in general." If the writer of that Discourse had followed the Examiner's method of refutation, he might have made short work of what the Examiner advances about *the word of Christ*, by saying, as he does, "I have mentioned this purely to shew his method of interpreting scripture. Nothing can be more groundless than to limit it to the New Testament." The reader must see by what is observed here, that neither the natural import of the phrase, nor yet what is said of it in Col. iii. 16. afford any reason for limiting it to the New Testament. But with respect to the other two texts, the passage of the Discourse referred to, offers no limitation but what is plainly included in the texts themselves: For this author himself will hardly have the effrontery to say, that a person would not sin against Christ by being ashamed of or denying a particular article of his word, as well as by being ashamed of, or denying the profession and practice of christianity in general; and this was all the writer of the Discourse intended; for he did not mean, that the phrase in these texts was to be limited to one particular article; but only that in the connexion wherein it stands in these texts, it must be understood of that which church-members are in danger of being ashamed of, or tempted to deny, which is often some particular article: Whereas there is no ground at all for the Examiner's limitation of it to the New Testament, in any one of the texts he has quoted, but his bare assertion, repeated, indeed, by him and the author of a Discourse on Psalmody *ad nauseam*. That the term, *logos*, or *word*, is sometimes used for a particular article of truth, is obvious. See *Tim. iv. 9. Tit. iii. 8. in the Greek New Testament.*

taken, in any place of scripture, for the whole word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament; the reason is, not that there is any impropriety in calling the whole *the word of Christ*; but because something in the connexion renders it necessary to understand it in a more limited sense; in which connexion the limitation would have been the same, supposing the word had been called *the word of God*. But in the text under consideration, there is nothing in the words that accompany this phrase, to hinder us from understanding it of the Old Testament as well as the New: For surely it is our duty to have the Old Testament scriptures dwelling in us richly, as the psalmist had it, Psal. cxix. 11. *Thy word have I hid in my heart. ver. 93. I will never forget thy precepts. ver. 98. Thy commandments are ever with me.* By the Old Testament, as well as by the New, we may attain spiritual wisdom, not only to our own salvation, but to usefulness in teaching and admonishing one another. Psal. cxix. 99, 100. *I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.* And as to psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, the Old Testament is the storehouse wherein they are laid up by Infinite Wisdom in rich variety. Thus it appears, that there is nothing in the titles mentioned here, namely, *psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*, nor in the phrase, *the word of Christ*, which ought to deter us from continuing to sing the book of psalms in our solemn worship.

But, in the *second* place, We have no warrant in this text, for singing in solemn worship, any other psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, than those which we have in the scriptures. It is a good maxim in the interpretation of the scripture, that what is wanting in one place is supplied by another. We are here taught by the apostle, that we are to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. But if it be farther inquired, whether the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs we are to sing in solemn worship, be such as are of human composition, or such as are contained in scripture? we have a sufficient answer, in the Lord's having given us a body of them expressly bearing these very denominations, as has been shewn; and also in the divinely recorded and approved example of his church; which, as hath been shewn, is not an example of what was to be abrogated at the

commencement of the New Testament dispensation, but of what is to continue till the end of time. With regard to what we are to sing in solemn worship, nothing more can be required by this text, than that we sing what comes fully up to the import of these three names, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and that we adhere to the more particular directions which the Lord hath given us in the other parts of his word. But we do so, when we sing the scripture-songs. Therefore the conscience has a solid ground of satisfaction in the singing of them, as the whole of what is here enjoined with respect to the form of psalmody to be used in solemn worship.\*

Here it may not be amiss to take notice of some exceptions that have been offered to our view of this text. See the Preface of a Discourse on Psalmody.

“It should be shewn,” says the author of that Preface, in “the first place, that the *word of Christ* of which the apostle “speaks to the Colossians, was so peculiarly restricted to the “psalms of David, that what Christ himself delivered by his “own ministry and that of the apostles, was no part of that  
“word;

\* The author of the Examination, &c. pag. 8. intimates, that the writer of the Discourse on Singing Psalms, should have proved, “that the scripture-songs are here meant exclusively:” Whereas it was certainly sufficient to the purpose of that Discourse, to shew the vanity of the pretence of finding a warrant in this text for the singing of human compositions in solemn worship. It has been proved, by comparing this with other places of scripture; that the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, which are appointed to be sung in solemn and public worship, are to be understood of those only, which are found bearing these titles in the sacred scriptures. But if it be meant, that we should prove the same thing by this text alone, without considering it in connexion with what is taught in other places of scripture; the requisition is as unreasonable, as it would be to require us to disprove by this text alone, or without considering what is taught on the same subject in other places of scripture, the assertion of some, that all church-members, according to their gifts or ability, are alike warranted or authorized to teach and admonish publicly. It may be of use to observe here, that the members of this verse seem to be most distinct as they are pointed by the accurate Bengelius: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs: Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

“ word ; and that the Colossians could not fail to have understood the apostle as meaning by the word of Christ those psalms.

Answer. By *the word of Christ*, we understand not the psalms only, but the whole word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament. With regard to the Colossians, there was nothing to hinder them as well as other christians from understanding, that the exercise which is here recommended, as a consequence of their having the word of Christ dwelling in them, is rather the singing of the psalms, hymns and songs which are found in that word, than the making of new ones. For the apostle is here speaking of the common duty of church-members : And, we hope, it will hardly be affirmed, that it is their common duty to make psalms and hymns for public worship.

2. “ They should,” says that author, “ have shewn, that it is usual with our apostle and the other sacred writers, in mentioning the psalms of David, to call them psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.”

Answer. These names are all found, as we have seen, in the inscriptions of the psalms ; a circumstance which leads us to think that they must have been their usual names. So that if the Colossians were acquainted, as the apostle exhorts them to be, with the whole compass of the word of Christ, they could not be ignorant, that there are, in that word, compositions bearing the names of psalms, hymns and songs.

3. “ They should have proved, that it was the duty of christians not to draw the instructions and admonitions which they communicated to one another in these psalms and hymns, from the doctrines and discourses of our Saviour and his apostles, but from the words of David and Asaph.”

Answer. There are two ways in which the discourses of Christ and his apostles may be made use of with regard to our psalms and hymns. The first is, to receive light from these discourses for our direction in singing the inspired psalms in solemn worship with understanding and believing application. This we allow to be here intended by the apostle, as being the duty of all christians. In singing the psalms, which abound with divine and spiritual instructions and admonitions, christians may well be said to teach and admonish

monish one another. The second way is, that of making use of the matter of the books of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, in composing hymns and songs for the edification of themselves and others, without attempting to introduce them into the exercises of solemn worship. There seems to be nothing in the words of the apostle, that renders it necessary to suppose, that even this (which we allow to be warrantable in itself) was what he directly intended in this exhortation: For, as we have just now observed, we may teach and admonish one another by these forms of psalms, hymns and songs, which we have in the scriptures; and the common duty of christians, of which the apostle speaks here, is rather to sing psalms, making melody with their heart to the Lord, than to compose them. Much less can we allow, that these words of the apostle necessarily imply, what nobody will pretend they expressly say, that it is the duty of christians to compose psalms, hymns and songs, to be sung in the solemn and public worship of the church; as this would suppose, that they were not furnished in the word of Christ with inspired forms of psalms, hymns and songs, suitable to that purpose; that is, it would suppose what is manifestly false.

It may be observed, that our opponents allow, that *psalms* in this text, signifies the book of psalms, and consequently, that teaching and admonishing in psalms, is not to be understood of composing them; with what colour of reason then can they insist, that the same expression, in the same construction, used with regard to hymns and songs, is necessarily to be so understood?

4. "They should have shewn, that the whole worship of the Old Testament was conducted in the name of the Lord Jesus, and that the songs of praise and thanksgiving under that dispensation, were expressly offered up to the Father through Christ."

Answer. We have shewn, that the church and people of God, in all ages, *really*, or in fact approached to God by Christ, or in his name. This is to be understood in each of the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, which we have in scripture. With regard to what our author seems to insist on, that our prayers and praises should be *expressly* offered up in Christ's name, we allow that this truth is, now, under the

New dispensation, set in the clearest light, that there never was nor is any acceptable worship of God by fallen man, without a believing regard to Christ's name. This we should be ready to declare to all who are ignorant of it or deny it. But if the author means, that the use of the words or syllables, *through Christ, or in his name*, is necessary to render our prayers or praise acceptable to God, he is chargeable with childish trifling. These words are not found in the Lord's prayer: Is it therefore not fit for New Testament worship? Or is it not a pattern of coming to God in the name of Christ?

We now proceed to the consideration of another text, adduced by such as plead for the singing of human composures in solemn worship; which is 1 Cor. xiv. 26. *How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation.*

In the preceding verses of this chapter, the apostle treats of the extraordinary gifts with which the Corinthian church was so abundantly furnished. He reproveth them for their undue preference of the gift of tongues, of which, it appears, they were very ostentatious. He shews them the folly of using that gift so, as to hinder the church from being edified by other gifts, particularly by that of prophesying. From the 26th verse to the end of the chapter, the apostle shews how all these gifts might have a place in the public administrations, and be exercised to the general edification. In this verse we have an enumeration of these extraordinary gifts. The exhortatory form of this enumeration seems to imply a reproof of the Corinthians, not only for their disorder, but for the vanity of the pretensions of many among them to these gifts. Hence the apostle, in a following verse, directs, that, *while two or three prophesy, the others should judge.*

We may observe, with respect to the gifts here enumerated, that most of them are included in that of prophesying. That *revelation* and *interpretation* were included in it, will not be doubted, when we consider, that it was the office of the prophets in the times of the apostles, to interpret by an extraordinary gift of the Spirit, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and to shew their exact agreement with those things

things that were taught by the apostles and evangelists. The apostles, indeed, were prophets of the most eminent rank; but there were some prophets who were not apostles. Thus, it is said of Judas and Silas, that being prophets, *they exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them,* Acts xv. 32. "The gift of prophecy," says a most learned writer,\* "may be said sometimes to coincide with the gift of wisdom, sometimes to differ from it, as the whole from a part. For to some was given prophecy, by which they might dextrously interpret and judiciously apply theological or doctrinal matters only, in preaching, in conference and disputation, in prayers and hymns, 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4, 25, 31. coinciding with wisdom and knowledge, and, in ver. 26. distinctly pointed out by the synonymous terms of a psalm and a doctrine. To others was given prophecy, by which they might not only do what is now mentioned, but also know and foretel hidden and future things by divine revelations and visions." It has been justly observed by Witfius,† and others, that the gift of prophecy is represented in scripture as exercised in singing the divine praises, of this we have a remarkable instance in 1 Sam. x. 5, 6. where Samuel says to Saul, *When thou art come to the city, thou shalt meet a company of prophets, coming down from the high place, with a psaltery, and a tabret and a harp before them, and they shall prophesy: That is, they shall utter such songs of praise as were immediately suggested by the Holy Spirit: For the denomination of prophecy was not given to every song on a religious or sacred subject; but to those only that were uttered under an extraordinary and immediate agency of the Holy Spirit; as is intimated in the following words of Samuel to Saul: And the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee; and thou shalt prophesy with them.*

The psalm, which a prophet in the Corinthian church is here said to have, was either one of the Old Testament psalms,

Voetii Disput. de signis et charismatis. Dr. Owen calls Voetius *πολυμάθησ τε τοσ*, ob raram eruditionem, pietatem singularem ac veritatis amorem nunquam satis laudandus.

† Miscellan. Sacra de Prophetis.

psalms, which the Holy Spirit directed them to sing, as peculiarly adapted to the purpose of administering that correction or instruction, which the case of the church then required; or some other song which was immediately suggested by the Holy Spirit, and which they were immediately directed to deliver with such modulations of the voice as are called singing.

It is to be observed, in the first place, that this cannot be considered as an instance of dictating a psalm to be sung by the church in her ordinary solemn worship, if this singing was, as it seems to have been, such prophesying as that which is mentioned in 1 Sam. x. 5. in which none joined but the company of the prophets, or such as were under immediate inspiration. According to Tertullian's account of the remains of this gift in the christian church when he wrote, only one seems to have sung at once. *Post aquam manualem et lumina, ut quisque de scripturis sanctis vel de proprio ingenio potest, provocatur in medium deo canere*: That is, "After water for their hands and lights were brought, every one," (not of the whole congregation surely, but of such as were esteemed to be, in some measure, possessors of the gift of prophesying) "is called upon to sing publicly to God, something either out of the holy scriptures, or of his own composition." If it should be supposed, that some of the psalms or songs, thus delivered, were new ones, yet it will not necessarily follow, that such were then sung by the church in her ordinary solemn worship: For it is one thing to have a new psalm to be sung by the prophet himself in the exercise of his extraordinary gift, and another thing, to have a new psalm, or to dictate it, in order to be sung by the whole church in her ordinary solemn worship. That the New Testament prophets might possibly have new psalms for the former purpose, is allowed; but that there is sufficient evidence of their having any for the latter purpose is denied.

In the next place, we observe, that the circumstance of the prophets, or persons endued with extraordinary gifts, having uttered psalms which are not contained in the holy scriptures, will not warrant others, who have no such gifts, to dictate psalms to be sung in our ordinary solemn worship. For it is a maxim absolutely necessary to the right understanding

standing of the scriptures, that what is therein recorded to have been done by virtue of an extraordinary gift, is, when taken singly or by itself, no proper warrant for any thing in our ordinary worship or practice; nor is it at all to be imitated, except we have a warrant for it in some other place of scripture. Unless this be allowed, we may pretend to have a warrant for hiding a girdle in the hole of a rock, or for eating a book, after the example of Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and for many other extravagancies. Unless we adhere to this maxim, the plea of Quakers and other enthusiasts, from the exercises described in this chapter, must be admitted, to the utter subversion of the institution of a gospel ministry. But if this maxim be adhered to, then we will find nothing in the text under consideration to justify the dictating of psalms for the solemn worship of the church, by any man destitute of the extraordinary gifts, of which the apostle is here treating; for it cannot be denied, that the having or uttering of a psalm meant in the text, was by virtue of an extraordinary and miraculous gift. But if it be alleged, that our warrant to imitate the exercise of that gift in this matter, is in some other place of scripture, then the pretended warrant for it in this place is given up; the thing, which, in that case, is pre-supposed, being the very thing in question.

**OBJECTION.** "We cannot, indeed, reason from the existence of this spiritual gift in the first ages of christianity, to the existence of it now. From the necessity of it then we cannot infer that it is necessary now. Nevertheless the duty performed by the help of this gift, which was then, but not now, necessary, is in every respect of a common and ordinary nature."

**ANSWER.** As the gift itself was, so were the peculiar acts of it: If the former is not necessary now, neither are the latter; the gift being for the sake of the peculiar acts thereof. That the having or uttering of a psalm in the way of prophesying, was by virtue of an extraordinary gift, is not denied. That it is a peculiar act of that gift, can as little be denied, unless it could be shewn from some other place of scripture, that it might proceed from another cause; and then the proof would be from that other place, not from this.

The objector says, the duty performed by the help of this gift, is, in every respect, of a common and ordinary nature. But how knows the objector, that it is so? There is no such thing to be found in the text under consideration. If it had been said, that a psalm was dictated to be sung in the ordinary solemn worship of the Corinthians; if it had been the act of the prophets acting as the ordinary pastors of the church, and not by virtue of an extraordinary gift; if these things had been expressed, or deducible by necessary consequence from what is expressed, there would have been reason to look upon it as an example of an ordinary duty. But the case is far otherwise. We have no more reason, from any thing in the text, to consider the having or uttering of a psalm in the way of prophecy, as a common and ordinary duty, than we have to consider the having of a *revelation* in that light. Both evidently arise from the extraordinary gifts belonging peculiarly to an extraordinary office, which has long ago ceased in the church. It is true, some of the particulars, here mentioned, are allowed to be ordinary duties of the pastors of the church; as the having of a *doctrine* or an *interpretation*. But then these are no other than such duties as might be performed by the prophets acting, not as prophets, nor by virtue of their extraordinary gifts, but as ordinary teachers in the church. That this was the case with their having a psalm is true, if it only means their giving forth one of the psalms recorded in scripture; but not at all true, if it means what the objector contends for, that is, the dictating of new psalms.

OBJECTION. "What is it that was of an extraordinary nature in the case referred to? Was it the exercise of singing praise? No; this is an ordinary duty? Was it the matter of their songs? This was such as was suited to the gospel-dispensation then existing; and therefore such as will be suitable to it, as long as it shall continue. The only extraordinary thing in the case under consideration, is the spiritual gift, or the extraordinary manner in which they were furnished with their songs of praise."

ANSWER. Here the objector distinguishes between what is ordinary and what is extraordinary. But what he says can make nothing for his purpose, unless he means, that the dictating of psalms to be sung in the solemn worship of the church

church belongs to the ordinary duty of the church. This he does not pretend to find in the text, though it was the very thing he meant to prove by it. So that hereby, according to him, in order prove, by the text, that the dictating of psalms for the solemn worship of the church is an ordinary duty, we must first allow, upon some other grounds, that it is an ordinary duty; that is, the text will prove the point, if the point itself be already admitted upon other grounds.

As to the distinction itself, it is readily granted. We are agreed, that singing is an ordinary duty of the church; and, also, that the matter sung should be suited to the gospel-dispensation.\* But we cannot agree to his supposition, that the songs which the prophets are here said to have or sing, were those with which the church was then furnished for her ordinary solemn worship: 1. Because this singing appears to have been peculiar to the prophets, like that in 1 Sam. x. as has been already observed. 2. Because we have no proof that ever a song dictated by a New Testament prophet, was actually sung in the ordinary worship of the christian church. 3. Because, if their compositions had been sung, they would have been preserved and committed to writing; and having been given by inspiration, they would have belonged to the canon of scripture.

OBJECTION. "All divine discoveries, when first made, were such as had not been known or in use before. Therefore, because they were once new, and discovered, too, in an extraordinary manner, by immediate inspiration, must we conclude, that they are not to be of common use and as a standard directory. We must then throw aside all divine revelation. The matter of the first christian

\* It may not be amiss to offer a remark on an expression here used by the objector. He says, that the only extraordinary thing in the case was, "the spiritual gift, or extraordinary manner in which the church was furnished with songs of praise." He ought to have distinguished between *the gift by which*, and the manner in which the church was furnished with songs. The manner, he allows, as well as the gift, was extraordinary. But this manner, according to him, is the dictating of new psalms. Thus, he allows the dictating of new psalms to be extraordinary, in opposition to his own hypothesis, that it is an ordinary duty.

“ christian songs, then, though communicated in an extraordinary way, was not of a temporary nature. It was such as the New Testament, afterwards completed, contains at large; and which is designed for ordinary use in praising, praying, and preaching to the end of time.”

ANSWER. This peculiar exercise was said, in the Discourse on Singing Psalms, to be extraordinary; not because the divine will concerning it was newly revealed at that time; or because it was communicated in an extraordinary way, or by inspiration; but because this exercise was revealed as peculiar to persons of such a description, namely, to prophets, or persons endued with those extraordinary gifts, which were to cease with or soon after the apostolic age. It would be a ridiculous conclusion, indeed, that the scripture-revelations are not of common use, or to be regarded as a standing directory, because they were once new and delivered in an extraordinary way. But who can see what this conclusion has to do with our asserting, that a certain practice, being the peculiar exercise of an extraordinary gift, was to cease with the gift itself; and that the recording of that practice, like the recording of other miracles, may be useful and necessary for the church, till the end of time, though the practice itself be limited to a particular period.

What the objector says about the matter of the first christian songs not being of a temporary nature, is nothing to his purpose; for this does not hinder the manner of the New Testament prophets, in delivering songs extempore and in public assemblies, (whatever was the matter of these songs) from being temporary. We are sure that much of the matter of the immediate revelations which were made to the prophets was not of a temporary nature; yet the manner of communicating that matter by such revelations was undoubtedly of a temporary nature.

With respect to the insinuation (which we meet with, at every turn, in the writings of our opponents) that the word is to be used no otherwise in singing psalms, than in prayer or preaching, it has been considered already. Surely, a little reflection will convince a serious reader, that our prayers must always be considered as our own language, and as applicable to our present case, while many psalms or hymns, which are warrantably sung; do not admit that  
consideration,

consideration. Hence we may be limited in singing, though not in prayer, to a certain form of words.

Upon the whole, with respect to the passage under consideration, it is evident, that no man, who pretends to make psalms for the solemn worship of the church, without the extraordinary gifts here treated of, can, with any colour of reason, attempt to justify his pretension from what is here said of the prophets; also, that there is nothing here that countenances the singing in our solemn worship, of any psalms or hymns whatever, which are not found in the sacred scriptures.

OBJECTION. "As to singing other words than those of the inspired songs, the reader is desired to cast his eye on Luke xix. 37, 38. where we are informed, that, when Christ rode into Jerusalem on an ass's colt, *the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works which they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.* Mark in his xith chap. 9th and 10th verses, records some more particulars of this song, thus, *They cried, &c.* This was certainly an act of social worship; yet the words used are different from any inspired song. Again, Acts iv. 23, 24. Peter, John and their company, sung a song of praise, in which there is a reference to two verses of the 2d psalm, and which might teach christians how to form their songs. They introduce two verses of David's; but not an exact literal translation. And, to mention no more, John has recorded two songs, which should serve as a model of christian psalmody to the end of the world, Rev. i. 5, 6. and v. 9, 10."\*

ANSWER. The account we have of the acclamations of the multitude, upon our Saviour's entrance into Jerusalem, is allowed to be an instance of social worship; but not of that ordinary social worship which continues in the church, and which the writer of the Discourse on Singing Psalms manifestly intended, when he spoke of singing in social worship. The manner of it was singular and extraordinary, suitable to the singular and extraordinary occasion, namely, our

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Saviour's

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 38, 39, 105.

Saviour's entrance into Jerusalem, as foretold by the prophet Zechariah.\* The exercise, here described, is not that of people regularly assembled for the purpose of joining in religious worship; but an exercise into which a multitude, come together unexpectedly, were suddenly and rapturously surprized. If there was no example of singing an inspired psalm, neither was there an example of singing any other hymn made beforehand. They all spoke at once, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and, under his immediate inspiration, applied the words of the cxviii<sup>th</sup> psalm to Christ.

But it may be questioned, whether the exercise of this multitude can be properly called singing at all. It is not necessary to understand the expression, *they praised God with a loud voice*, of singing. We may praise God in our prayers to him, and in our discourses of him, as well as in our psalms or songs. Daniel was not singing, when he uttered these words: *I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might.*†

It is most agreeable to the parallel passages in the other evangelists, that, they expressed their joy and praise in crying and proclaiming these words, *Hosannah to the Son of David, &c.* When the people, upon hearing Herod's oration, gave a great shout, saying, *It is the voice of a god, and not of a man*, they might be said to praise him with a loud voice. In short, no reasonable person will say, that, in the passage under consideration, there is an example of singing any other than the inspired songs in the ordinary solemn worship of the church. On the contrary, the multitude's making use of the words of the cxviii<sup>th</sup> psalm, shews us, that the words of an Old Testament psalm may be properly made use of in praising God for New Testament privileges.

As to the passage in Acts iv. 24, 27. it seems very strange that any one should represent, as an example of *singing*, what the inspired writer expressly calls *praying*, ver. 31. Surely it is not necessary to understand the words, *lifting up the voice*, of singing, as is evident from the common use of this phrase in scripture, particularly in this book, Acts ii. 14. xiv. 11. xxii. 22. As to the translation of the words of the

\* Zech. ix. 9.

† Dan. ii. 23.

the 2d psalm, it is the same which we have in the Septuagint, and is without doubt exactly literal. The Greek words, which are rendered, gathered together, certainly correspond exactly with the Hebrew verb and adverb. The Hebrew preterites answer to the Greek aorists. They are both often rendered in the present tense.

With respect to the passages in the first and fifth chapters of the Revelation, neither the one nor the other seems to have the proper form of a psalm or song. The first of them is not called a song, but is such an ascription of praise as we meet with in many parts of scripture, which have neither the name nor form of psalms, 1 Tim. i. 17. Jude 24, 25. The other passage from the Revelation is part of a divine allegory; and it would be manifestly absurd to regulate the outward form of our worship by the literal and grammatical sense of it. The words which John represents the four beasts and the twenty-four elders as uttering, in their new song, may be considered as expressing the scope and principal subject of their songs in general, rather than as exhibiting the form of a particular song. The words, *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*, represent what every believer truly sings of in singing the scripture-songs. For such passages as the following can never be sung according to the full extent of their meaning, without a believing regard to redemption by the blood of Jesus: Psal. xxxi. 5. *Into thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.* lxxi. 23. *My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I sing unto thee: And my soul which thou hast redeemed:* ciii. 2, 3, 4. *Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction.* The representation of the four beasts and twenty-four elders as saying, that they were *redeemed out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation*, intimates, that the church of Christ, which celebrates the praises of his redeeming love in singing the psalms, was to be gathered out of all the various nations of the world, Psal. cxlvii. 2. *He gathered together the outcasts of Israel.* cvii. 3. *He gathered them out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.* They are also represented as saying, *Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall*

*shall reign for ever; according to Psal. cxiii. 7, 8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. clxviii. 14. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Psal. cxlix. 6, 7, 8, 9. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people: To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron: To execute upon them the judgment written. This honour hath his saints. cxxxii. 12. Their children also shall sit upon thy throne for evermore.*

Thus we see how vainly men attempt to find a warrant in scripture for singing any other than the inspired songs in the ordinary solemn worship of the church.

**SECT. II.** *Whether the Variety of the Scripture-songs be sufficient to answer the purpose of Singing in Solemn Worship.*

THE second argument against the singing of any other than the scripture-psalms in solemn worship, arises from the extent and variety of these psalms being sufficient for that purpose. If some of the psalms be in a very sublime strain, as the xviii<sup>th</sup> and civ<sup>th</sup>, the strain of others is more plain and simple, as the xxv<sup>th</sup> and xxxvi<sup>th</sup>. If many of them respect the case of the church, as the lx<sup>th</sup>, lxxiv<sup>th</sup>, lxxviii<sup>th</sup>, there is a still greater part of them that respect personal cases. So plainly and abundantly do the psalms testify of Christ, that "from them, (says Witfius) may be learned the most part of those things which are to be held concerning his person, offices, states and benefits. And a great many passages of the psalms, adds he, pertaining to these subjects, are frequently, in the New Testament, alleged by Christ and his apostles, not in the way of an elegant allusion, but for the solid proof and confirmation of the doctrines which they delivered." "This book," says Junius and Tremellius, "is an epitome of the Old Testament, a looking-glass of the grace of God, a complete anatomy of human nature: It abounds with instruction concerning

\* Witfius de Prophetis, lib. i. cap. xviii.

“ concerning the promises of God, concerning his works  
 “ of grace towards his own people—of severity towards  
 “ his enemies—and of inviolable faithfulness towards all:  
 “ also concerning our faith in his promises; concerning our  
 “ obedience; concerning our infirmities, patience, constan-  
 “ cy, and deliverances in adversity; concerning the right  
 “ use of benefits, and thanksgiving in prosperity; and in  
 “ general, concerning our whole duty towards God, and his  
 “ faithfulness towards us in Christ; of whom the most ele-  
 “ gant and illustrious prophecies are here every where in-  
 “ terspersed, for the confirmation and consolation of the  
 “ church.” These representations of the book of psalms  
 shew, that Luther had reason to call it his *little bible*.

Such was the judgment of these eminent lights of the church concerning the book of psalms, resulting from a most accurate study of them, and from a solid experience of the use and application of them in the various trying situations in which the Lord was pleased to exercise their faith and patience.

OBJECTION. “ If the scripture-system of psalms con-  
 “ tains all these things, undoubtedly there can be no need  
 “ of any other scripture: It will answer every purpose  
 “ of doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in right-  
 “ eousness, for the perfecting of the man of God.”

ANSWER. The representation of a doctrine or duty may be sufficient for the purpose of psalmody, that would not be sufficient for all that instruction of those that are ignorant of it; for all that conviction of those that deny it, and for all that farther illumination of those who have begun to know it, which the Holy Spirit designs by more largely insisting upon it in other places of scripture. The concise mention of a doctrine in the psalms, does not supersede the necessity of that full explication, and of those various lights in which it is placed, in the other sacred books. It is possible to have the idea of a poem on the late war between Britain and America so complete, that there would not be one of the scenes or operations, described in the histories of Dr. Gordon and Dr. Ramsay, but would be dwelt on more or less, as the purposes of poetry should admit, yet it would be very ridiculous to say, that such a poem would render the information of these valuable histo-

ries useleſs or unneceſſary. As, on the contrary, ſuch a poem, well written, would recommend the ſtudy of theſe hiſtories; ſo the more concise representation of a doctrine or duty in the pſalms, is a proper mean of exciting us to ſeek the farther inſtruction concerning it to be found in the other parts of ſcripture.

OBJECTION. “The writer of the Diſcourſe on Singing Pſalms ſhould have deſcended to particulars, and pointed to places where every article of doctrine, ſpiritual exerciſe, &c. &c. contained in the whole compaſs of revelation, is to be found in the ſcripture-pſalmody, or have produced ſome text of ſcripture to ſupport it. When he undertakes to do this, I will ſhew him many ſcripture-doctrines which are not contained in it.”

ANSWER. When the objector ſays the ſcripture-ſongs are imperfect, and that ſome point of chriſtian doctrine or experience, which ought to be in the pſalms we ſing in ſolemn worſhip, is not to be found in that ſyſtem, it is ſurely incumbent on him to declare what that point is; and not leave others to form conjectures about what it may be. Enough has been ſaid to ſhew, in general, that the peculiar doctrine of the goſpel about the way of ſalvation through a Redeemer, is contained in the pſalms. For particulars we muſt refer to Calvin, Mollerus, Ainfworth and other judicious commentators.

The objector boaſts, that he will ſhew many ſcripture-doctrines, that are not contained in the ſcripture-pſalms. But when he ſpecifies any one article of faith, concerning the nature and perfections of God, concerning the covenant of grace, or concerning his dealings with his church and people, or their exerciſe towards him, aſſerting that it is neither contained in the expreſs words of any ſcripture-ſong, nor deducible therefrom by neceſſary conſequence, his miſtake will then be eaſily evinced.

OBJECTION. “The new favours received from God, ſhould be with us, “as they were with the Jews of old, continually the ſubject of new ſongs; and the very minute circumſtances of the preſent providence ſhould be deſcribed in them; their matter, ſtyle, and all their ornaments being ſuited to the preſent occaſion. This paints matters to the life; preſents objects as they really are;”

“and

“ and consequently gives to expression energy to touch the  
“ heart.”\*

ANSW<sup>22</sup>. It is not the design of a form of psalmody, to give a circumstantial narration of every particular event which may be the occasion of singing praise to God; but rather to celebrate the divine power, wisdom, righteousness, mercy, and faithfulness, manifested in such events or providential dispensations. And whatever dispensations of prosperity or adversity we are under, we may still find a form of words in some of the scripture-songs suitable to express the Lord's doing therein; to express the admiration, reverence or gratitude, the faith, hope and love which ought to be exercised on such an occasion. It may be farther observed, that the songs which the Jewish church used in her ordinary solemn worship, after the times of David and Solomon, were not such as were newly composed on the occasion on which they were sung. In Hezekiah's time, the songs, used in solemn worship, were those of David and Asaph, which had been delivered to the church nearly three hundred years before.† It may be added, that the sort of reasoning

\* Examination, &c. pag. 101, 102.

† Do our opponents think, that our ancestors, so eminent in faith, holiness and zeal for God, wanted fit words, in which to praise him, because they sought them in the book of psalms? The following passage of history will shew us what hymns they made use of on the most interesting occasions. Remarkable was the danger of Geneva, from the attempt which the duke of Savoy made upon it in the year 1602. That little tyrant, in a time of peace, having found means to corrupt some in the city, marched an army, in the middle of the night, to the gates; and, when they had applied a scaling ladder to the walls, 200 of the most resolute actually got into the city, while a troop stood ready to rush in at one of the gates, as soon as their companions from within should be able to open it. Providentially, however, before they got it opened, the citizens were alarmed; every one seized the readiest arms he could find; and some, observing where the danger was, resolutely sacrificed their lives to save the city and their families. The contest was dreadful, and for some time dubious. But at last the Savoyards gave way; and, a random shot of a cannon having broken or thrown down their scaling ladder, they were forced to take a dangerous, and, to some of them, a deadly leap from the top of the wall. The venerable Beza, was at that time still in life;

soning used in the objection, does not go at all to prove, that such a scheme of psalmody is warrantable; but only that, if it were warrantable, it would, in the judgment of some people, be attended with such and such advantages. But, as bishop Butler observes with respect to the truth of christianity in general, "the only question is, Whether it be a real revelation? Not, Whether it be attended with such advantages as we should have looked for before-hand? For of these, in the matter of a revelation, as well as in the acknowledged constitution and course of nature, we are incompetent judges." So we may observe, with respect to the singing of any other than the scripture-songs in solemn worship, the only question is, Whether it be a real institution of Christ? Not, Whether it be agreeable to our pre-conceived opinions of what is of most advantage? We should never forget the danger of admitting man's wisdom to prescribe in such matters. As to what the objector says, about the novelty and supposed suitableness of songs made for the occasion, being what gives expression and energy to touch the heart, if he means that spiritual and saving energy which the Lord's people always desire to experience, when they wait on him in his ordinances, we are to beware of ascribing it to the outward proposal of any words whatsoever. In this respect, it is the immediate and victorious work of God to touch the heart; but this may rather be expected to accompany the forms of psalms which he himself hath indited, and given to be used in solemn worship, than any other.

OBJECTION. There are none of the psalms which directly apply either to baptism or the Lord's supper.

ANSWER.

life; but oppressed with age and infirmity, and so deaf that he heard nothing of all this tumult. Next day, having been informed both of the danger and of the deliverance of their city, he was carried forth to see the heads of the enemies ranged along that part of the wall where they had so insidiously entered; and then he was conveyed to one of the churches, where the people were assembled for thanksgiving. He was unable to preach; but he gave forth the cxxivth psalm to be sung. This was his last public service. Now the reader may judge whether a modern poet, had he been there on that occasion, could have furnished the citizens of Geneva with a more suitable hymn.

ANSWER. If, by a psalm directly applying to baptism and the Lord's supper, the objector means a psalm which gives a narration of the institution of these ordinances, his principle is absurd, namely, that a psalm or hymn is not applicable to any occasion, which is not expressly mentioned in it. Upon this principle, the psalms were not adapted to the use of the Jewish church: For neither circumcision nor the passover is expressly mentioned in the psalms. But if he mean psalms directly applicable to the subject-matter of these ordinances, we deny his assertion. For we sing what is directly applicable to the subject-matter of baptism, in singing such words as these: Psal. viii. 2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.* li. 2, 5, 7, 9, 10. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: Wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow. Hide thy face from my sin, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.* lxxxvii. 5. *And of Zion it shall be said, This man and that man was born in her.* cxv. 14. *The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children.* Again, we sing what is directly applicable to the subject-matter of the Lord's supper, in singing the psalms which describe the sufferings of Christ; as the xxiid and lxixth; and those which set forth Christ and his benefits under the notion of suitable and abundant provisor, as Psal. xxii. 26. *The meek shall eat, and be satisfied: They shall praise the Lord that seek him; your heart shall live for ever.* xxiii. 1, 5. *The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.* xxxvi. 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house.\**

OBJECTION.

\* The passover and the Lord's supper are both seals of the same covenant of grace. Both set forth Christ's obedience unto death, as the proper condition, and eternal life as the great promise of it. Thus, the subject-matter of both is the same, the difference between them lying only in the outward symbols and circumstances. Hence it appears that, when we argue from the usual singing of psalms at the celebration of the passover, to our Saviour's singing them on occasion of both these ordinances, we are not

OBJECTION. "Dr. Watts' imitation of the cxxxiiid psalm is more proper to be sung at the ordination of a minister, than a literal translation of that psalm."

ANSWER. The matter of the imitation is either the same with that of the literal translation, or it is not. If it is the same, then it is not true that the imitation is more suitable; for when we say, that a psalm is suitable to any purpose, we mean that the matter is so. With regard to the language, that of the original is the best; and therefore the more exactly a version represents that language, it is the better. But if the matter is not the same, we cannot hesitate a moment about preferring the choice of the Holy Spirit to the choice of Dr. Watts.

SECT. III. *Shewing that the great Excellency of the Inspired Songs, renders it unwarrantable to give any other of Human Composure the same place with them in the Solemn Worship of the Church.*

THE third argument against singing any other than the scripture-songs in solemn worship is to this purpose, That, in respect of the qualities of the scripture-songs, their infinite excellency forbids any other to be brought into competition with them, or to possess the same place with them in the solemn worship of the church.

I. No other songs have the authority of the scripture-songs. No other has the Holy Spirit given under the form and designation of *his songs*. They alone bear the stamp of *Thus saith the Lord*. Of some other poems on divine subjects

not chargeable with "such reasoning as if one was to say, the promises are different, therefore the conclusion must be the same." We only say, that there was no necessity of using other hymns, than those which had been commonly used at the celebration of the passover, on account of the institution of the Lord's supper: Because the subject-matter of both is the same: Hence the accounts, found in the writings of the Jews, as to what was wont to be sung at the celebration of the passover, may be made use of to throw light on Matth. xxvi. 30. especially considering the probability that, if there had been any thing singular in what our Lord sung on this occasion, it would have been taken notice of by one or other of the evangelists.

jects it may be said, that they are agreeable to the word of God, and serve to illustrate some truths contained in it. But it can be said of none but the scripture-songs, *That they are formally his word.*

2. No other have the majesty of the scripture-songs. What is said in psal. xxix. 4. *The voice of the Lord is full of majesty*, is undoubtedly applicable to his voice in the word. This majesty of the word arises from the greatness and sublimity of the things set forth in the name of God, and in words chosen by himself to express these things.

3. The words of scripture have a pregnancy and fulness of meaning, which is not to be found in any other words. Though the sense of scripture is always but one determinate sense; yet so large and comprehensive is that one sense, that, though a christian, even of the weaker sort, may come to know, that there is no such erroneous opinion, as some hold, contained in a particular text adduced in support of that opinion; and that another doctrine, reproof or instruction is truly contained in it; yet a real proficient in scriptural knowledge will not venture to say, that he has learned all that may be learned even from a text that is accounted one of the plainest. Hence other songs must be very inspired to a person of spiritual discernment, when compared with the scripture-songs.

4. No other songs can justly be accounted absolutely pure and holy, absolutely faultless and free from all the effects of human vanity, like the scripture-songs. Prov. xxx.

5. *Every word of God is pure.* Psal. xii. 6. *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.* This purity makes the people of God prefer the scripture-songs to any human compositions. Psal. cxix. 140. *Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.*

5. No other songs are comparable to the scripture-songs in point of efficacy: For *the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and is a discernner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

OBJECTION. May not the superiority of the prayers and sermons recorded in scripture be an argument against the use of any other prayers or sermons, as well as the superiority

ority of the psalms or songs of scripture is against the singing any other psalms or hymns ?

ANSWER. We observe, that the reading or rehearsing of the scripture, and preaching, are quite distinct exercises. Nehem. viii. 8. *They read in the book of the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense; and caused them to understand the reading.* Luke iv. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. *And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaias, and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c. and he closed the book, and gave it to the minister, and he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* Acts xiii. 5. *And after the reading of the law, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* Thus the reading of a passage of scripture is no preaching. But our opponents themselves have not yet gone so far as to say, that the singing of scripture-songs is no singing at all to the praise and glory of God. Hence it plainly appears, that the cases of preaching and singing in solemn worship, are not at all parallel in that respect wherein they are alleged to be so in the objection; it being no better than nonsense, to talk of preaching confined to the reading or rehearsing of scripture, while it is manifestly no preaching at all to read or rehearse scripture.

Enough has been said already, to shew that the exercise of prayer is distinct from that of singing, reading, or repeating any form of words whatsoever. There is no real exercise of the gift of prayer, but so far as the thoughts and desires therein expressed, are uttered by the person performing the duty, as his own. And there is no scriptural performance of solemn or formal prayer, without an exercise of the gift of it. It is true, that prescribed forms of words are sometimes used in the actual performance of the duty of prayer. But with respect to this, two things may be observed: One is, that, in this case, there is no real exercise of prayer, but so far as the words of the form are considered and uttered, by the person praying, as his own words, and applicable to his own case: Whereas there is as proper an exercise of singing in solemn worship, when the words sung are not, and cannot be so considered, as when they

are. The second thing is, that though we allow it is better to pray in the way of using a prescribed form than to neglect prayer altogether, or to utter gross absurdities in it; yet we apprehend, that this manner of performing the duty of prayer is unsuitable to its nature, which implies, that the sense of our sins, wants and mercies, ought to suggest the words: And besides, it does not appear to be warranted either by the directions or examples of the word. Some pretend that, when our Lord gave his disciples that form of words commonly called the Lord's prayer, he appointed them to pray in these very words. But if they were, by his appointment, to pray in these very words, then they must have been appointed to do so, either always or sometimes only. If they were appointed to pray always in these very words, then it was never warrantable for them to use any other words in prayer; an opinion which every one will allow to be absurd. But if they were appointed to pray in these words sometimes only; then we inquire, when or on what occasions they were to use these very words and no other in prayer? How much more rational is the doctrine maintained by the bulk of presbyterian writers on this subject, namely, that our Lord's design, in giving that form, was to teach us, not words and syllables, but the right manner of prayer; that our Lord no more prescribed a form of words for prayer in the expression, *Say ye, Our Father, &c.* than he prescribed a form of words for preaching, in the following expression, *Go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand:* That Luke's expression, *Say, Our Father, &c.* is explained by that of Matthew, *After this manner pray ye:* That the variations between these two evangelists in the words of this prayer, shew that it was not meant as a prescription of the words to be used in prayer. That the saints recorded in scripture, instead of using this or any other prescribed form of words in the actual performance of prayer, are still represented as using such words as the present occasion and the present exercise of their hearts suggested: That the very perfection of the Lord's prayer as a pattern, in which all other warrantable prayers are comprehended, is an argument against the use of it as a form of words; in regard that our weakness renders the specifying of particulars, and our dwelling sometimes more on one particular, sometimes

more on another, necessary to the exercise of prayer : That, though there is a most remarkable speciality in the use of this form, as a perfect pattern ; yet, as to the words or expressions, they are no more sacred, and, particularly, are no more to be used in prayer, than any words or expressions suitable to that exercise, recorded in other places of scripture.

We conclude, that, since adherence to a prescribed form of words is as suitable to the nature of singing, as it is unsuitable to that of praying and preaching ; and since our singing in solemn worship cannot be conducted without some forms of psalms ; so the incomparable excellency of those indited by the Holy Spirit entitles them to the preference ; nor can the same place in that worship be given to any hymns of human composition, consistently with a due estimation of the scriptures as the very word of God.\*

SECT. IV. *Consequences of the Scheme of Singing Human Compositions in the Solemn Worship of the Church, instead of the Scripture-songs.*

THE last argument against the introducing of any other than the scripture-songs into the solemn worship of the church, arises from the dangerous tendency thereof.

OBJECTION. " The arguing against the new psalmody  
 " from consequences, is like that of the church of Rome against the reading of the scriptures by the common people ; namely, that they would pervert them, and dangerous consequences would follow. What one thing is there  
 " which we must not give up, if the possible bad consequences following from it, be a sufficient reason for setting it  
 " aside ?"

ANSWER.

\* Another exception has been offered to this argument from the superior excellence of the inspired songs, namely, that the words of these songs, when translated, are not the words of the Holy Spirit, and that they are not entitled to the recommendation of being inspired forms of psalmody. As this assertion affects not only the present argument, but the ground of our faith and hope of eternal life, so it has been considered particularly, Chap. II. Sect. II.

ANSWER. Our divines have often shewn, in the most convincing manner, the falsehood of this allegation of the papists. They shewed, that the reading of the scriptures, instead of tending to the seduction of the people, was the only mean of preserving or delivering them from it; they shewed, that misapprehensions of the meaning of scripture, instead of being caused, are removed by the serious reading of it, accompanied with prayer for saving illuminations. They shewed, that the hearing of the word, which the papists allowed, was as much liable to abuse from men's corrupt dispositions, as the reading of it. It is always unjust to charge any sentiment or practice with consequences that are only accidental; that may or may not attend it. But if they be consequences that are of the same nature with that sentiment or practice; if, by fair inference or deduction, they can be shewn to follow from its very nature; the imputation of them is every way reasonable. It is even no more than a necessary explication of such a practice or sentiment; it is only warning people whither they are going, when they follow it. Therefore, the tendency of the scheme of singing human compositions, instead of the scripture-songs, in the solemn worship of the church, ought to be carefully examined.

I. This scheme cannot be vindicated from the charge of tending to the disparagement of the scripture-songs. This is particularly the case with the book of psalms, when it is represented as proper for the worship of the Jewish church, not for ours. It will be vain to say, that this representation respects the use of it in singing only: For, in the first place, a book of psalms, or songs, given to the church for the express purpose of being sung in public worship, is undoubtedly disparaged, when it is represented as unfit to be sung. This book is given to us under the denomination of psalms or songs, as well as it was given to the Jews; it is given to us, without any intimation of the unwarrantableness of using it, as the title directs. The mercy, wisdom, and faithfulness of God, in giving us a book of psalms, is disparaged by representing them as improper to be sung. And, in the second place, the psalms are greatly disparaged by the strange reasons that are given for discarding them as a system of psalmody; for, in order to excite disgust at that

that system, we have been told, " that many of the psalms  
 " are quite foreign to any other person but David himself ;  
 " that there is not in the whole compass of the book of  
 " psalms, any act of devotion done, or directed to be done,  
 " in the name of the Lord Jesus ; that the singing of the  
 " psalms excludes the gospel from our solemn praises ; that  
 " David never wrote a psalm of sufficient glory and sweet-  
 " nefs to represent the peculiarities of the religion of  
 " the blessed Jesus : That the psalms lead christians blind-  
 " fold over the river Jordan, through the land of Gebal,  
 " Ammon and Amalek, into the strong city, and thence  
 " into Edom, through the valley of Baca, and into Jeru-  
 " salem ; there to wait on the court of burnt offerings,  
 " confined to the drudgery of binding sacrifices to the  
 " horns of the altar, instead of offering spiritual sacrifices  
 " to God : That many of the psalms of David are pecu-  
 " liar to David the king, the shepherd, the fugitive, the  
 " Jewish musician : That many of his psalms breathe such  
 " a cruel and revengeful spirit against his enemies, as is  
 " quite opposite to the spirit of the gospel ; that we con-  
 " tinually meet with something in the psalms that damps  
 " the spirit of our devotions, and checks our souls in their  
 " motion towards heaven." Surely, it is not saying too  
 much, to assert, that persons, who allow themselves in the  
 use of such expressions as these, forget that the psalms  
 were dictated by the Holy Spirit, for a rule of faith and  
 practice to the church until the end of time, and are guilty  
 of casting reproach upon a very important part of divine  
 revelation. Such persons are running upon the thick bosses  
 of God's bucklers. May he grant them repentance, to the  
 acknowledging of the truth. An advocate for the new  
 psalmody, seems to think he pays a great compliment to  
 the psalms, by saying, " they were perfect and complete for  
 " the purpose for which they were intended, that is, for  
 " the Jewish dispensation." \* But how comes this writer  
 to give it as an adequate representation of the purpose of  
 any book of the bible, that it was for the Jewish dispensa-  
 tion ? Does not the perfection of each part of scripture lie  
 in its being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for cor-  
 rection,

\* Examination, Sec. pag. 66.

rection, and for instruction in righteousness, to church-members unto the end of time? Divine revelation was committed to writing for the perpetual use of the church. Let the reader only compare this writer's way of speaking of the psalms, with the following sentence of the President Edwards concerning them; and then let him say which of the two is more suitable to the respect and veneration due to the sacred scriptures: "The psalms," says that excellent writer in his *History of Redemption*, "have been, and will, to the end of the world, be made use of in the church to celebrate the praises of God. The people of God were wont sometimes to worship God by singing songs to his praise before; as they did at the Red Sea; and they had Moses's prophetic song in the xxxi<sup>d</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy, committed to them for that end; and Deborah, and Barak and Hannah sung praises to God: But now first did God commit to his church a book of divine songs for their constant use."

2. This scheme cannot be vindicated from the charge of tending to gross error with respect to the Old Testament dispensation. Here we are not left to draw inferences. This is done to our hand, by one who tells us, That it was his business to establish principles,— the principles upon which this scheme proceeds.\* According to him, it is one of these principles, "That it is an error to say, that what we have written in the Old Testament, as well as what we have in the New, was dictated to be a perpetual rule to the church of God on earth."† Which is directly contrary to the doctrine taught, agreeably to the holy scriptures, in the 2<sup>d</sup> question of our Shorter Catechism: "The word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him." Another principle of this scheme is, "That the medium through which mercy and grace are communicated, and how the communication thereof is consistent with the other divine attributes and government, appears to be the discovery of the New Testament;" that is, it was not discovered at all in the Old.‡ That the Old Testament does "not lead us to God through Christ,"

X 2

nor

\* Examination, &amp;c. pag. 67.

† Pag. 7.

‡ Pag. 82.

nor teach us really to “ rely upon and plead with God his  
 “ merits ; or to ask and expect every favour we need, on  
 “ account of what he has done and suffered in the room of  
 “ guilty man, by the Father’s appointment.”\* All which is  
 contrary to the doctrine taught, agreeably to the holy scrip-  
 tures, in our Confession of Faith, Chap. vii. sect. 5. “ The  
 “ covenant of grace was administered under the law, by  
 “ promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal  
 “ lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the  
 “ people of the Jews ; all which fore signify Christ to come,  
 “ and were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through  
 “ the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the  
 “ election in the faith in the promised Messiah, by whom  
 “ they had full remission of sins and eternal salvation.” Sect.  
 6. “ There are not two covenants of grace, differing in sub-  
 “ stance, but one and the same under various dispensations.”  
 Here we are taught, that the elect under the Old Testament  
 had faith in the promised Messiah : Consequently, they  
 knew the medium through which mercy was communicated  
 to them. For surely the knowledge of Christ belonged essen-  
 tially to their faith in him. Christ was revealed to them by  
 their prophecies and types ; for by these they were instruct-  
 ed in the faith of the promised Messiah. In a word, the  
 gospel of the Old Testament was, for substance, one and the  
 same with the gospel of the New ; the same covenant of  
 grace, which includes the whole gospel, being administered  
 under both dispensations ; and the difference between them,  
 being wholly and only in the manner of administration.  
 The same truth is taught in that form of sound words, the  
 Heidelberg Catechism, Question 18. “ Who is that Medi-  
 “ ator, who is, at the same time, true God and true and  
 “ perfectly righteous man ? Answer. Our Lord Jesus  
 “ Christ, who is made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness,  
 “ sanctification and redemption. Question 19. How know  
 “ you that ? Answer. From the gospel, which God re-  
 “ vealed in paradise, and afterward propagated by the pa-  
 “ triarchs and prophets, shadowed forth by the sacrifices  
 “ and other ceremonies, and at last accomplished by his only  
 “ begotten Son.” “ Without controversy,” says the Con-  
 fession

\* Examination, &c. pag. 79.

cession of the Elector Frederic III. Count Palatine of the Rhine, "all the patriarchs and the godly under the Old Testament, when they offered their lambs and other beasts, comforted themselves by faith with this consideration, that the Seed of the woman, who is our Lord Jesus Christ, should in like manner, be slain, and so make full and perfect satisfaction for sin." Another advocate for the new psalmody teaches, that there was no distinct worship or homage paid to the Son and the Holy Spirit as distinct persons from the Father under the Old Testament dispensation; and that in consequence of the sufferings and exaltation of Christ, he is entitled to a worship and homage never before paid to him. This doctrine is plainly contrary to that which is taught, agreeably to the holy scriptures, in our Confession of Faith, Chap. viii. Sect. 6. "Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ, till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and benefits of it were communicated to the elect in all ages successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed and signified to be the Seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head; and the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, being yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever. Chap. xxi. Sect. 2. "Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and to him alone.—And, since the fall, not without a Mediator." From these quotations it appears, that the principle of the advocates for the new psalmody, with respect to the faith and worship of the church under the Old Testament dispensation, is a new and strange doctrine in the protestant church. This doctrine, however, is deemed necessary to justify the scheme of laying aside the singing of the book of psalms in solemn worship, as unsuitable to the condition and privilege of the New Testament church.

3. This scheme cannot be vindicated from the charge of tending to deism. The objection, so much insisted on against the use of the book of psalms in our worship, namely, that the matter of them, as relating to various incidents of David's life, to various passages of the history of the Jews, and to the abrogated usages of the ceremonial law, is unsuitable

suitable to gospel times, favours strongly of deism. For, according to the principle of this objection, however suitable the record of such particulars, as those now specified, was in the period in which they took place; however fit it was then for the purpose of edifying church-members, and of promoting faith, love and other graces, it is quite unfit for any such purpose now. Upon this principle, the whole Old Testament may be thrown away, and some such writers, as Dr. Watts and Joel Barlow, may compose an imitation of it more suitable to the present time. How little edification, it may be said, can a christian reap from the narrative of what was done by the Jewish kings or judges, in comparison of what he might reap from an account of the conversion, life and death of some Whitefieldians? What have we to do, may they say, with the differences in the families of the patriarchs, with the genealogies, with the ceremonial institutions, and a hundred other things in the Old Testament? An opinion which thus carries in it, that something else might answer the end for which the scriptures were given, better than the scriptures themselves, is quite inconsistent with the belief of their being the word of God. Now the scriptures were given for the edification of the souls of men in faith, holiness and comfort, unto the end of time; 2 Tim. iii. 16. Rom. xv. 4. Again, in support of this scheme, we have been taught, that the words of the scriptures in a translation, are no more the words of the Holy Ghost or the inspired form of scripture, than English is Hebrew or Greek, that is, not at all. Consequently, such as read the scriptures in a translation, have none of the words, nothing of the form of that revelation which God hath given us. Now this is the very thing which a deist says, we have not. He will allow, that whatever truth is in the book we call the bible ought to be believed: He professes to have as much regard to truth, wherever he can find it, as any man. What formally constitutes deism, is not the denial of particular doctrines contained in the bible, but the denial of the communication of these doctrines in the words of the Holy Spirit. If it be said, that what is denied by the scheme in question, is only the divinity of the scriptures as exhibited in a translation; We answer, that this is surely a most tremendous affair,

as it deprives the bulk of professing christians of divine revelation as such, making it no better to them, in point of authority, than the writings of Xenophon or Plato; for it is our duty to receive the truth contained in them, because they are truths; and our duty with respect to the bible, when divested of its inspired form, (which lies in the words of it being the very words of God) can be no more. But this is not all; for, the form of the bible which we have in our translation, and which the new scheme treats as a thing which there is no harm in altering or diminishing at men's pleasure, and as a thing to be received so far as it is thought proper or suitable, includes in it the particular sort of discourse that is employed in any part of scripture, the method, the metaphors, the similes, which cannot be denied to be the same, in a just translation, that they are in the original. Whoever is the author of the original is the author of these. So that when the abettors of the new scheme of psalmody, represent these particulars (which undoubtedly belong to the form of the scriptures) as not given by inspiration, they deny that the original was so given, or, in other words, that we have any divine revelation at all. Many that are attached to that scheme, we allow, have no such thought; but nothing is more common than for persons to be blind to the nature and tendency of the snare wherein they are entangled.

4. This scheme cannot be vindicated from the charge of tending to hinder a desirable uniformity in the worship of God. In no part of religious worship did there seem to be a clearer ground for uniformity in the worship of God among christians, than in this of the use of scripture-songs in the public and solemn praises of the church. This seemed to preclude every objection among those that receive the scriptures as the word of God. But we are deprived of this agreeable prospect by the new scheme of psalmody, according to which we are to expect as many different systems of psalmody, as there are different denominations of christians; nay, as many as there are different congregations and families. How opposite is this to that uniformity of worship, that singing together with the voice, which ought to result from the common profession of adherence to the same divine rule?

5. The substituting of human compositions in the place of the scripture-songs in our solemn worship, being itself an instance of will-worship, cannot be vindicated from the charge of tending to promote it in the visible church. The pretence, that the scheme of singing hymns composed by ordinary church-members, in the ordinary solemn worship of the church, as preferable to the singing of the book of psalms, is countenanced by such passages of scripture as Col. iii. 16. 1 Corinth. xiv. 26. Acts iv. 24. Luke xix. 37, 38. has been examined, and will be allowed to be very vain, by such as exercise their judgment without prejudice. But what shews plainly the superstitious tendency of their scheme is, that their chief plea for it is, by no means, the authority of scripture precepts or examples, binding them to make new psalms or hymns for solemn worship: But a profusion of other pleas are made use of. The singing of the scripture-songs is said to be a poor low exercise, which would sink the gospel beneath the level of Judaism. Nay, it is said to disturb rather than promote devotion. It is, say they, to sing one thing, and mean another; which, to be sure, must be sad work. But when they turn their attention to the favourite scheme of psalmody, what a delightful scene opens. Why, in their apprehension, it is “so full of goodly prospects and “melodious sounds on every side, that the harp of Orpheus “was not more charming.” For here we have songs adapted to our superior knowledge, and to the variety and warmth of our devout affections, the ardour of which was pitifully damped by the Jewish psalms. Here we are not taken up with what respected the peculiar condition of the Jewish church; but we have songs which describe our own situation, which paint matters to the life, present objects as they really are, and consequently have energy of expression to touch the heart. The songs recorded in scripture, and used in the Old Testament worship, were composed on occasion of such and such providential dispensations, and why should not we compose ours in the same manner? We are surely in a capacity of furnishing ourselves with songs suitable to our circumstances, as well as they. How can the new song mentioned in the Revelation be sung without new forms of psalmody?

Such

Such is the enthusiastical strain in which human devices in the worship of God are usually celebrated. Their beauty and advantages are painted by an inflamed imagination in the liveliest colours; while the attention is diverted from the simple form of worship delineated in the scriptures. Men are apt to think themselves more devout in the practice of such human modes of worship, than in the observation of the ordinances which are plainly and undeniably appointed in the word: But it behoves them to take heed, lest they be among those who are walking after their own thoughts, in a way that is not good, *Isai. lx. 1. 2.*



C H A P. V.

*Of the Use of Music in Religious Worship.*

**I**N the Discourse on Singing Psalms, the following proposition was laid down, *That in the public praises of the church, the outward part ought to be conducted with decency and simplicity, in subserviency to the spiritual part, which is chiefly to be regarded.* The objections that have been made to the illustration of this proposition in the Discourse, gave occasion to what is offered in the following sections.

SECT. I. *Whether a joint Singing represents the Agreement of Worshippers.*

**I**T was observed in the Discourse just now mentioned, that the decency which ought to be studied by worshipping families and congregations, is such an agreement or concord of voices as may fitly represent an agreement of minds in understanding and believing what is sung, and in the exercise of suitable gracious affections. To this it has been

been objected, That singing is neither a natural nor an instituted sign of the agreement of minds.\*

Answer. It is true, that singing, abstractly considered, or all singing, is not a sign of that agreement; but social singing, like the outward part of all other social worship, is undoubtedly such a sign. Thus, joint prayer is represented as *our agreeing together touching what we ask*, Mat. xviii. 19. An agreement of minds is expressed by singing together with the voice in Isa. lii. 8. *The watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye.* The true ministers of Jesus Christ are said to sing together with the voice, because, as Vitringa observes, *idem sentiunt, idem docent*, they think and teach the same thing. It is true, there may and always will be, in the visible church on earth, some diversity in the views and exercises of worshippers; yet what is becoming and fit to be expressed in the outward part of social worship, (being that only which worshippers should study to attain) is not diversity, but agreement of minds; that they may, with one mind and one mouth glorify God.

## SECT. II. *Of the Effect of Music in Religious Worship.*

THE Discourse on Singing Psalms has been charged with inconsistency, because it represents this as a natural sentiment, that poetry and music should be used to express suitable affections in the worship of the Supreme Being; and also allows singing to be a natural and proper expression of our affections; and, as the ordinance of God, to be a mean which he makes effectual in promoting gracious affections; and yet asserts, that though music, as an art, serves to excite natural affections, it is a delusion to suppose that it will, *in like manner*, excite those that are supernatural and heavenly.

In the first of these passages, the meaning is, that the light of nature led the heathens to think, that they should worship the Deity with songs of praise. They had some faint impressions of truth on this subject; but were far from having suitable apprehensions of the spiritual nature of that worship which is acceptable to God. Following the imagination of  
their

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 26.

their own hearts, and thinking, that God was one like themselves, they concluded, that he was pleased, when their own natural affections were excited by musical sounds. They were so far right, in supposing, that prayer and singing praise belonged to the worship of God; but they knew not how or why these services were acceptable to him.

It is necessary to distinguish between natural and spiritual affections. It is allowed, that music is a proper mean of exciting the former, but not *in like manner* of exciting the latter. It is also necessary to distinguish between the divine ordinance of singing psalms and the art of music. Many observe that ordinance, and have their spiritual affections thereby promoted, who are ignorant of music as an art. Upon a candid consideration of these distinctions, one should think it might be allowed, that the appearance of inconsistency complained of, was owing to an endeavour to express the truth with precision, and to guard against dangerous extremes.

For the farther explanation of this subject, the following observations are offered:

1. Very little music, as an art, is necessary for promoting attention to the matter sung, and for expressing our joint concurrence in the exercise. Greater improvements in the art of music may do no harm; but it is delusion to think, that the employment of them in religious worship would render our affections more pious.

2. It is dangerous to represent the word of God and music as means of the same order with regard to spiritual affections. The word cannot be truly received without exciting spiritual affections; whereas music may not only affect the outward senses, but also raise the natural passions to the highest pitch, while the soul is utterly estranged from spiritual affections.

3. They who say, that singing is a proper mean of exciting godly sorrow, because the plaintive sounds, therein made use of, are proper for exciting the natural affection of sorrow; or that singing is a proper mean of exciting spiritual joy in the Lord, because the lively sounds made use of are proper for exciting the natural affection of joy, suppose that the agreeableness of the singing to the animal

part of our nature, makes, or contributes to make it profitable to our souls.

4. We grant, it is an instance of divine goodness, that what belongs to the outward performance of religious duties is, in general, something easy and agreeable to the animal part, and, in this respect, remote from the austerities and bodily labour of superstition; yet if we look upon the conformity of any exercise to the animal part, as that which renders it a mean of spiritual good to our souls, we shall be in as great and dangerous a mistake, as those who consider austerity or bodily pain in that light. This supposition appears to be verified by what we see of both extremes in the church of Rome. The austerities of a few individuals are ostentatiously displayed: But it is manifest, that their indulgences, the pomp and magnificence of their worship, and the far greater part of their superstitions, are calculated to gratify the senses and entertain the imaginations of the multitude.

5. To suppose, that singing is a proper mean of promoting spiritual affections, in proportion as the music is better adapted to the animal part of our nature, is, in itself, enthusiastic and delusive; and opens the door to an inundation of enthusiasm and superstition. Some will find one contrivance well adapted to human nature; others will find something else better adapted to it; and so on without end.

6. It is vain to reply, that singing is a divine institution: For where is it to be found in scripture, that singing is an appointed mean of profiting our souls, because it is adapted to the animal part of our nature, or because there is some analogy between the sensations produced by musical sounds and our natural affections? Where is it said, that one mode of singing is a more proper mean of exciting spiritual affections than another; that singing all the parts, for example, is a more proper mean than singing otherwise? If it were so, it would be the duty of every christian to learn that particular mode of singing; and the most expert musician might be expected to be the most lively christian.

7. We do not say, that a more complex or artificial mode of singing, as when all the parts are sung, is, in itself, unlawful or superstitious. But whenever we suppose, that it is necessary in religious worship, or a whit more proper for promoting

promoting spiritual affections, than a more simple mode of singing, we deviate into folly and superstition. Modes of singing are indifferent in themselves; but the representing of a particular mode of singing as necessary, or even as a better mean of promoting spiritual affections, than another, is to be regarded as an attempt to introduce superstition, and to entangle the consciences of men.

8. With regard to outward order, two extremes are to be avoided: A rude confusion of voices, on the one hand; and on the other, a manner of singing which is too complex and artificial; the attainment of which would require too much application. For it is but idleness and folly, for church-members, and especially the rising generation, to occupy in acquiring the foppery of musical sounds, the time which ought to be employed in acquainting themselves with the grounds of their religious profession, in opposition to the errors and corruptions now prevailing in the visible church. How nearly does it concern christians to *have understanding of the times, and to know what Israel ought to do?*

This section may be concluded in the words of a late valuable publication, entitled, *The Christian Remembrancer*. "I cannot," says the author of that performance, "but shake my head, when I hear an officer of the church calling upon the people, "to sing to the praise and glory of God," and immediately half a dozen merry men, in a high place, shall take up the matter, and most loudly chant it away, to the praise and glory of themselves. The tune perhaps shall be too difficult for the most part of the congregation, who have no leisure to study chrotchets and quavers; and so the most delightful of all public worship shall be wrested from them, and the praises of God taken out of their mouths. It is no matter whence the custom rose. In itself, it is neither holy, decent, nor useful: And therefore ought to be banished entirely from the churches of God. I am no enemy to music, as an human art; but let all things be in their place. The pleasures of the ear are not the gracious acts of God on the soul; but the effects of vibrated matter on an outward sense. This may be indulged as an innocent and ingenious amusement; but what have our amusements to do with the solemn and sacred adorations of God? Would not this be  
 "carnal,

“carnal, and after the modes of the world, and not after  
“Christ?”

SECT. III. *Of the Use of Instrumental Music in Religious  
Worship.*

THE Discourse on Singing Psalms having been censured for representing the use of instrumental music in divine worship as not belonging to the moral, but to the ceremonial law; it appears necessary to offer some farther explanation of the subject in the following observations:

1. We observe, that the Old Testament church was not led to the use of instrumental music in their worship by the dictates of human reason, but by a positive institution of God; Num. x. 8. *The sons of Aaron shall blow with the trumpets, and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.* Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4, 5. *Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon: In the time appointed on our solemn feast-day. For this was a statute for Israel and a law of the God of Jacob.* There can be no doubt, that the appointment of musicians was made in the days of David, by divine inspiration; since they were communicated to the church by inspired men, by David, Asaph, Heman, and Ethan. Nay, this is expressly declared, 2 Chron. xxix. 25. *Hezekiah set the Levites in the house of the Lord, with psalteries and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: For so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.* Hence it is mere vanity to affect to find the reason of this Old Testament usage in the natural influence of the art of music. Though it should appear, that there were some instances of the use of musical instruments in religious worship before the solemn giving of the law at mount Sinai, it will not follow that it is no ceremonial institution; more than it would follow, that sacrificing, and the distinction between clean and unclean beasts, were not such institutions; because they were known and observed before that æra.

“It is not enough,” as a sensible writer observes, “to war-  
“rant the use of musical instruments in God's worship, that  
“they are apt to stir and cheer our minds; for it is not law-  
“ful

“ful for us, of our own heads, to bring every thing that is  
 “likely to have such an effect, into his worship. Who knows  
 “not, that wine has a similar tendency to warm and enliven  
 “men’s affections? And yet it is unlawful to use it in the  
 “worship of God, excepting, where it is commanded, in the  
 “Lord’s supper.”\*

2. If this were not a ceremonial, but a moral duty, then it must be binding on all the christian churches; and each of them ought to use cymbals, and psalteries and harps in their worship; and that, as belonging, not to their occasional, but, as much as any thing else, to their stated worship; and then it would follow, that something belonging to the stated and ordinary solemn worship, that God had appointed to be observed in the christian church, was utterly neglected by the church under the direction of the apostles, and, according to ecclesiastical history, for more than six centuries after them.

Besides, if this command to use instrumental music in divine worship be obligatory on us, we must either be restricted to the particular instruments specified in the command, or not so. If we are not restricted to these very instruments, by what rule shall we determine what, or how many ought to be used in our churches? But if we are restricted to them, then this command has been disregarded, even by those New Testament churches that have admitted the use of instrumental music in their worship; for we know not of any of them that pretend to have cymbals and psalteries, and other instruments that were divinely appointed to be used in the temple.

3. Instrumental music, like other things enjoined by the ceremonial law, is, considered in itself, a carnal unmeaning thing, and utterly unprofitable to the soul. Hence Arnobius, in his book against the Gentiles, justly represents the instrumental music which they used in the worship of their gods as ridiculous. “What is there,” says he, “in the tinkling  
 “of brass, that your divinities should be so mightily de-  
 “lighted with it? Is it that, as infants are frightened from  
 “their foolish screaming by the shaking of a rattle; so  
 “your gods, even in their terrible fits of rage, are much  
 Y 2 “frightened

\* Pierce’s Vindication of the Dissenters, Part iii. Chap. 3.

“frightened at the squeaking of your pipes, or softened  
 “to the meekness of lambs by the repeated strokes of your  
 “cymbals?”

4. The use of instrumental music in the worship of God, which we read of in the reigns of David and Solomon, manifestly belonged to the peculiar service of the temple: 1 Chron. xxv. 6. 2 Chron. xxix. 25, 26, 27, 28. Ezra iii. 10. Nehem. xii. 27.

OBJECTION. “Instrumental music in divine worship  
 “was practised before either tabernacle or temple existed;  
 “and appears, from the instance of Miriam and all the  
 “women of Israel, using timbrels in praising God for their  
 “deliverance from Pharoah, to have been a common prac-  
 “tice; otherwise we cannot conceive how they, all at  
 “once, could touch that instrument in a suitable manner.  
 “The company of prophets, mentioned 1 Sam. x. 5. hav-  
 “ing a psaltery, a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before  
 “them, is another instance to the same purpose.”

ANSWER. Suppose these women to have practised instru-  
 mental music before; yet it does not follow that they  
 did so in religious worship; because it might be used on  
 a civil account; as appears to have been the case of the in-  
 strumental music, which the women used in the congratula-  
 tion of Saul upon his victory over the Philistines, 1 Sam.  
 xviii. 6. And supposing instrumental music had been used  
 before in religious worship, the case was the same with o-  
 ther observances of the ceremonial law. God’s appoint-  
 ment of many of these observances was made known to his  
 people before the time of Moses: But it was then commit-  
 ted to writing; and the Israelites being formed into a  
 church and nation, many ceremonial offices which had be-  
 fore been performed by the heads of families, were appropri-  
 ated, by an express appointment of God, to the priesthood  
 in the tribe of Levi, and limited to the tabernacle or tem-  
 ple. This was undoubtedly the case with sacrifices. In a  
 word, the example of Miriam and the woman in this text,  
 might as well be alleged for the moral and perpetual use of  
 dancing, as for that of musical instruments, in religious wor-  
 ship. With regard to 1 Sam. x. 5. we have already seen  
 the absurdity of considering exercises performed by virtue  
 of

of an extraordinary gift, as any precedent for the ordinary solemn worship of the church.

OBJECTION. "Although David instituted a select choir to attend constantly the place where God peculiarly placed his name, yet it would be a strange way of reasoning to infer from thence, that the use of instruments in the worship of God every where else, was thereby interdicted."

ANSWER. The objector might as well say, though God appointed a table of shew-bread and an altar of incense to be in the temple, it would be a strange way of reasoning to infer from thence, that the use of such a table and altar in the worship of God every where else, was thereby interdicted: For the musical instruments, as much as any thing else, belonged to *all the vessels of service in the house of the Lord*; of which the pattern was given to David by the Spirit, 1 Chron. xxviii. 12, 13. We deny that, after the building of the temple, there was any warrant, either from precept or example, for introducing the use of instrumental music into the ordinary worship of God, any where else but in the temple: And if the objector affirm that there is such a warrant, it is incumbent on him to produce it.

OBJECTION. David himself was not in any of the classes of singers that belonged to the temple; yet he represents himself as praising God with musical instruments.

ANSWER. This may be understood of such an use of musical instruments as was peculiar to the prophets, of which we have spoken already: Or he might be said to do what he, as a prophet, appointed the Levites to do; as he says, *I will offer bullocks upon thine altar*, when he would cause the priest to offer them.

OBJECTION. There is just the same reason to believe the Jews might, and did use instrumental music in their ordinary worship in the synagogues and private families, as that they sung the praises of God in them. For scripture is equally silent with regard to both.

ANSWER. The scriptures represent singing praise as the ordinary duty of all the members of the church. With regard to the synagogue-worship, reading the prophets is expressly mentioned as a part of it, Acts xiii. 15, 27. and we may reasonably suppose, from the knowledge which the

Jews had of the scriptures, that prayer and singing praise, being moral duties, would not be omitted. After the Jews had the book of psalms in their hands, none of their families could neglect the duty of singing praise to God, without a gross contempt of the end for which God had given them that book; or without practically denying praise to be a good, a comely and a pleasant exercise, as it is said to be in Psal. cxlvii. 1. Besides, it is expressly declared in Psal. cxviii. 15. that the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles or dwellings of the righteous. There seems to be nothing to hinder us from understanding tabernacles here, as comprehending both synagogues and private families. Our Lord's singing an hymn with his disciples is an instance of family praise; and, as we have reason to believe, that what he did on this occasion, was agreeable to the ordinary practice of families at the celebration of the passover, it is a proof of what is asserted by the Jewish writers, that the observation of that ordinance was attended with the singing of psalms in the families of Israel. Such are the reasons which we have for believing, that the praises of God were sung in the Jewish families after the building of the temple. The reasons for supposing that musical instruments were employed in family or synagogue-worship, during that period, have not yet occurred.

**OBJECTION.** It never can be proved that the Jews had any synagogue-worship, till after the Babylonish captivity.

**ANSWER.** If by synagogues we understand assemblies of the people that met at stated times for social worship, there seems to be much reason to believe that they were in use long before the Babylonish captivity. "For not only," says a learned writer, "does Asaph in Psal. lxxiv. 4. say to God, *Thine enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations*; or, according to the translation of Pagninus, *in the midst of thy synagogues*, (a phrase which Luther also interprets of the schools and synagogues in which the word of God is taught) and in ver. 8. *they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land*; but the law concerning the sabbath in Lev. xxiii. 3. 4. strongly implies that the Israelites, soon after their settlement in the land of Canaan, had various synagogues or congregations, which they attended on that day: *Six days, says the divine law, shall work be done, but the seventh day*

day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation ; ye shall do no work therein : It is the sabbath in all your dwellings. These are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. Now, it seems plain, that when the people were settled in the land of Canaan, and were engaged six days of the week in their ordinary labour, many of them could not attend at Shiloh, or afterwards at Jerusalem, from which they lived at a great distance, for holding a holy convocation or assembly for religious worship every sabbath, according to this command. Wherefore such worshipping assemblies being so necessary for preserving and propagating the true religion, it may well be supposed, that it was not long after the settlement of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, when they began to have synagogues or places of meeting for social worship. The inquiry which the Shunamites' husband made into the reason of her desiring to go to the prophet, when it is neither new moon nor sabbath, seems to indicate that at such times it was usual to assemble at the prophet's house, to hear the word, and (as Mr. Henry observes) to join with him in prayers and praises. Several learned authors have indeed asserted, that there were no synagogues among the Jews till after the Babylonish captivity ; and suppose that the first hint of them was derived from the example of reading and explaining the law recorded in Nehem. viii. With regard to the whole of the order and service of the synagogue, we may allow, that it was gradually introduced after the Babylonish captivity ; but it is more than propable, that there were, long before, various places where the people assembled at set times for social worship, or for hearing the discourses of such as instructed them out of the divine words."\* But let us now return to our subject.

5 The use of musical instruments is not agreeable to the simplicity of New Testament worship. It was very suitable to the external grandeur of the temple, which was designed to be a figure of the spiritual glory and beauty of the church of Christ. Under the Old Testament, the former was a divine ordinance for directing the views of church-members  
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\* Vide Pitii Introductionem in Lectionem Novi Testamenti, cap. xlvi.

to the latter. But now these outward shews, being introduced into the worship of God without his warrant, both involve church-members in the guilt of will-worship, and hinder them from discerning the true spiritual beauty of instituted worship. Even while this worldly pomp belonged to the divinely instituted form of worship, it was often a snare, and an occasion of ruin to church-members who rested in it, and did not look through the shadow to the substance: How much more pernicious must it be under the New Testament, when it is destitute of any divine warrant, being introduced into religion by the mere will and pleasure of men?\*

-OBJECTION. Instrumental music is still retained by several of the Reformed churches.

ANSWER. It was rejected by such of them as made the greatest progress in reformation. In retaining musical instruments the Lutherans have forsaken their own Luther, who ranked organs among the ensigns of Baal. The church of England, in retaining them, has forgotten her own homilies: In the homily of the place and time of prayer, we have the following passage. "A woman said to her neighbour, Alas! gossip, what shall we now do at church, since all the saints are taken away; since all the goodly sights, we were wont to have are gone; since we cannot  
" hear

\* The great Mr. Pool, author of the Annotations, says, "Better all the organs in the world were broken, than one soul lost; the more enveiglements there are to sense, the more disadvantage to the spirit. To instance in one thing, I appeal to the experience of any ingenuous person, whether curiosity of voice, and musical sounds in churches, does not tickle the fancy with carnal delight, and engage a man's ear, and most diligent attention unto those sensible motions, and audible sounds, and therefore, must necessarily, in a great measure, recall him from spiritual communion with God; seeing the mind of man cannot attend to two things at once, with all its might, (to each) and when we serve God, we must do it with all our might. And hence it is, that some of the ancients, giving this rule, that even vocal singing in churches should not be too curious, "*sed lengenti, simpliciter quam canenti.*" And Paul himself gives it a wiper, Eph. v. 19. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, making melody in your hearts to the Lord.*" *Life of Pool.*

“hear the like piping, singing, chanting, 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 delivered out of all those things, which displeased God so sore, and filthily defiled his holy house, and his place of prayer.” That instrumental music still continues in some of the Dutch churches, is against the mind of those eminent divines who have been the greatest ornaments of these churches. A national Synod at Middleburgh in the year 1581, and the Synod of Holland and Zeeland in the year 1594, resolved, that they would endeavour to obtain of the magistrate the laying<sup>a</sup> aside of organs, and the singing with them in the churches, even out of the time of worship, either before or after sermons. So far were those synods from bearing with them in the worship itself.\*

6. It is also to be observed, that the Holy Spirit makes use of instrumental music, as an emblem or figure of what was to be fulfilled in Christ, and his church. Thus, it is said in the xlviii<sup>th</sup> psalm, *God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.* This being understood, as it undoubtedly ought to be, of Christ’s ascension, *the sound of a trumpet* here must be taken figuratively. In like manner, the trumpets and harps in Rev. viii. 6. and xiv. 2. are to be understood as emblems taken from the ceremonial usages of the Old Testament. The following analogies between the instrumental music of the temple, and the preaching of the gospel, under the New dispensation, suggested by a very learned writer,<sup>†</sup> appear to be not unsolid: 1. David, as an inspired prophet, appointed the ceremonial worship by musical instruments; so Christ, the spiritual David, appointed the gospel to be preached to all nations, Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. 2. The instrumental music did not begin till the burnt offering began, 2 Chron. xxix. 27.; so the preaching of the gospel is founded on the sacrifice of Christ; and the great scope of the former is to exhibit the latter. 1 Cor. i. 23. 3. The variety of the musical instruments in matter, form and use, might represent the variety of articles in the great mystery of godliness, and of the gifts employed in preaching

\* Pierce’s Vindication of the Dissenters, Part ii. chap. 3.

Adolphus Lampe in the first Exercitation on the xlv<sup>th</sup> psalm.

ing it, 1 Corinth. xii. 7, 10. 4. In order to make an harmonious concert, it was necessary for the players on these instruments to observe the notes (or what was equivalent to notes) of music accurately, and to express them by distinct sounds. In like manner, it is necessary for the attainment and preservation of the church's harmony in the faith and profession of the truth, that the preachers and professors thereof adhere stedfastly to the rule of God's word, and that they declare the articles of revealed truth, to which they adhere, plainly and distinctly. 1 Cor. xiv. 7, 8, 9. *And even things giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak in the air.* 5. The different tones of the musical instruments deserve notice: The sounds of some of them being more clear and shrill, those of others more soft and sweet, and those of others more deep and grave. So in the pure preaching of the word, there is a diversity of matter: Sometimes what is delivered commends itself to the babes in Christ by its simplicity; sometimes it elevates the minds of the hearers by its sublimity; sometimes it breathes the sweetness of the promises; and sometimes thunders in awful threatenings. 6. As to the sound of the temple-music, it was heard at a great distance, and recommended by its peculiar sweetness. So the preaching of the gospel is a most sweet and joyful sound, which hath already extended to a very great part of the world, and shall extend still farther, Rom. x. 18. *But I say, have they not heard? Yea, verily their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* Lastly, in this consideration of instrumental music, we may not overlook the greatness of its natural influence, of which a poetical writer says,

Music exalts each joy, allays each grief,  
Expels diseases, softens every pain,  
Subdues the rage of poison and the plague.\*

These

\* *Arnsfrang's Art of preserving Health.*

These effects of music might serve for some shadow of the supernatural efficacy of the gospel in the hand of the Holy Spirit, as being *the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; opening the eyes of the blind, turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ.*

From what has been said, we may understand how little reason there is to consider the use of musical instruments in divine worship and the singing of the psalms as parallel to one another. The author of a Discourse on Psalmody represents it as an inconsistency to follow the example of the Old Testament church in singing the book of psalms, and not in the use of musical instruments; to receive the former and reject the latter, on account of their being used in the temple-service.\* But this is a gross misrepresentation of the ground on which we proceed in this matter. For we receive the singing of the book of psalms, while we reject the use of instrumental music in the solemn worship of God, not merely because they were used by the Old Testament church, or in the temple worship; but because we cannot say of the singing of the psalms, what we can say of instrumental music, that it is in itself unprofitable to the soul; that after the building of the temple, it was limited to that great theatre of the ceremonial worship; that it is inconsistent with the simplicity of New Testament worship; that it had a typical signification; and that we have positive proof that it was not used by the church of Christ in the apostolic age.

We are also told by this author, that “the argument for the use of musical instruments in the worship of God be-  
“ing

\* Pag. 70, 71, 72. “We have the example and authority of the Old Testament church for the use of organs, timbrels, harps, and other musical instruments in the public worship of God. Strange! David’s Psalms being used “in the public praises of the temple,” is an argument for their continuing in use to the end of the world. And instrumental music being used in the service of the temple, is an argument for its being wholly abolished. David no where restricts us to his words, but often enjoins and exhorts us to the use of his instruments of music.”

“ing abolished, drawn from its being of typical signification, or ceremonial institution, is without all ground.” From this it appears, that he reckons the use of these instruments in the worship of God a moral duty. For surely, those standing usages of the Old Testament church in the ordinary solemn worship of God, which were not of typical signification nor ceremonial institution, are of moral and perpetual obligation upon the church and people of God. If this were true, an eagerness to introduce instrumental music into the public worship of the christian church would be more commendable, than eagerness to introduce the new form of psalms. And indeed what he says of the former, that it was *once* of divine appointment, cannot be denied; all the means of divine worship, which were ever warrantably used by the church, being of divine appointment: while, with respect to the new scheme of preferring the use of humanly composed forms of psalms, to the use of those of divine inspiration in solemn worship, he could not shew that it ever was any other, than what it is still—so much of the froth of human vanity.

The apologies which Bishop Horne makes for the use of musical instruments in the worship of God, have been materially answered in what has now been advanced on that subject. The plea for its introduction, that it enlivens and exalts the affections of men, was considered in the first part of this section. As to the passage from the Revelation, we have observed, that it rather argues that the sort of music there alluded to, was ceremonial; as every good commentator on this book, allows that it abounds with allusions to the peculiar usages of the Old Testament church.

With regard to what he says about combating the abuse of instrumental music in the worship of Baal, by introducing it into the worship of the true God, we may observe, that the circumstance of its being so much used in the idolatrous worship of the papists, is rather against the admission of it into our worship. There is much sin in symbolizing with idolaters in their forms of worship. Mr. Henry on Deut. xii. 4. observes, “that the Israelites are charged not to translate the rites and usages of idolaters into the worship of God, no, not under colour of beautifying and improving it, nor were they to indulge a luxurious fancy in their wor-  
“ship,

“ ship, nor to think, that whatever pleaseth this, would  
“ please God. He is above all gods, and will not be wor-  
“ shipped as other gods are.” It is well known, that what  
the Bishop here suggests is a stale pretence, upon which  
many pagan rites were brought into the worship of the  
christian church, till at length the monstrous system of su-  
perstition was formed, which we now see in the church of  
Rome. It may only be added, that professed presbyterians  
must be greatly degenerated, when they must go to learn  
the scriptural form of public worship from superstitious  
prelates.

END OF *VINDICIÆ CANTUS DOMINICI.*





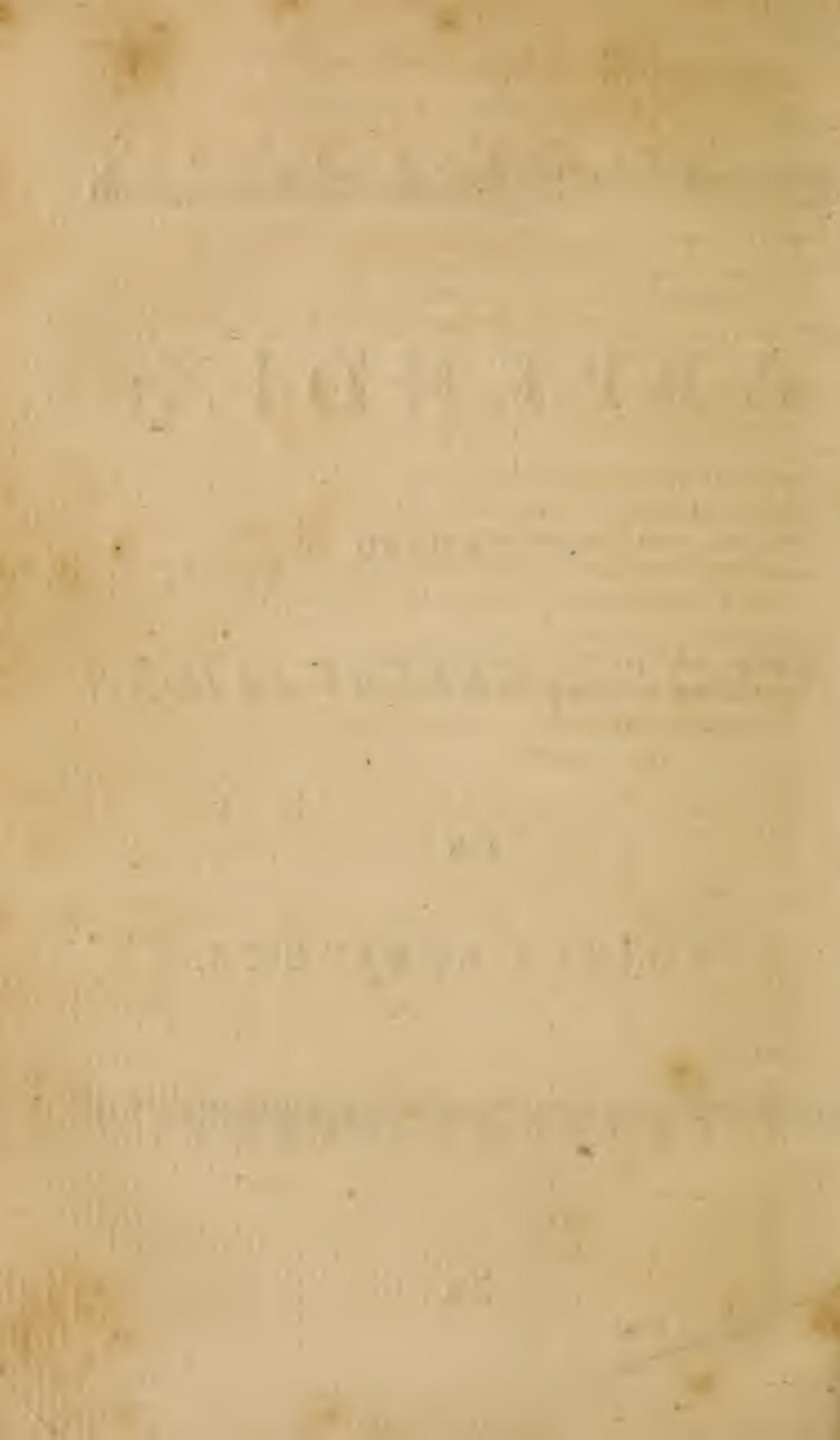
A P P E N D I X:

CONTAINING

*ESSAYS AND OBSERVATIONS*

O N

V A R I O U S S U B J E C T S.



# A P P E N D I X.

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## Of Superstition.

Omnis superstitio, cum sit magna pœna hominum ac periculossima turpitude, honor est ac triumphus dæmonum. *Augustine.*

**R**ELIGION, says Lactantius, is the name of the true worship of God; superstition of the false. He derives religion from *religare*, to bind; because man is bound to serve God as his Lord, and to reverence him as his Father. Among the heathens, he adds, those who worshipped the public and ancient gods were said to be religious; while those who, surviving their parents, ranked them among the gods, and honoured them with new religious rites, were accounted superstitious. Hence Virgil says,

Vana superstitio, veterum ignara deorum.

Even upon this supposition Lactantius proves the charge of superstition against the heathens; for the pretended deities which they worshipped, were originally men who had been consecrated after their death.

Superstition may be defined, an opinion, or belief of a connection, by an invisible agency, between the presence or absence of a particular event or action, and some temporal or spiritual good or evil, without a warrant in the known course of nature, or in the scriptures of truth.

This evil abounds among mankind, even in common life. How many superstitious observations are handed down among the vulgar, from one generation to another, about lucky or unlucky days of the week, or of the moon; lucky or unlucky occurrences; about various ceremonies for preventing or curing diseases; about the repetition of certain words by way of charm against the attempts of evil spirits?

All

All such observances are condemned by the word of God, Lev. xix. 26. *Ye shall not use enchantments, nor observe times.* Deut. xviii. 10. *There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an inchanter, or a witch.* Jer. x. 2. *Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain.* The divination or enchantments of the ancients consisted, in a great measure, if not entirely, in such superstitious observations as many are still addicted to. No system of philosophy has been found sufficient to root out the popular attachment to these vanities; nor is there any effectual remedy, but the propagation of genuine christianity. Mankind will always be liable to vain terrors, till they be possessed with the true fear of the Lord; and, in their straits, they will be the dupes of every extravagant imagination that promises relief, while they are strangers to that solid ground of confidence in God which the glorious gospel affords.

They who seek benefits by such practices, seek it not from God; for the only way, in which we have ground to expect any benefit from him, is either by means of some virtue which he has put into his creatures, and which belongs to what we call natural causes, or in the use of some ordinance which he hath appointed in his word. But such as deal in these observations have no regard to either of these ways. They use a ceremony which they know has no natural tendency to produce the desired effect; and is none of the means appointed in the word of God. Such devices, therefore, lead men quite away from the due acknowledgment of their dependence on God, to atheism, or the worship of the devil.

But nothing has in all ages been more infected with superstition, than religious worship. In this respect, superstition is called εἰδωλοθύτων, will-worship; that is, when something is used in the worship of God not according to his command, but according to the will and pleasure of man. The prohibition in the second commandment of one kind of will-worship, namely, that of images, (the principal way in which the worship of God was corrupted in ancient times) includes a prohibition of all other kinds of it. *Thou shalt*  
not

*not make to thyself*, signifies, as Amefius and others have observed, Thou shalt not make any thing a way or mean of worshipping me at thy pleasure. For though, as that judicious author adds, the pronoun, *thyself*, may seem sometimes redundant, or bear some other meaning; yet we are led to understand it so here by the concise manner of expression used in this summary of the moral law, and by the analogy of other places of scripture. Amos v. 26. *Your images which you have made to yourselves*. It is God's prerogative to declare by what means he will be worshipped; and communicate spiritual benefit to our souls. It is only an act of obedience to the revealed will of God, that he will accept as an act of worship; an act by which we do what is right in the sight of the Lord, declining all other modes of worship, though they should seem ever so much more proper in our own eyes, Deut. xii. 25, 28. Besides, religious worship, if a door be opened for the introduction of men's devices into it, will soon be filled with such vain and ridiculous observations, as tend to alienate the heart entirely from spiritual worship; as is evident from the examples of superstitious worship in ancient and modern times. The Pharisees made the divine commands of no effect, through their traditions.

It is sometimes alleged, that, while the essentials of divine worship are preserved, additions or alterations in the circumstances of it do little harm.

We answer, that as the least of God's commands are to be religiously observed, nor may a jot or tittle of any of them be neglected, Mat. v. 18, 19.; so the least additions or alterations are to be rejected. The prohibition of adding and of diminishing, is, in Deut. xii. 39. put as a seal to the commandments concerning the plan of divine worship, concerning abstinence from blood, and similar things, which are certainly as circumstantial, as any thing belonging to New Testament worship. It is much to be considered, that nothing is more essential to the true worship of God, than the study of conforming ourselves in all things to his revealed will. Nor is the harm of any want of conformity thereto small. It is a maxim in christian ethics, *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex qualibet defectu*. An action, to be morally

morally good, must be good in the whole matter and manner of it; the least defect renders it evil.

It is said, if we may not do any thing in divine worship but what is pointed out in scripture, then we may not fix on the time and place of our worship, the dress we are to use when we attend on it, and the like circumstances, none of these being determined in the word.

Answer. When we say, that we are not to use any thing as a mean of worshipping God, which he hath not appointed in his word, we do not speak of things that are common to civil and religious actions, but of such things as are peculiar to religious worship. Things of the former sort are not forms of religious worship, and belong to it no more than hands, feet, eyes and ears, the air we breathe, or the particular part of the earth on which we tread. And therefore this objection, though it has been much insisted on, is a very gross instance of that kind of sophism, called *ignoratio elenchi*, or a mistake of the matter in question. As to the prudential ordering of these circumstances in subservience to the right exercise of religious worship, it is enjoined in such general precepts as that in 1 Cor. xiv. 40. and is necessarily implied in every part of instituted worship: But surely this is not the case with any of the additions of which we speak. Without any of them instituted worship may be observed in all its integrity.

The want of due impressions of this truth, that the appointment and blessing of Christ, is necessary to render any usage an acceptable and useful mean of divine worship, is the great reason why so much religious superstition is found among the professors of christianity. Hence it has been a prevailing opinion, that the allurements of fine pictures and music should be introduced into religious worship in order to produce devout and virtuous affections. Thus, images have been called the books of the vulgar. Viceſimus Knox, in his *Essays*, recommends the processions and pompous formalities of religion, that were used by the ancient heathens and by the papists, as a pattern for the imitation of protestants. He argues for the introduction of such sounds and rites into religious worship, from their effects in war. It seems, it did not occur to him, that God never revealed to men a system of the military art; whereas his  
infinite

infinite goodness has condescended to give us, by way of immediate revelation, a complete system of the ordinances which he saw fit to be used in his worship, accompanied with a charge not to add or take away any thing. He bids us recollect the temple of Solomon; but he himself had forgot that external pomp or parade in divine worship was one of the peculiarities of the Old Testament worship, which were done away by the coming of Christ. He appears to have wrought himself up to a fit of passion, when he called an adherence to the simplicity of New Testament worship, the zeal of a barbarous fanaticism; as if he would frighten his readers by scurrility of language; while he had not so much as deigned to take notice of one of the arguments made use of by divines against pompous shews in religious worship. It may be sufficient to observe here, that this sort of fanaticism, has prevailed most since the revival of letters, and among those who have had most knowledge of the scriptures and sound philosophy. What charms, adds he, can a London carman, chairman, hackney coachman, fisherman, find in an English meeting or church? If what is read or delivered there be the words of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, we need not hesitate to say, that they are better adapted to the case of their souls, and more likely to be made effectual, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to their reformation, than any pictures which Raphael ever designed, or Titian drew. Mr. Knox speaks much better on the subject of religion in his 133d Essay, where he has the following words: "Religion must lose much of her venerable air, when, instead of the decent clothing of a chaste and honourable matron, she is represented in the tawdry and flimsy garment, with the painted cheeks, the glass ear-rings, the false brilliants of a courtesan."

It is not now proposed to speak of the popish religion, which, as a celebrated writer observes, is one huge and overgrown lady of childish and idle superstitions. But it may be useful to point out some superstitious usages, which, being retained in some of the protestant churches, have long been prejudicial to their purity and their peace.

One of these usages is that of restricting the external exercise of prayer in public to the repetition of the words of a prescribed

scribed form. We are far from denying, that there are human compositions called forms of prayer, which christians may make use of with advantage for assisting their meditations. But we say, that it is superstitious for a person who has the gift of prayer, (without which, in some measure, there are few serious christians, and no faithful ministers) to flint or limit himself to a prescribed form of words. There is no warrant for such limitation in the precepts or examples of scripture, as we had occasion to observe in another place.

It is superstitious to lay it down as a rule, to kneel at some of the public prayers, and not at others; as if the former were to be offered up to God with more reverence and devotion than the latter. It is superstitious to direct the same petition, first to one person of the godhead, and then to another; since every prayer, which ever of these persons be named, is directed to a Three-One God, the *bearer* of prayer.

The custom of bowing at the name *Jesus*, falls under the same censure. The apostle's expression in Philip. ii. 10. has been applied to this custom; as if the words *name*, and *bowing the knee*, were always to be understood literally; whereas the word *name*, is often put for power, authority, dignity, or for the person or thing named. Here it is to be understood of Christ himself, agreeably to the parallel text, in Isa. xlv. 23. *Unto me every knee shall bow*. Bowing the knee is here used, by a metonymy, for submission or subjection: It is here ascribed to things in heaven, among which are spirits, which have no bodily parts. Thus the prophecy in Isa. xlix. 23. and Psal. lxxii. 9. concerning the depression or subjection of the enemies of Christ, shall be fulfilled in many, who cannot be said, in a literal sense, to lick the dust. Those who use this ceremony say, that they do not worship the sound or syllables of the word *Jesus*, but what is signified by it. But it may be properly asked, why they bow, rather at hearing this name pronounced, than at seeing it written or printed? why at the name of *Jesus*, and not at the equally emphatical names of Christ, Immanuel, Redeemer, Mediator, God, Jehovah, all which belong to the same adorable Person? Why at this title of the Son, and not at the names of the Father and the Holy Spirit?

The dedication, or consecration of churches, was introduced in the reign of Constantine. We have no precept in the New Testament about raising sumptuous edifices for divine worship. Christians may meet together for that purpose, wherever it is convenient, even in the open air. Buildings, indeed, serve for the better accommodation of a worshipping assembly. But when these are consecrated, and considered as in themselves more holy than other places, and as liable to be profaned by the holding of civil courts, or the transacting of any other secular business in them, there is too much ground for the charge of superstition.

The custom, which some have, of taking off their hat, when they enter a church, though there be no person in it, and of bowing towards the altar or communion table, is not only superstitious, but favours of idolatry. The temple of Jerusalem, being built according to God's express direction, being the place which he had chosen to put his name there, and a type or shadow of good things to come, was always holy, even when there was no actual performance of divine worship in it. But this was not the case with the Jewish synagogues, to which, rather than the temple, our churches bear a resemblance. May not the word be purely preached, and the sacraments rightly administered, in places which are every way convenient, though not consecrated? Did God ever appoint the consecration of any other walls than those of the tabernacle and temple under the Old Testament, as a mean of obtaining his gracious presence? Was not the power of godliness most experienced in public ordinances, before there were any consecrated churches; when the apostles preached in private houses, or in the open air?

Another superstitious custom is that of kneeling at the Lord's table. Neither Christ nor his apostles knelt at the first celebration of the Lord's supper; but received it in that posture which was then usual at ordinary meals. This ordinance is called the Lord's table, the Lord's supper. But where was kneeling ever used as the posture of guests at a table or supper? Even kings have always allowed those whom they admitted to their table to sit with them. The Lord's supper has the external form of a feast, as it is a mystical and symbolical representation of that spiritual feast which believers have with Christ, who comes into their souls, and

supps with them, and they with him, Rev. iii. 20. Many things used in feasts among men are excluded from this ordinance; but these things which were exemplified by Christ and his apostles, and without which it would not have the external form of a feast, are to be retained. Farther, by kneeling in the act of receiving the Lord's supper, protestants symbolize with the papists in their idolatrous worship of the consecrated elements, which are supposed to be transubstantiated into the real body and blood of Christ, the same rite being used by both in the same moment, in the same manner, exhibiting the same appearance to spectators. Nay, this practice of kneeling in the act of communicating, as it is used with a religious regard to the symbols, cannot well be cleared from the charge of idolatry. If they say, they adore God through the symbols as significant and commemorative signs, this will no more vindicate kneeling before the symbols from idolatry, than the same apology made by the papists for their practice of worshipping images. We cannot allow, that the directing of religious reverence or worship, even externally, (whatever may be the inward intention of worshippers) to the means of divine worship, such as bread and wine in the Lord's supper, is free from idolatry. The sacramental bread, as Mr. Rutherford observes, could it speak, would say to the person that kneels before it, See thou do it not, for I also am a creature.

Private baptism may be justly ranked among superstitious practices; especially as it is often occasioned by the popish opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism to salvation. The Holy Scriptures teach us, that what is absolutely necessary to salvation, is not the outward baptism of water which is dispensed by the minister, but the inward baptism of the Holy Spirit, which the Lord Christ grants when he sees meet; and that it is not the want, but the contempt of baptism, that is pernicious to the soul. But from whatever motive private baptism is practised, it is highly blameable. The Lord hath appointed us to make public profession of an invisible and spiritual communion with the whole church of Christ, by an immediate visible communion with a particular worshipping assembly, in the same individual exercises of divine worship. Persons decline this profession, when, instead of joining with the particular congregation to which they be-  
long

long in celebrating the sacraments, they get them dispensed to themselves or their children privately. The sacraments ought to be dispensed in the presence, and with the approbation of the faithful. Baptism is the sacrament of initiation into the church of God; and the particular congregation, of which the person presented to baptism is to be a member, has a right to witness his solemn admission into their communion. With regard to circumcision, which, it is said, was sometimes administered in private families, the neighbours being invited, (as is supposed from the accounts of the circumcision of Abraham and of John) we observe, that, though baptism and circumcision are alike, as being both seals of the everlasting covenant, and of the solemn admission of persons into the visible church; yet there were circumstantial differences. There was not the same necessity for a congregation to witness the reception of a person into the church; because then all that belonged to the nation of Israel were church-members: And by reason of the injunction to circumcise every man-child on the eighth day after the birth, it might often be impracticable to assemble the church on that occasion. Hence we do not find that the circumcising of children was peculiarly assigned to the priests under the Old Testament, as the baptising of them is expressly assigned to the ministers of the New Testament. The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, that of Lydia, and that of the Philippian jailor, have been alleged as instances of private baptism. But the persons baptised in these cases were, in a manner, each of them the beginning of a congregation; which was to be formed by others being gathered to them. Many things are warrantably done in the first formation of a church, which are not allowable in a church already constituted. What we mean by baptism being publicly administered, is that it ought to be administered before the congregation, where there is one. The baptism of a person, where there is no congregation, is nothing against what we maintain.

Nor is the private administration of the Lord's supper less superstitious. Many entertain a notion, that the outward act, in itself, of receiving the consecrated bread and wine, conveys some spiritual benefit to the soul, some such delusive imagination must possess the minds of those who  
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make little account of the gracious declarations and promises of the gospel, proposed to them in their great afflictions, or in the agonies of death, unless they be accompanied with the sacramental signs. The private use of this ordinance is inconsistent with one principal end of it, which is to signify and represent the unity of the church of Christ, by a particular worshipping congregation meeting together in one place, to eat of one bread and to drink of one cup. Hence, the apostle says, in 1 Cor. x. 17. *We, being many, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.* The ancients called this ordinance *cæna* from *κοινωνια* communion and *συνεστ* from *συναγωγη* to gather an assembly; because it was celebrated in a public worshipping assembly. As the benefit of baptism, so that of the Lord's supper is not to be confined to the moment of receiving the outward signs; but is to be expected by the believer in all the after trials of life, and at his death. As to the sick and dying, they are to be taught that they truly eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, when they believe in him as their Saviour, though they have no opportunity of joining publicly with a worshipping assembly, where the Lord's supper is regularly administered.

Another superstitious rite, is that of making the sign of the cross on the forehead immediately after baptism. In scripture the name of the cross is, indeed, used to signify the death of Christ, the preaching of it, or our suffering on account of the profession of Christ. But we are no more called to use the sign of the cross in religious worship, than to use the sign of a scourge, or of a crown of thorns, which were instruments by which Christ suffered as well as the cross. There is no institution nor example of this usage in the New Testament. As annexed to baptism, it is plainly superfluous; since baptism itself is a sufficient token or sign of that which, they pretend, is signified by the sign of the cross; namely, that the person baptised shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight against sin, the world and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end. And surely the water of baptism is a sacramental sign of the blood and righteousness of Christ, and our partaking of it is a better way of professing our faith in him, and obedience to him, than our receiving the  
sign

sign of the cross; while the former is of heaven, and the latter of men only. The very abuses and corruptions which have for many ages attended this usage, and which still prevail in the popish church, is a sufficient argument for laying aside a rite which nobody will pretend to be necessary. The brazen serpent which Moses had made, was an ordinance of God for the healing of the people; yet Hezekiah reckoned the abuse, of which the children of Israel had been guilty, in burning incense to it, a sufficient reason for breaking it in pieces. The sign of the cross has been abused by no less idolatry; and therefore it ought to be utterly abolished. The Episcopalians insist upon some passages of Tertullian, and other ancient writers, who speak of this as a common usage in their time. But as to this, we observe, first, that these writers speak of using the sign of the cross on other occasions than on that of baptism. "In the beginning of any business," says Tertullian, "in going out or coming in, washing, eating, lighting candles, going to bed, sitting down, or whatever we do, we sign our heads with the sign of the cross." And signing with the cross which they speak of as after baptism, was accompanied with the ceremony of anointing. Now, why do they not admit one of these usages as well as the other? Why do they not use the putting on of white garments, the tasting of milk and honey, and the like rites of equal antiquity? In the second place, we observe, that it was not so from the beginning. Justin Martyr, when he is professedly describing the rites of baptism, makes no mention of anointing or signing with the cross. In the third place, the practice of the ancients in this matter ought to be ranked among their errors.

Another corruption, more ancient perhaps than the sign of the cross, is that of washing or sprinkling with water three times. Sprinkling or washing with water once, sufficiently answers the institution of Christ; and therefore some other reason must be devised for proceeding to a repetition of it. To make the number of the acts of sprinkling a sign of the Three Persons of the Godhead, without the warrant of any command or example in scripture, is undoubtedly superstitious. The moment we purposely add any thing, be it ever so small, to the signs of divine institution, we are in danger of the idolatry forbidden in the second commandment.

We may add one observation more with regard to baptism, namely, that other than the parents ought not ordinarily to be admitted as sponsors for a child in baptism: As the child hath its right to baptism by one or both the parents being regular members of the visible church; so they are antecedently bound by the scriptures to bring up their child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and they have ordinarily the best opportunity of performing that duty. Hence no church is warranted to lay it down as a rule, that what are called godfathers and godmothers, shall ordinarily present children to be baptised.

It is another superstitious rule, that ministers shall perform the duties of their office in garments of a certain form or colour; as if a certain form or colour of garments were holier than another, or might be constituted a sign of sincerity and purity of life; or as if it were profane for ministers to have the same dress, when they perform the public exercises of divine worship, as at other times. There was, no doubt, a ceremonial holiness in the priest's garments under the Old Testament dispensation, as being according to God's express appointment; and as being typical signs: But as the practice of wearing these was utterly abolished, among other ceremonial observances, by the coming of Christ; so no form or colour of garments can be made holy, or a sign of holiness by human appointment, it being God's prerogative to make either persons or things holy, or to constitute any thing a sacred sign of a spiritual blessing. We never find that the form or colour of the garments, which our Lord and his apostles wore, was any other when they preached and prayed publicly, than at other times. A particular appropriation of a certain sort of garments to divine worship is the more intolerable, when it is manifestly such as had been defiled with the abominable superstition of the papists; as is well known to have been the case with the surplice of the church of England. In a word, they are chargeable with superstition, who do not allow the same dress to be decent in a minister, when discharging the duties of his office, which would be decent in any other man of acknowledged gravity and piety, when he goes to a public assembly.

It is an instance of superstition for any church to appropriate certain days, to be observed periodically, as feasts, in commemoration of the apostles, and other saints; or of the birth, the circumcision, and other passages of Christ's life on earth. There is much ground to consider the observation of such days as a relict of the old heathenism. For, as a judicious writer observes, many ancient pastors of the christian church were too much disposed to accommodate their religious worship to the taste of the heathens, imagining that they would more easily allure them to embrace the gospel by the use of ceremonies resembling those to which they had been accustomed, than by adhering to the simplicity of the worship and ordinances appointed by Jesus Christ. Hence, a multitude of ceremonies gradually crept into the church. But experience has shewn, that this policy was not attended with the divine blessing. For while men were taken up with these external shews, they neglected the spiritual worship of God. "I think," says Hospinian, "those who first appointed the celebration of the feast called Christmas, in the month of December, did so, not because they believed that our Lord was born at that time, but that they might change the festival that was celebrated at Rome, at that season, in honor of Saturn and Ops, into a christian feast." "Instead of the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus," says Theodoret, a writer of the fifth century, "the feasts of Peter, Paul, Thomas, Sergius, and other holy martyrs, are now celebrated."

The observation of saint's days, as the feast of St. Matthias, St. Mark, St. Barnabas, St. John, and others, favours of idolatry. The observers of these feasts defend themselves by the authority of the fathers. But the fathers whom they cite, say that these feasts were instituted, not only in memory, but in honour of the saints, whose names they bear. "Festivitates," says Isiderus, "in honorem martyrum anti qui patres celebrari sanæcrunt." "Pro varietate," says Jerome, "regionum diversa in honorem martyrum tempora sunt constituta." But to dedicate a day to religious exercises for the honour of a saint, is to give to a creature what is due to God alone. For we ought to devote time to such exercises for the honour of God only. Christ foretold, that Mary's anointing of him before his last sufferings, wherev-

er the gospel would be preached, would be told for a memorial of her; but he did not institute a feast for that end. The apostle, writing to the Hebrews, exhorts them to remember those that had spoken to them the word of God, and to follow their faith; but he says nothing of keeping holy days in memory of them. There is no vestige of such an usage either in the Old or New Testament.

Nor may men appoint any day of the week, of the month, or of the year, to be observed periodically as a day devoted to the immediate exercises of God's worship. It is God's prerogative to appoint such a day. Accordingly he hath blessed and sanctified the sabbath; a day sacred to his service; a day in the highest estimation with all the saints; a day which they have always called their delight; and on which they have been in use to expect and receive the most refreshing communication of divine grace. It is a great presumption against men's holy days, that whenever the estimation of these increased, that of the sabbath decreased.

*Six days shalt thou labour*, saith God, in the fourth commandment. The design of these words, as they stand in this commandment, seems to be not so much to oblige men to diligence in their worldly calling, (that belonging more properly to the eighth commandment) as to guard them against either adding to or taking from the sabbath. None may take away from the people of God any of the six days, which he hath so expressly allowed them for their own employments. This is not inconsistent with the other holy days observed under the Mosaic dispensation, nor with what is still the duty of the church, the setting apart of days for humiliation and thanksgiving. With regard to the former, God, who is Lord both of us and our time, bound the Israelites to keep several other days beside the weekly sabbath, as particularly at the time of the three great festivals, in which their males appeared before the Lord in the place where he chose to put his name, the passover, the feast of weeks or Pentecoste, and the feast of tabernacles. These days belonged to the ceremonial law, and were types or shadows of good things to come. With regard to the latter, the season of humiliation and thanksgiving days is not to be regulated by the calendar, but by a serious consideration of the past and present condition of our souls, and by a careful  
 observation

observation of the dispensations of providence. Indeed the Lord calls us to employ a portion of every day in the immediate exercises of his worship. But it is utterly inconsistent with the allowance of six days for our own employments, for a human authority, civil or ecclesiastical, to bind us to the religious observation of any particular hour or day of the week, of the month, or of the year, periodically, besides the sabbath.

The feasts of which we speak, are contended for as a part of religion and divine worship, as promoting piety and devotion. It is allowed, however, that there is nothing in the scriptures concerning them; and that none of them were observed or known in the time of the apostles. Easter is the earliest of which we have any account in history. But Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, tells us, that it appeared certain to him, (*mihi, says he, certe videtur*) that this feast had been introduced by the custom of the private observation of it; because no rule concerning it had ever been delivered to any by the apostles. And, as he also justly observes, what have we to do with feasts or holy days which we have not received from Christ or his apostles? *Quid vero ad nos feriæ quas non accepimus ab apostolis, nec ab ipso Salvatore Christo?* If Christ and his apostles had judged these feasts necessary for promoting piety or holiness of life, they would no doubt, have authorized and diligently inculcated the observation of them.

It is objected, that feasts may be observed, that have been appointed by civil or ecclesiastical authority; as the feasts of Purim, and of the dedication, seem to have been. To this we answer, that before the Purim can serve as an example of the feasts in question, it is necessary to prove, first, that what was thereby intended was religious worship, and not political or civil entertainments. We read of nothing that was to be done on those days which renders it necessary to consider them as holy days. Farther, it would be necessary for the purpose of the objection, to prove that Mordecai, the institutor of them, was not divinely inspired. Mordecai, says one,\* wrote all that we have in the book of Esther, to the words which we put in the beginning of  
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\* Sixtus Senensis in his Bibliotheca sancta.

the tenth chapter. He was one of the hundred and twenty, who constituted the great synagogue, among whom were the prophets, Zechariah, Daniel, Ezra, Malachi, &c. It is commonly allowed, that these settled the canon of the Old Testament. With regard to the feast of the dedication, which had been instituted by Judas Maccabees, on occasion of the purification of the temple, after it had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes, we observe, that at this period, the Jewish church was much corrupted by the doctrines and traditions of the Pharisees, who were called the wise men of Israel. Judas Maccabees seems not to have been directed in this institution, by the Spirit which directed Solomon in building, and Ezra and Nehemiah in rebuilding it. They appointed no feast in commemoration of what they had done; but Judas on account of his having restored the altar and some other things, appointed an anniversary of eight days, as a memorial of his achievement. The words of the evangelist, in John x. 22, 23. do not carry in them that our Lord countenanced or approved this feast. These words only point out the time and place in which our Lord had the conversation which is related in the following verses of the chapter; and at the conclusion of which it is added, *And he escaped out of their hands. We sailed from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread,* says Luke in Acts xx. 6. It does not follow, that the apostle and his companions kept the days of unleavened bread at Philippi. Christ did not come on purpose to observe the feast of the dedication. He was at Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, John vii. 2. after which he remained at Jerusalem, while these things took place which are recorded from the 10th verse of the viith chapter to the 39th verse of the xth, during which time the feast of the dedication began.

Farther, the observation of such holy days as those we speak of, is not only not authorized, but is expressly condemned in scripture, Gal. iv. 9, 10. *Now after ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days and months, and times and years.* The apostle not only forbade the Galatians to observe the days, months, times, and years prescribed in the Jewish ritual, but any days, months, times and years, which, like those

those of the ceremonial law, are considered as instructive signs; for the way of teaching by days, as when one day is supposed to commemorate the birth of Christ, another his circumcision, another his ascension, and so forth, is the old elementary manner of teaching which obtained under the Old Testament; but which is unsuitable to the state of the christian church, where babes are to be fed, not by the observation of days, months, and years, but with milk, that is, with the pure doctrine of the word, beginning with the first principles of the oracles of God. The Lord hath given us other instructive memorials, or teaching signs, even the word and sacraments. *By these*, as the apostle says to the Galatians, *Christ is evidently set forth crucified before our eyes.* How great was the advantage of the feasts under the Old Testament over our popish feasts? The former were expressly appointed by God to be teaching signs of spiritual things; and the members of the Old Testament church had good ground to believe, that as long as they were called to observe them, the glorious Institutor, would bless the observation of them for their spiritual good; but as for the latter, the poor creatures, who presumed, of their own heads, to introduce them, could do nothing to make them useful to one soul, and had no ground to look for the blessing of God upon them, they being their own things, and none of his.

Christians are to beware of submitting to the observation of these feasts, as having a tendency to bring a burden upon them too heavy to be borne. If it should be said, that they would not be numerous, if they were limited to such as are kept in memory of the principal facts relating to our Saviour. It may be replied, that besides the want of a divine warrant for the observation of any of these feasts, we know not how much they may be multiplied: There is as much reason to appoint a number of days to be observed in commemoration of other facts relating to him, as to observe those that have been already appointed. Why should we not have holidays for commemorating, for instance, his disputation in the temple, his flight into Egypt, his mission of the seventy disciples, his temptation in the wilderness, his agony in the garden, each of his recorded miracles, and his baptism, as well as those commemorating his circumcision, or the coming of the wise men out of the east? The rule of  
God's

God's word is a simple and determinate rule; but the additions of human devising are without end.

The unlawfulness of observing some of these feasts appear, from the falsehood implied in the observation of them. Thus, when our Episcopalians say in their prayers on Christmas day, "Almighty God, who has given thy Son, as at this time, to be born;" and in that on the Purification day, "As thy only Son was this day presented;" their words imply, that they have a certain knowledge, that these events took place on the particular days of the months which they have fixed on for these feasts. Now the opinion that Christ was born on the 25th of December, proceeded upon several suppositions that are manifestly false: Such as, 1. That Zacharias was the high-priest when he offered incense in the temple; whereas he is plainly represented as one of the priests who officiated in the temple according to their courses, and by lot. 2. That the time of his ministering mentioned in Luke i. 9. and of his receiving the promise of the conception of John the Baptist, was the day of expiation; whereas that was only one day, Lev. xvi. 29, 30. but the time of Zacharias' ministry is said to be several days, Luke i. 23. 3. That the conception of the Baptist was on the 27th of September; a bold conjecture: While the ministrations of Zacharias was for several days, who will say on which day of his ministring the angel appeared unto him? 4. That there were six entire months between the conception of the Baptist, and that of Christ; whereas Luke says, that Gabriel was sent to Mary on the sixth month after the conception of the Baptist; but whether in the beginning, or in the middle, or towards the end of that month, is not revealed. Such are the premises from which the conclusion has been drawn, that Christ was born on the 25th of December. In any authentic Roman histories, now extant, of the three first centuries, there is a deep silence of that festival. Chrysostom owns, that in his time there were various opinions on this head, some holding, that he was born on the 6th day of January. As for himself, he tells his hearers in his sermon on the birth of Christ, that he had but lately come to know that it was the 25th of December. What account we are to make of the knowledge he had of this matter, we may understand by considering, that it proceeded upon the false or uncertain

uncertain suppositions now mentioned; particularly upon the absurd notion of the pontificate of Zacharias. Ambrose, Prudentius, and others, try (ridiculously indeed) to prove that Christ was born on the 25th of December, because John the Baptist says, in John iii. 30. *He must increase; but I must decrease.* Wherefore, say they, Christ must have been born when the light was increasing, that is, on the 25th of December; for then the days begin to grow longer: And the Baptist, when the light was decreasing, that is, on the 24th of June. The Egyptian churches held, that his birth was on the 6th of January. Clemens Alexandrinus mentions other opinions; as that it was on the 20th of April, or the 20th of May. Paul, bishop of Middleburgh, wrote a book to shew that it was on the 26th of March. Scaliger attempted to shew that he was born in the end of September, or the beginning of October. Casaubon, in his Exercitations, endeavours to support his hypothesis, by alleging the custom of the church of Alexandria, which, at first, celebrated the solemnity of the Baptist, on the 23d of April. They are followed by Calvisius, and others. There is no certainty in any of these assertions. Scaliger's, the most rational, perhaps, of them all, determines neither the month nor the day. From all that genius and industry has advanced on this subject, it does not appear, that even a probable knowledge of the day of Christ's birth is attainable. Thus, God seems, by his wonderful providence, involving the birth-day of Christ, and the date of many other events relating to him, in impenetrable darkness, to have rendered it impossible to find any solid grounds to proceed upon in computing them, even in the early ages of christianity; that by a sensible and cogent argument, he might convince men that such days and times were no longer to be observed as a part of religious worship.

Thus, we have pointed out some instances of superstition, which are still to be found in the worship of some of the protestant churches. We might have added several others, such as, the singing of hymns of human composition, and the use of instrumental music in public worship. The most pious and judicious divines, even in churches where some of these usages are continued, have lamented that they were not taken away. Thus Voetius, speaking of

the holy days still retained in the Dutch churches, owns that these churches are much happier in which ministers and people have agreed to take away such a bone of contention, as the observation of these days have proved. The Episcopal church, indeed, represents such superstitions as so many "forms and usages, which may, without offence, be allowed, provided the substance of the faith be kept entire." If it is meant, that they may without offence be allowed by the civil magistrate; we grant, that it belongs not to him to judge and determine in such matters; nor is the observation of the true religion to be enforced by civil penalties. But if it is meant, that the practice of these forms is without offence to God, we apprehend they are in a dangerous error. It is as sure, that God is offended at such usages, as it is, that he charges us neither to add to, nor take away from, what he hath commanded, Deut. xii. 32. and condemns all these forms of worship which they devise of their own heart, 1 Kings xii. 33. according to their own thoughts, Isa. lxxv. 2. according to the precepts of men, Mat. xv. 9. And there is no reason to doubt, but that the obstinate attachment of many in the Reformed churches to such human inventions in divine worship is one principal cause of God's judgments that have come upon them. Hath he not divided them in his anger? Has he not raised up a generation of atheists and infidels to be a scourge to them? Have not multitudes in their communion, embracing Socinian and Arminian errors, lost even the substance of the faith? Are not multitudes in their communion manifestly without any favour of the christian religion in their conversation, and without the daily exercise of christian worship in their families? Every one that has any acquaintance with the history of the Protestant churches, particularly, of those in Britain and Ireland, knows, that these human devices in the worship of God have been an offence to great numbers of pious people, ever since the reformation from Popery; of whom there were many who, for a stedfast adherence to their testimony against such impositions, suffered not only the spoiling of their goods, but imprisonment, exile and death.

## Of Enthusiasm.

These are the ingredients of which Enthusiasm is generally composed : Great heat of temper, melancholy, ignorance, credulity, and vanity or self-conceit. *Lord Lyttleton.*

**E**NTHUSIASM, agreeably to the derivation of the word, has been sometimes taken in a good sense for divine inspiration, or for the state of the human mind when, under an immediate prevailing impulse of the Holy Spirit, it is elevated far above what it can reach in the natural use of its faculties. But it is now taken in a bad sense ; and an enthusiast is commonly understood to be one who ascribes the natural operations and tendencies of his own mind, to an immediate agency of the Holy Spirit or of angels. To guard against the extremes into which men have run in their sentiments on this subject, (some of which manifestly tend to atheism, others to a seemingly religious frenzy) is of great necessity and importance:

It is no less than atheistical blasphemy to call the belief of man's absolute dependence on God, enthusiasm. Right reason teacheth us, that the same will and power of God which determined us to exist rather than not to exist at first, are still the only efficient cause of our continuing or not ceasing to exist ; that we cannot move nor form a thought but as he enables us ; that, as we are endowed with the faculties of the understanding and the will, which make us rational creatures, so it is the proper use of these faculties to acknowledge our absolute dependence on God as our first cause and last end, and to express our acquiescence in that dependence, by studying conformity to his will, as it is made known to us ; and that, when we do otherwise, we are chargeable with a criminal defect, and with rebellion against our Creator. Let impious men call an habitual regard to these principles, enthusiasm, we esteem it, with the highest reason, the only true wisdom.

It is impiety to reproach any as enthusiasts, for ascribing to the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit what the scriptures

tures of truth ascribe to it. God having a gracious purpose of saving a certain number of mankind from sin and misery, and of bestowing upon them the promised blessings of the covenant of grace through the precious blood of Christ, actually communicates these blessings in the time and order settled in that everlasting covenant. Particularly, he sends the Holy Spirit at the appointed moment to work faith, love, repentance, and every other grace in their hearts; enabling them to mortify the deeds of the body, and to perform other duties in an acceptable manner. Believers are said to have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts and to abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. He bears witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. He seals them unto the day of redemption. He strengthens them with might in the inner man. He is represented as the author of all the gifts by which the church is edified, not only of the extraordinary gifts of working miracles, and speaking various tongues; which were necessary before the canon of scripture was closed; and which have now ceased; but also, of those which are still continued, such as the gifts of prayer, preaching, ruling in the church. *All these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.* The scriptures afford believers good ground to expect that God will give them what is good in answer to their prayers. Christ assures them that whatsoever they ask in his name, shall be given them: Hence, they are to direct their prayer to him, and to look up in the expectation of a gracious answer through the righteousness and intercession of Christ. The scriptural expectation of the answer of prayer, is not founded on the absurd notion of working any change on the Divine mind, but on the persuasion that God hath appointed prayer to be used as a mean of obtaining promised blessings at his hand; and that, as he from all eternity decreed that his people should obtain such blessings, so he decreed that they should use prayer as a mean for that end.

It is no enthusiasm to look for the gracious presence of God with us to uphold and direct us in the way of duty, and more especially in the ordinances of his worship, such as, praying, preaching, reading and hearing the word, communicating, covenanting. These are so many ways in which  
 God

God hath appointed us to draw near to him; and in which he hath given us ground to expect that he will draw near to us. Nor is the experience, which believers declare they have, of the Lord's withdrawing from them at one time, and returning at another, as to sensible manifestation, any other than what the scriptures hold forth as his way of dealing with them. He says, *I will go and return to my place: And again, I will come unto you, and I will bless you.* The Lord the Spirit dwells in believers as their effectual teacher and continual remembrancer. Hence, we look upon it as horrid impiety to ridicule christians as enthusiastic; because they ascribe the seasonable remembrance, affecting views, and abiding impressions of particular words of scripture as indeed the words of God, to the work of the Holy Spirit; or because they acknowledge they have found much relief in the way of consulting the throne of grace, laying their matters before the Lord, and imploring his direction.

It is no enthusiasm to believe that God employs the ministration of angels in preserving us from danger, and in various friendly offices. Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation? The consideration of the presence of the holy angels with us, should be a continual incitement to watchfulness and circumspection in our conversation.

Nor dare we say, that all the extraordinary views which some of the servants of God have had of future events, even since the apostolic age, were enthusiastical. Mr. John Huss foretold the Reformation, in which Luther was eminently instrumental: Mr. George Wishart foretold the death of cardinal Beaton. It is observable, however, that these reformers did not, like enthusiasts, give out that others were bound to believe their declarations about future events, as if they had been equal to the predictions of the apostles and prophets. These holy men, giving themselves to the word of God and prayer, seem to have been favoured with an extraordinary measure of the influences of the Holy Spirit, leading them to apply the general predictions of the word to some particular cases.

Persons, however, are chargeable with enthusiasm so far as they make their experience of the impulses or motions of the Spirit without the word, the rule of their faith and

practice. We are enjoined not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they are of God. We are to bring all their suggestions to the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light, no dawning, in them. They are enthusiasts who imagine themselves to be directed to what they believe or practise by a pretended spiritual sense of scripture, quite different from the sense which the native signification of the words, taken in consistency with other places of scripture, bears. We allow, that true believers have peculiar views of the reality, glory and excellency of the things revealed in scripture; but still these are no other things than what are really set forth in the words of scripture, according to the true grammatical sense of them. The natural man, as Mr. Rutherford observes, seeth the same true sense of scripture with the star light of mere natural reason, which the renewed man seeth with the supernatural, spiritual, sun-light of the Spirit of grace.

Enthusiasm leads persons to conclude themselves the subjects of a saving conversion, before they have examined themselves by the marks and characters of converted persons laid down in scripture; because they have had such and such strange and unusual impulses, imaginations and sensible impressions. In the same manner, they are brought to engage or not engage in a particular business or way of life; because they feel themselves under a strong impulse to engage or not engage in it, without any suitable consideration of what the word of God directs them to in the matter. If a text of scripture occur to an enthusiast, while he is deliberating on any affair, he is apt to apply it to that affair, on account of its unexpected occurrence, without considering how far the genuine sense of the passage admits such an application. A selfish complacency in the frames and lively affections that he thinks he has attained in certain devotional exercises, (different from the spiritual delight of believers in, and outgoing of soul towards the glorious Object of worship) occasions such a protracting of these exercises as juttles out other duties. It is a constant feature in the character of an enthusiast, that there is something which his imagination, continually brooding upon it, has magnified so much, that, for the sake of it, he dis-

parages

parages, or even violently opposes other things, that are, in their place, no less necessary. Thus, there are some so much taken up with inward meditation, that they imagine they are not at all concerned to utter a word, however much the glory of God or the good of their neighbour may require it. Others are so much occupied in singing hymns, that they never charge themselves with the neglect of other duties, such as, that of searching the scriptures, that of recollecting the word of God that has been preached to them, that of meditating on it with application to the case of their souls, and that of speaking often to one another of the things of God.

The enthusiast is full of chimerical expectations of temporal benefits, without regard to the means which, according to the ordinary course of providence, are necessary to the attainment of such benefits; and promises himself every spiritual blessing, while he neglects the means which God hath appointed in his word.

Enthusiastical religious affections make a greater noise than the true love of God in the heart. The former proceed from a lively imagination, and are often much promoted by the bodily constitution: Whereas the latter is the effect of a divine light gradually springing up in the understanding; it is a habit rooted in the very nature of the soul. The former, being quite sensible, and meeting with no opposition from depraved nature or the agency of satan, always fills a person with self-conceit; the latter, on the contrary, is often for a time hardly otherwise discernible than by the humbling sense with which it is attended, of remaining darkness and enmity against God.

It is a striking instance of the self-conceit of some enthusiast, that they account their own words and compositions equal or even preferable to those of the Holy Spirit speaking in the scriptures.

There are various degrees of religious enthusiasm. It behoves us to be alarmed at the very first approaches of it. We are so far entangled in it as we let our senses, our imaginations or our affections take the lead in matters of religion, instead of the sober exercise of our judgment; and so far as we adhere to any principle or practice, rather because it is agreeable to our feelings, than because it is agreeable to the word of God.

We conclude this paper with an account which an old author gives of two sorts of enthusiasts.

Those of the one sort, says he, call themselves *Dei patientes*, God's patients, because they are the passive subjects of his operations. Whatever they do, they are never chargeable, in their own apprehension, with any sin; for, say they, God does in us and by us what he pleases. They make no effort to regulate their thoughts or affections by the divine command; ascribing them all to the Holy Spirit. They are far from duly considering that the blessed Spirit never works in any man what is vain or unprofitable to the soul, or what is contrary to the example of Christ and the holy scriptures. Those of the other sort, again, are remarkable for their pretended spiritual elevations, for their great swelling words of vanity. The ordinary exercises of christians are low and mean things in their account. They boast of mystical transubstantiation, of self-annihilation, of spiritual inebriation, super-essential union and identification with God; of the death of the senses, and all the affections, of a meridian holocaust in medullary penetrability. Mr. Rutherford speaks of some in his time who represented themselves as all Christed, fully and purely spiritualized saints, that lived not upon ordinances. They speak nonsense, says he, that others more heavenly than themselves may go for carnal, legal, literal men, not having the Spirit, nor able to understand or judge of the things of the Spirit; whereas they are the only spiritual men who judge all things. In the mean time, they know not what they say, and speak contrary to scripture and to common sense.

P. S. It may not be amiss to subjoin to this Essay, some observations on what has been much celebrated by some of the Presbyterian denomination as a revival of religion.

In the first place, we observe, that this revival, if not begun, was much promoted by the ministrations of Mr. George Whitefield, a professed member and minister of the superstitious church of England. "It would be presumptuous," as a candid and judicious writer observes, "to determine what were Mr. Whitefield's prevailing motives to it in  
"erant preaching. Charity, which thinketh no evil, will  
"suppo"

“ suppose them to have been laudable. But it is fresh in  
 “ the memory of many yet alive, how much his artillery  
 “ was directed against all tests of orthodoxy ; with what  
 “ warmth he recommended and how highly he extolled a  
 “ motely communion of all who appeared to be good men.  
 “ To stand upon any divine, fixed system of government  
 “ and discipline, or stated mode of worship in the church,  
 “ or even upon some very important articles of christian  
 “ doctrine, he arraigned as bigotry, uncharitableness and  
 “ folly.” Hence it is manifest, that the advancement of  
 God’s work, so far as it lies in observing and keeping pure  
 that form of church government and of religious worship  
 which God hath appointed in his word, in opposition to In-  
 dependent disorder, Prelatical ambition and other corrup-  
 tions, was by no means the professed design of Mr. White-  
 field’s administrations.

We observe in the next place, that several circumstances,  
 favouring of enthusiasm, attended the revival in his time,  
 even among those of the presbyterian denomination in this  
 country. Then, as we are informed by an examination of  
 Mr. Tennent’s remarks upon the reasons given by the synod  
 of New-York and Philadelphia, for not admitting the bre-  
 thren of the Brunswick party to sit and vote in synod,  
 ministers, who adhered to that revival, intruded into other  
 men’s labours. People deserted their proper pastors and  
 assemblies, to ramble up and down after disorderly intruders.  
 A new-fangled stir was kept up of society-meetings, to make  
 vaunting boasts of men’s experiences of grace, comforts and  
 visions. Some pretended to form positive judgments of  
 men’s inward experiences and secret states : And, in order  
 to found such positive judgments, men and women were  
 importuned to declare without reserve whatever was in  
 their hearts. On sabbaths, men’s profiting by public ser-  
 mons was manifestly hindered by the disorderly singing of  
 hymns and the loud reading of several persons at once, in  
 the intervals of public worship. Roaring, trembling, hide-  
 ous cries among the people were encouraged by the fantas-  
 tical motions and roaring of some ministers. Men were  
 prompted to rest on fits and outcries for conversion work.  
 The usual note of some preachers, when many of their hear-  
 ers cried and fell into fits, was, *Will any more of you come to  
 Christ?*

*Christ*? calling upon others to come and see the evidences of God's work, insinuating, that these shocks were undeniable evidences of it. At the same time, the persons, who cried and who had such fits, were told, that the threatenings denounced were not levelled at them, but at those hard-hearted pharisees who were void of such appearances. The ministers of the Brunswick party, who were zealous for the revival, denied that synods should go any farther in judging of references and appeals, than to give their best advice; and taught, that natural men have no call of God to the ministerial work under the gospel dispensation; confounding the call to the ministry with the qualifications for it. Mr. Tennent's Remarks upon the Protestation Examined, pages 61, 85, 91, 92, 93, 98.

In the third place, we observe, that since Mr. Whitefield's time, there have been, among those of the Presbyterian denomination, revivals distinguished sometimes by more and sometimes by fewer of the particulars mentioned in the above quotation. The revival of the power of godliness is, no doubt, what we greatly need, and what all the people of God ardently desire. But when any appearance in the visible church is called a revival, it behoves us to examine, whether it bears the scripture-marks of a real revival, or not. *Beloved*, says the apostle John, *believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.* The scripture gives us ground to expect such marks of a real revival, as the following:

1. A prevailing concern among professors to have the manner of divine worship exactly conformable to the scriptures. Hence a revival which is promoted by setting aside the psalms given by divine inspiration, as unfit to be sung in New Testament worship, and by substituting in their place hymns of human composition, is to be suspected. So is that which encourages church-members to allow themselves in the practice of hearing preachers whose instruction is well known to be such as causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

2. The pure preaching of gospel-truth without disguise, without any parade of human wisdom. What a simple declaration of the truth was Peter's sermon, at which 3000 were

were converted? *My speech*, says Paul, *and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom; but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.* Hence the artful addresses of public speakers to the imaginations and passions rather than to the judgment of the hearers; or such mean artifices as that of telling the hearers, that they will give them so many minutes to consider whether they will come to Christ or not; or that of shewing them a paper, and intimating, that such as are willing to receive Christ must come immediately and subscribe that paper. Such means render any revival that is said to be promoted by them, very suspicious.

3. A disposition among church members to inquire into the corruptions with which they are chargeable, either as individuals or as a church; to acknowledge them and turn from them. Such was the exercise of the Jews in those revivals which took place in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Such was the exercise of our forefathers, during that remarkable revival in Britain, about the middle of the last century. Hence, a revival in which the public evils of the church are overlooked, palliated or justified, whatever uncommon appearances are boasted of as proofs of heaven's countenance, wants a principal feature of a scriptural revival.

4. A concern to hold fast whatever knowledge and profession of divine truth has been already attained by the church of God; and to be delivered from all contrary errors and corruptions. Thus, at the beginning of the New Testament dispensation, the apostles and other ministers of Christ condemned, not only the errors of the Jews and heathens, but those that sprung up among themselves. Thus, the Synod of Jerusalem judicially condemned the errors of the Judaizing teachers. Hence, the reality of a revival is so far to be suspected, as it proceeds upon a scheme which holds many truths of God denied by such and such good men, by Independents, Episcopalians and others, as of little or no consequence, unworthy to be contended for.

5. Scriptural views of the saving work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, as a secret and mysterious work, which is gradually manifested in progressive sanctification. It is true, the Lord may grant a person sensible assurance of his gracious

ous state at any time after he has once been brought to believe in Christ; but he usually exercises the faith and patience of his people before they obtain it. The ordinary course is, first, the blade; then, the ear; and at length the full corn in the ear. Hence, a revival is much to be suspected, which makes sudden and uncommon shocks and impressions on the bodies and minds of men in attending on the preaching of the word, pass for signs of conversion; and where the promoters of the work, teach, "that it would be as absurd to say, that a man might pass out of a state of nature into a state of grace without knowing it, as it would be to say that a man may come out of a dark dungeon into the light of the sun, without perceiving the change."

6. A real regard to all the beautiful order of the house of God, as bearing the stamp of his appointment. Hence, the disorders of persons crying aloud in assemblies for public worship; and of private church-members, of their own accord, stepping out of their sphere, and, without waiting for any regular or scriptural call, presuming to act as public teachers, are by no means to be ascribed to a real revival of the christian religion.

## Of Humiliation-days before, and Thanksgiving-days after, the Administration of the Lord's Supper.

Since our Lord hath not precisely determined the time of communicating; but by the expression *as often*, hath only recommended the frequent practice of it in general; it seems requisite, especially amidst a great prevalence of corruption, that a medium should be observed; lest, by too great a frequency, this sacred provision should be disesteemed, or the table of the Lord slighted and neglected. *Witsius's Oeconomy of the Covenants.*

AS the question, whether the practice which has obtained in our churches, of employing one day in humiliation before the communion, and another in thanksgiving after it, be warrantable or not, is now agitated among ministers and people, and discourfes on the negative side solicit the public attention,\* it seems not improper to lay the following observations before the reader :

### 1. The

\* A publication lately appeared, entitled, *Letters on Frequent Communion*, addressed particularly to the members of the Associate Reformed Church, in North America. The anonymous author, in his preface, takes notice of an Act of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, against Occasional Communion, accompanied, among other things, with "A Survey of the Presbyterian Churches in America." He observes, that, in this pamphlet, it is marked as one of the corruptions tolerated by the Associate Reformed Synod, that the Lord's supper is dispensed "by synodical indulgence," without a previous fast, and a subsequent thanksgiving day. On this account, he charges the author of that Survey with defamation and slander. This charge is certainly a very heavy one. The author of the Letters thus condemns the passage of the Survey to which he refers, either because it is *not* matter of fact, that the Associate Reformed Synod, having had the discontinuation of preaching on those days under consideration, gave their members indulgence on that head; or, because the author of that Survey represents the formal giving of that indulgence, in the present state of the church, as a corruption. If the author of the Letters meant the former, he might easily have proved from the minutes of the Associate Reformed Synod, that there never was any such thing. If he meant the latter, a candid reader

will

1. The Lord's supper is justly considered as peculiarly solemn. All the ordinances of God are holy, as they have a holy

will hardly allow that, because the author of the Survey has declared it to be his judgment, that the Associate Reformed Synod's giving such indulgence is a corruption; therefore, he is a defamer and slanderer of that body. If the author of the Letters shall prove the justness of this inference; or that every one in the present state of the visible church is a defamer and slanderer who represents the principles and practices of other religious denominations as corruptions—he will make terrible havoc: Hardly any will escape; and least of all those that are honest in any profession they make of religion. With regard to our declining to countenance the public administrations under the banner of the constitution of the Associate Reformed Synod, it will be a reason of sufficient weight, with those that are duly concerned to be established in the present truth, and to hold fast whatever the church of Christ has attained; that that Synod, in adopting their constitution and abiding by it, are chargeable with turning back from a more explicit and particular acknowledgment of the truth, which was formerly made by Seceders in this country, (while they professed adherence to the Judicial Testimony, the Act concerning the Doctrine of Grace, and the Declaration of principles concerning Civil Government, of the Associate Presbytery in Scotland) unto the far more general profession made in the Constitution now mentioned. This is a matter of fact, with regard to which any one may soon be satisfied, by looking over the papers now referred to, or, which is in substance the same, the Declaration and Testimony for the doctrine and order of the church of Christ, published by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. There is not one article of that Testimony, which, before the late union, was not expressly owned by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania as a part of their holy profession. And, therefore, let the members of the Associate Reformed Synod wrangle ever so long, and let them call their neighbours defamers and slanderers, and ever so many other ill names, and with ever so much affected solemnity, it will still remain a very plain truth, about which many of the weakest of Christ's flock are at no loss, that an adherence to the late Union, and present profession of the Associate Reformed Synod, is indeed a departure from a more particular to a more general confession of Christ's truth; an evil of great magnitude, with those who esteem the least of his truths as of more value than the whole world; and who are convinced, that, by declining an explicit and particular confession of any of them, we are in danger of incurring the guilt of those who are ashamed of Christ's words in the midst, of an evil and adulterous generation, Mark viii. 38.

a holy God for their Author, are to be observed in a holy manner, and are appointed means of promoting holiness. Yet an ordinance may be said to be more solemn in respect of the more sensible manifestation which God makes therein of his glory; in respect of the peculiarly awful warning which he gives against a rash and inconsiderate manner of intermeddling with it; in respect of the variety of holy exercises which concur in the right observation of it; and, lastly, in respect of the more full and public representation of the communion which the people of God have with his whole church. That the Lord's supper has a greater solemnity in these respects, than some other ordinances, seems to have been hitherto the sense of the whole New Testament church. This is expressed by the judicious Mr. Durham, in the first of his communion sermons; where, speaking of the words of institution, he says: "Every  
" circumstance speaks out a solemnity in this ordinance;  
" as the night in which it was instituted; the same night  
" in which he was betrayed; and his jealousy of and  
" threatening for the abuse of this ordinance. The Lord's  
" supper seems dignified with an eminence above all other  
" gospel ordinances: 1<sup>st</sup>, In reference to what it exhibits.  
" They all set forth love, but this sets forth love in an em-  
" inent degree; for it sets forth the Lord's death; where-  
" in the most eminent degree of his love shines. It  
" sets forth the great master-piece of his love, his  
" actual dying. 2<sup>dly</sup>, In respect of the excellent benefits  
" communicated

With regard to the observations here offered to the public, it may be proper to observe, that the writer does not mean, that they should be considered as a formal examination of the Letters on Frequent Communion. What he aimed at was only to state the principles which he judged necessary to be held on this subject; such reasons being added as to him appear satisfying. Since these observations were written, I have seen four Letters addressed to the rev. John Mason, M. A. of New-York, in answer to his Letters on Frequent Communion, by the rev. John Thomson, residing in Glasgow; an author who formerly wrote an excellent Defence of the Principles of the Associate Presbytery in Scotland, concerning civil government. It is a peculiar satisfaction to see this veteran maintaining the principles of the Reformation with so much firmness and strength of argument, under the infirmities of old age.

“ communicated in it. It is true, there is no other thing,  
 “ on the matter, communicated in it, than in the word  
 “ and baptism; yet if ye look to the words, Take, eat,  
 “ this is my body; they hold forth Christ Jesus not so  
 “ much giving any particular gift, as actually conferring  
 “ himself in his death and suffering. 3dly, In respect of  
 “ the manner in which our Lord Jesus makes over himself:  
 “ For there is herein not only a most clear view of the slain  
 “ Saviour, and of covenanting with God; but also a clear  
 “ glance of heaven upon earth, Jesus Christ and his people  
 “ mixing (so to speak) and being familiar together; he con-  
 “ descending not only to keep company with them, but to  
 “ be their food and refreshment, and giving not only the  
 “ word to their faith, but himself (as it were) to their  
 “ sense! In so far as the mean, whereby he communicates  
 “ himself, is more sensible; it is by his Spirit that the mean is  
 “ made effectual. There is not only a fixedness of faith on our  
 “ part; but a sort of divineness in the ordinance itself, as it  
 “ were, to the very senses of the believer. I say unto you,  
 “ says our Lord, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of  
 “ the vine, until the day when I shall drink it new with you  
 “ in my Father’s kingdom: Where he seems to point out,  
 “ that in this ordinance, he has a more special way of keeping  
 “ communion with his people, bearing a resemblance to that  
 “ which he will have with them in heaven.” That there is  
 a peculiar solemnity in the partaking of the Lord’s supper,  
 appears from the concurrence of duties requisite to the  
 right performance of it. “ If it be a great and difficult  
 “ work,” adds the same eminent divine, “ to carry rightly  
 “ on an ordinary sabbath, or in prayer, or in meditation,  
 “ how difficult must communicating be, in which we ought  
 “ to have all these joined together.” If all religious duties  
 were equally solemn, then they would all alike require pre-  
 paration. An ejaculatory prayer, for example, would re-  
 quire another duty to prepare for it; and that duty would  
 require another, and so on without end. The Old Testa-  
 ment church had more solemn days, such as that on which  
 the children of Israel stood before the Lord in Horeb. And  
 there were to be such days under the New Testament dis-  
 pensation also. Hence, in the vision, which we have in  
 the latter part of the prophecy of Ezekiel, and which ju-  
 dicious

dicious interpreters allow to be an emblematical representation of the New Testament church, we have an account of the observation of such solemnities as the passover, and the feast of tabernacles, Ezek. xlv. 21, 25. And surely, sacramental occasions may be said to be such times. A person that duly considers these things, will not be easily persuaded, that there ought to be no more solemnity in the breaking of the sacramental bread, than in asking a blessing at our ordinary meals.\*

2. As

\* It is with regard to the greater solemnity of public ordinances, that it is said in Psal. lxxxvii. 2. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. "I would ask you, Sir," says Mr. Thomson in his Letters to Mr. Mason, "whether God requires us to observe the sabbath in a more holy manner than the six days of the week? And if so, whether it is a native consequence, that he allows us to be less holy in these days than in the sabbath. Is God more holy on the sabbath than on other days? Is an irreverent mind or a polluted heart less offensive to him on these than on this? You introduce Lev. x. 3. *I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me.* I suppose, sir, this is said in allusion to Nadab and Abihu, who offered strange fire, when employed in a distinguished act of divine worship. And I think, sir, that this divine declaration would be much better applied, as an awful warning to communicants to guard them against rash approaches to God in that solemn ordinance. One remarkable thing, sir, you seem to take no notice of, viz. the divine denunciation doubled and appended to this sacred institution, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. Do you really think, sir, that these awful denunciations do not constitute any difference between this and other divine ordinances? When the Israelites at Mount Sinai heard the thunders, &c. did they not fear and tremble? And shall the christian outface those dreadful thunders, without trembling? We are called upon to prepare to meet our God; Amos iv. 12. and shall our preparation for this distinguishing ordinance be charged with superstition and will-worship? You will find, sir, four days which may be called preparatory to the killing of the paschal lamb. Do you think that these days were not analogous to something of a like nature with respect to our New Testament passover? Or had the Jewish passover more need of preparatory days and exercises than the New Testament passover? Certainly, sir, these preparatory days, necessarily called for religious exercises not common to other days. Again, sir, the passover was to be eaten with bitter herbs. Do you think, sir, it is unnatural or  
C c 2
" foreign

2. As the duty of preparing for this solemn ordinance is very weighty, before we adventure to the communion-table we ought to set apart some time for that purpose. For, says the apostle, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat.* Under the Old Testament dispensation, it was required of church-members, that they should be prepared for the observation of the passover according to the purification of the sanctuary. The want of this, even in such as had been exercised in preparing their hearts to seek the Lord God of their fathers, exposed them to smiting; as appears from Hezekiah's prayer, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20. In like manner, there is an exercise of solemn prayer, meditation and self-examination, necessary before communicating; the neglect of which even in real christians, may cause very heavy corrections. They appear to have been gracious persons of whom the apostle speaks in 1 Corinth. xi. 30. It is not meant that by our preparation we procure any right or ground of claim to that communion with God which is tendered to us in this ordinance: No, the whole ground of our claim to what is set before us in the communion table, lies in the mercy of God venting to poor sinners through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. But such preparatory exercise is necessary, as being divinely commanded. God says to persons intending to communicate, as Jacob said to his household, Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. *Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean: Arise, go up to Bethel.* It is also necessary as a mean of promoting the sense of their sinfulness and misery, of their infinite need of Christ, and of the danger they are in from the legal bias of their hearts. The exercises we speak of, rightly managed, are far from cherishing a legal spirit. On the contrary, it is owing to the indolence of professors, in neglecting these exercises, that they are so much over-run with spiritual pride and a conceit of their own righteousness. In them is verified that word of Solomon, in Prov. xxvi. 16. *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.*

Such

“ foreign to the subject to say, that these preparatory days were  
 “ partly designed for gathering the bitter herbs; and that their  
 “ eating the passover with them was significant of that painful  
 “ contrition which believers experience when they look upon  
 “ Christ in the gospel passover?”

Such preparation for the Lord's supper being necessary, a competent portion of time for it must also be necessary. Some time must be allowed for the performance of every duty. "Such a time," as Dr. Owen observes,\* "should be chosen for these preparatory exercises, so near our partaking of the ordinance, as may give probable ground that they will influence the mind in the act of partaking. Nor should the time allotted for preparation be so short as to be unmeet for going through the duty effectually. Men may be ready to turn their private prayers into a few ejaculations. And a thought in going in or out of a room may be deemed preparation for the most solemn ordinance. This," adds the doctor, "hath lost us the power, the glory, the beauty of our profession. Nor is the return of these to be expected, till persons study to be exact in their preparation for the duties of their profession; till it come to be the case with them, that their souls must have real and suitable converse with God, as to the solemn work before them."

This reminds one of the following passage in a late publication: "In what does preparation for the table of the Lord consist? In a multitude of outward performances, in devoting a great part of the preceding week to various exercises of public worship. Alas! all this may be done, and the heart remain as unprepared as ever. The religionist, who, besides giving tithes of all that he possessed, fasted twice in the week, was not thereby fitted for communion with his Maker. One hour, one minute of genuine humiliation before God; one tear of gracious contrition for sin, one groan unutterable of the Spirit of adoption, is of more value in his sight than the most splendid round of formalities."

All this declamation may be answered by asking, whether one minute of genuine humiliation, one tear of gracious contrition for sin, one groan of the Spirit of adoption, be not of more value than the prayers, the reading and hearing of the word, and all the duties of a mere formalist? Is not this reasoning, then, as much against all these duties, as against the preparatory exercises in question? Nay, is it not against frequent communicating itself? For were the formalist

\* In his *Sacramental Discourses*. Dis. v.

formalist to communicate every sabbath, still one groan of the Spirit of adoption would be of unspeakably more value than all his communicating. Farther, we may ask, whether it be the manner of the Lord's people, or the character of those who have gracious contrition for sin, and the Spirit making intercession for them with groanings unutterable, to hurry over their preparatory exercises in one hour or a few minutes, or in one minute? Have we not heard of the saints wrestling whole nights with God in prayer, for his presence with them in some particular duty or trial they had before them? Once more, we would ask, whether they are most likely to attain gracious contrition for sin, that look upon the work of searching and trying their ways as a most weighty exercise, in which a considerable portion of time should be employed, or those who reckon it a very easy matter which they can accomplish in an hour, or even in a few minutes?

3. The exercise of fasting or humiliation for sin, is a suitable exercise for church-members in general, before the participation of the Lord's supper. It is a rash assertion, that we ought to have no public fast, but when something in our external circumstances is out of the ordinary course of providence: For surely the example of Ezra, chap. ix. 5. and of Cornelius, Acts x. 30. and the directions in James iv. 9. *Be afflicted and mourn and weep: Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.* Matth. xvii. 21. *Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting,* are sufficient to warrant any person or people to use the ordinance of fasting, for their relief, when they are under convictions of sin, or when they are called to some duty, in which they dare not venture forward, without special direction and support; though there should be nothing uncommon in the outward dispensations of providence. Such dispensations are, no doubt, occasions of fasting; but we have ground to deny that they are the only occasions of it. The very commonness of a sin calls for this exercise. When we term fasting an extraordinary duty, we do not mean, that it is ever the case with the church militant, that there is little or no occasion for it. The best men, and the best churches, in the best times, have abounded much in it. Paul was often in fastings. When the general conversion of the  
Jews

Jews, which we expect in the latter days, shall take place, they will be much engaged in this exercise, Zech. xii. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. But the reason why we sometimes call it an extraordinary duty is, that it is not to be performed daily or at set times recurring, but occasionally, as the case of our souls, or of the church, and the dispensations of providence may require. While fasting is itself a duty, it is a mean of removing our indisposition or unfitness for other duties to which we may be called. Hence, it may, on this account, be connected with other duties, especially with one which is more solemn, and the management of which is peculiarly difficult. The scriptural notion of fasting is not merely abstinence from food, (which persons are to use in such a degree as they can bear without being discomposed) but is, upon the matter, that solemn exercise of self-examination and self-judging, which the apostle enjoins as previously necessary to communicating. It is the exercise of searching and trying our ways and turning to the Lord. Mr. Boston, in his Memorial for personal and family Fasting, has pointed out, with abundance of scriptural evidence, twelve cases which call for this exercise. And, though he is there speaking of personal fasting; yet it is evident, from the proofs and examples he employs in his illustrations, that they are applicable to social or congregational fasting. The cases he states, are those of a person or people, 1. Being in disorder and confusion through a long tract of sinning or careless walking: 2. Under convictions, and proposing to reform, Neh. ix. 12. 3. Falling into some atrocious sin, Matth. xxvi. 75. 4. Essayng, through grace, to get over a snare in which they have been and still are much entangled, Matth. xvii. 21. 5. Under spiritual deadness, while the Lord has withdrawn himself; Sam. vii. 2, 6. 6. Under a sense of his withdrawing, Matth. ix. 15. 7. Under the pressure of some outward affliction, Job i. 20. 8. Threatened with some affliction, Psal. cxix. 120. 9. Desiring light and direction about some matter of special weight, Ezra viii. 21. 10. Setting about the performance of any duty, and seeking the presence of God with them in it, Esther iv. 8, 16. 11. In manifest hazard of being ensnared into sin, or some great calamity, Esther iv. 11, 16. 12. Having in view some special approach unto God,  
Gen.

Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. Several of these, particularly the 9th, 10th, and 12th, will be found to be the cases of christians in general before communicating. On the 12th Mr. Boston has the following words: "It is observable, that, whereas the feast of tabernacles was the most joyful of all the feasts which the Jews had throughout the year, a solemn fast was appointed of God to be observed always before it, four free days only intervening, Lev. xxiii. 27, 34. For, in the method of grace, none stand so fair for a lifting up, as those who are most deeply humbled, Isa. xl. 4. Luke xviii. 14. James iv. 10. Wherefore it is a laudable practice of our church, that congregations keep a congregational fast before the feast of the sacrament of the Lord's supper among them, in order to their preparation for a solemn approach unto God in that holy ordinance. And for the same reason, secret fasting by particular persons apart, and private fasting by families apart, especially such as have not access to join in the public fast, would be very seasonable on such an occasion." The due consideration of these things, leaves us no room to doubt of the propriety of setting apart some time for humiliation before our partaking of the Lord's supper.\*

## OBJECTION.

\* "I hope," says Mr. Thompson in one of his Letters, "you will acknowledge that the Jews were as much restricted to divine institutions as we are. I need not tell you, Sir, that, in the divine institution of the passover, seven days only were appointed or set apart to accompany it, besides the four preparatory days, which I already took notice of. Yet in that remarkable passover observed by godly Hezekiah and his kingdom, you will find in 2 Chron. xxx. 33. that the whole assembly took council to keep other seven days; and they kept other seven days with gladness. Now, Sir, do you think that this was a perversion of the divine institution of the passover, or an incroachment on its simplicity and purity; or that it met with a repulse from that God, who hath said, that "obedience is better than sacrifice." Though the righteous and holy sovereign did not, yet, by your treatment of us, you would have confounded them with the silencing question, *Who hath required this at your hand?*—You insist, at great length, Sir, against our fasts; as being inconsistent with the nature of that duty. As you justly say, fasts are only occasiona'; your whole  
" reasoning

OBJECTION. Why is not a congregational fast kept before baptism as well as the Lord's supper?

ANSWER. The cases are not parallel, unless when a whole congregation, as such, receives baptism, as it receives the Lord's supper. Personal receiving requires personal preparation; congregational receiving requires not only personal, but also congregational preparation.\* Besides, it is far from

“ reasoning upon this point is founded upon a material error, viz. that communicating is a stated duty; which you always take for granted, but never have proved. Give up with this error, Sir; allow communicating to be what our Saviour has indeed left it, viz. an occasional duty; and then, Sir, fasting will be an exercise, occasionally suited to that occasional duty. Whenever you prove your stated or periodical times of communicating, sanctioned by the authority of our Lord or his apostles, in the sacred oracles, your reasoning on this matter will have some consistency; but till this is done, your vain shew of reasoning is like water spilt upon the ground. — I have shewn, Sir, that as solemn humiliation, and its concomitant exercises, are, in themselves, duties of divine appointment; so they are suited to prepare and assist the Lord's people in the solemn work of communicating. You even reprobate the extent of preaching the gospel, upon these solemn occasions; yet you admit of a justification of your Friday evening sermon before the communion, as preparative, I suppose, for that solemn ordinance. This justification, Sir, will equally apply, according to the old maxim, *Majus et minus non variant speciem*. It is as really criminal, sir, by the divine law, to steal a horn spoon, as to steal a horned cow.”

“ I cannot help being surprised, sir, at your making a man of straw, and having dressed it up, you inscribe it *either sin or duty*; and upon this creature of your own fancy, you exhaust your whole quiver of shadows. The apostle comprehends the whole dispute in these few words, 1 Cor. vi. 12. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient, &c.* You certainly know, sir, that very many moral duties have their dependence upon a vast variety of circumstances; so that what in one case would be an important duty, would, in another case, be a criminal violation of duty. Of this we have a striking example, Exod. xiv. 15. And the Lord said unto Moses, “ Wherefore criest thou unto me?” &c.

\* The author of the Letters on Frequent Communion, page 10, admits this difference “ In holy baptism,” says he, “ our profession is separate and public, but not social.”

from being unworthy of notice, that there are no such express directions about preparation for circumcision or baptism, as about the passover and the Lord's supper.

4. Humiliation-days before the communion, and thanksgiving days after it, are not liable to the charge of superstition, as the holy days observed by Papists and Episcopalians. We object to the observation of these days on three accounts: 1. Because they are called feasts. Our Lord Jesus hath appointed no other ordinance bearing the external form of a feast, than the sacrament of the supper. 2. Because, in the opinion of the Papists and Episcopalians, on these holy days, the time regulates the duty, as in the sabbath, both being observed, according to their periodical recurrence, as holy times. But, with regard to the days employed in religious worship before and after sacramental occasions, the duty regulates the time. The duties of humiliation and thanksgiving are necessary, and therefore some time must be allotted for them. 3. These holy days are held by the Papists and Episcopalians to be commemorative signs of persons or things, as formally as the passover and the feast of tabernacles were under the Old Testament. But we admit of no such commemorative signs among the ordinances of God's worship under the New Testament, excepting the two sacraments. A person may not be charged with the superstitious observation of days, because he is found actually engaged in the same religious exercise on the same day of the week, in the same season of the year, for ever so long a period, were he to live and continue in the same course as long as the age of Methuselah; while he manifestly regards nothing but the opportunity that providence affords him for such an exercise, the suitability of it to his case, and its consistency and connexion with other duties; nor is he at all chargeable with formality, merely on account of that frequent recurrence.

The truth is, the days fixed for humiliation and thanksgiving on sacramental occasions are justly considered as belonging to the circumstances of time and place, which, as we observed in treating on superstition, are common to religious worship with secular business, and which must be determined by the general rule of doing all things decently and in order; just as we determine the time of beginning and  
ending

ending public worship on the Lord's day; the delivery of what we call a lecture in the forenoon, and what we call a sermon in the afternoon; our order of praying and then singing at the conclusion of public worship; and other similar circumstances.

5. Though it is by no means a principle with us, that our having so many days of public preaching is so indispensably necessary, that, in no case or state of the church, the Lord's supper could be duly administered without them; yet we cannot see cause, as yet, to countenance the proposal of laying them aside. We may conceive a time when the power of godliness will be such, that professors will not need to be put upon preparation or thanksgiving exercises, by being called so often to public worship before and after the sacrament of the supper; and when they will, of their own accord, employ much more time in these exercises, on such a solemn occasion, than they do at present by our days of public worship. But who will say, that this is the case at present? Many are forward enough to seek tokens of admission, who make no secret of their backwardness to spare the time necessary for suitable preparation from the hurry of their worldly business. And yet when people make no conscience of suitable preparation, communicating will not only be unprofitable, but bring on fearful plagues. While matters are in such a state, the proposal of laying aside these exercises which have a manifest tendency to impress the minds of gospel hearers with a sense of the solemnity of the ordinance and of the necessity of a conscientious diligence in preparing for it, appears to be quite unseasonable; and unlike that concern that should fill the hearts of faithful ministers to guard poor souls against the tremendous hazard of unworthy communicating. The writer of this has not now leisure for enquiring into the manner in which humiliation-days before communions were introduced; neither does he reckon it necessary; since what is contended for, is not the observation of the days, but the observation of the exercises that ought to attend our communicating. It is not supposable, that there have been any honest ministers, since the days of the apostle Paul, who did not represent the Lord's supper to their people as a peculiarly solemn ordinance, and warn them of the danger of coming forward to

it without essaying through grace the exercises that belong to suitable preparation.\*

There is no ground, however, to reproach us with the absurdity of making people's attendance on public worship, so many days of the week before the celebration of the Lord's supper, essential to the right participation of it. It is hardly ever celebrated amongst us but there are some admitted, who have not had an opportunity of attending at public worship on the fast day or the Saturday: Though when there is a sufficient call for the exercise of humiliation in a congregation, it must be offensive in members to absent themselves from public worship, who have no other hindrance than the ordinary course of their worldly business; because they are bound by their church state, and by express declarations of the word, to assemble themselves for such exercises, Zephan. ii. 1, 2, 3.

6. It

\* With regard to the passages of the Protestant Confessions, quoted by Mr. Mason, against the abuses and accursed inventions which men have added to the sacraments; Mr. Thomson says in one of his letters: "Do you really think, Sir, that these eminent reformers did intend, or would apply such thundering condemnations, against the precious exercise of spiritual fasting, or humiliation and mourning, as a preparative for the precious and important duty of communicating in the Lord's supper? Do you not blush, Sir, at your impeaching and slandering them with such sentiments? This you appear to be conscious of; for after all your quotations from the several periods of the reformed church of Scotland; and after you have asserted that our numerous services about the holy supper are diametrically opposed to the current of public sentiment in that church, and to her solemn repeated enactments from the commencement of the reformation down to the establishment of the Westminster Confession of Faith:" You add, "It is very true, that these acts are levelled immediately against corruptions which had taken place in the manner of distributing and receiving the sacramental elements.

"Here it appears, Sir, that you have applied their sentiments contrary to their own design and intention.

"By a rule of your own making, you conclude, that our days of humiliation, &c. connected with communicating, are superstitious additions to, and corruptions of the divine ordinances; and, in this view, you pervert the sentiments of these eminent reformers against those who are indeed of the same principles with themselves."

6. It is not determined in scripture how often in the year or in the month, the Lord's supper is to be administered. We allow the phrase, *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup*, imports that this ordinance is often to be administered, but not that it should be administered, in all states of the church, either every Lord's day, or even every month.\* Surely the interpretation which some put upon this phrase, cannot be proved to be necessary from the acceptance of it in scripture. In Heb. ix. 25. the word *often* is used with respect to the high priest's entering into the holy place every year. When Paul says that he was *in debts often*, one may doubt whether he was so every week, or even every month. It is absurd to make the administration of the Lord's supper, a necessary part of public

\* "Our Saviour's expression," says Mr. Thomson, "*as often*, though repeated, is quite indeterminate as to frequency; and certainly you assume too much in determining to the most extravagant extent, what the supreme Lord and Lawgiver has not determined. Frequency, then, is but a deduction; yet you arrogantly and repeatedly call it the positive command of our dying Saviour: And from this deduction you form another, of fifty-two, or three hundred and sixty-five communions in the course of a year. The sacrament of the supper, Sir, is a divinely instituted feast; yea, the only instituted feast under the gospel. This character is diametrically opposite to that frequency, which you would impose upon us, as the positive command of our dying Saviour. A feast, Sir, is a character which distinguishes the day wherein it is made from other or common days; and distinguishes the entertainment from common meals. To extend the frequency of a feast to the extent of our common meals, is contrary to its nature and destructive of its specific idea. One of its distinguishing characters, is, that it is a feast for friends. And shall there be no more solemnity in, or preparation for such a feast, than for a common meal.

"Your plan in this matter, Sir, is most unsuitable to the condition of the saints of God in this imperfect state; wherein they are constantly engaged in a spiritual war within, and exposed to temptation without;—wherein they are immersed in the toils and cares of human life, and have their minds often embarrassed and disturbed from spiritual things. One would be almost tempted to think, Sir, that you were burlesquing the distressed state of the people of God, in your not only making light of their preparations for this solemn ordinance, but even ridiculing them."

lic worship every Lord's day. This would make the Lord's day a feast, like the fourteenth day of the first month, and other feast days under the Old Testament. Our divines, in writing against the Popish holy days, have pointed out several differences between the sabbath and such feasts: Such as,

1. That it was unwarrantable to fast on a feast day. Hence the charge of Nehemiah to the people in chap. viii. 10. *This day is holy unto our Lord; neither be ye sorry.* Whereas it was lawful to fast on the sabbath.
2. That the sabbath is prescribed in the decalogue as belonging to the moral law: But the prescription of the feasts belonged to the ceremonial law. Hence, while the sabbath was to be observed at home and abroad, by the ceremonially unclean as well as others; the feasts were to be celebrated no where but at Jerusalem, (the place which the Lord had chosen to put his name there) and only by such as were ceremonially clean.
3. That the feasts were appointed to commemorate some peculiar benefit, or as a shadow of some particular mystery; whereas the sabbath was appointed for the worship of God in general, without any such restriction. Nor is the Christian sabbath, says the truly learned Dido clavus, properly a feast; for it is no less lawful to fast on it, than on the Jewish sabbath. It was often practised in the church of Scotland. The opinion of the unlawfulness of fasting on the Lord's day had the same origin, with that of the unlawfulness of kneeling on that day. Farther, to make the celebration of the Lord's supper a necessary part of the public worship of every Lord's day, seems not agreeable to the nature of this ordinance. As the sacrament of the supper is a seal, and the word is the testament to which the seal is appended; so it supposes that persons should be carefully instructed in the word, in order to their partaking of the seal. Hence it seems absurd, that, the very first sabbath a minister comes amongst a people, he should dispense the Lord's supper to them, even before he had time to instruct them in the nature, use and end of the ordinance, or about the self-examination necessary in order to worthy communicating. This opinion seems also to tie the benefit of communicating too much to the outward act of it; either as if the outward act of itself, could benefit the soul; or as if the benefit of it were confined to the time of receiving. The benefit of baptism,

once

once received, is continued to the end of life; so the benefit of the Lord's supper does not pass away with the transient act of receiving, but is abiding and operative afterwards. With regard to the passage in Acts xx. 7. *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech unto midnight;* it has been said, that here we have apostolic example for the practice of celebrating the Lord's supper every sabbath. But it is hard to see any such thing in the natural construction of these words. I was at Philadelphia some years ago, and, on the first day of the week, when the people of a certain congregation came together to break bread, or celebrate the Lord's supper, Mr. B. preached; might I therefore infer that they celebrate that ordinance every first day of the week? If I had been at Philadelphia, as Paul was at Troas, six days before; and during all that time had observed no such public meeting for solemn religious exercises, as on that day, I might then rationally conclude, that the ordinary day of their public worship was not the Jewish sabbath, nor any other than the first day of the week; but I could not with the like certainty conclude, that no part of the religious service, which they came together to perform on that day, would be omitted on *another* first day of the week. Supposing that a stranger had been at Jerusalem six days, in the time of the Old Testament dispensation; and supposing the seventh day had happened to be both the sabbath and the solemn day of expiation; he might have justly concluded from the services of that day, that the seventh day of the week was the day of their weekly public worship; but not, that the rites of the solemn expiation were always a part of that worship. It has been said, that we have the example of the first christians communicating every Lord's day recorded in 1 Corinth. xi. 17, 18, 20. From this passage it has been argued, "That since the apostles, in speaking of the irregularities which had taken place among the Corinthians in the celebration of the Lord's supper, expresses their assembling in order to partake of that ordinance, by saying, *they came together in the church;* and therefore, whenever they came together in the church, they came together to eat the Lord's supper." Now this is just as if one should say, that, because the Lord's supper is expressed

in several places of the New Testament by the breaking of bread, therefore whenever the first christians broke bread, they partook of the Lord's supper.\* It is plain, this phrase, *coming together in the church, or in one place*, may be used with reference to hearing the word or prayer, Acts x. 27. xiii. 44. as well as with reference to the Lord's supper. But it has been said in support of the gloss just now mentioned, that "otherwise their coming together so as not to eat the Lord's supper would be no proof of their coming together for the worse." What is here alleged supposes two things to be meant by the apostle, namely, that their coming together was *always* for the worse; and that their disorder in the manner of communicating was the *only proof* of their coming together for the worse. But neither of these things appear to be meant by the apostle. Not the first; for we can hardly suppose that their coming together to attend on the ministrations of Apollos, of Timothy, and other faithful ministers, was *always* for the worse. And supposing there had been only four or five instances, among the Corinthians, of the disorders in communicating here reprov'd; and supposing that these had not been duly acknowledged and lamented, but likely to be persisted in; would there not, in that case, have been sufficient ground for all the sharp expressions which the apostle here makes use of?—Not the last; since there are other evils, such as divisions and heresies, mentioned in ver. 18, 19. which, being understood in the same sense, as in other places of the New Testament, 1 Cor. iii. 3. and Gal. v. 22. were sufficient proofs or causes of their coming together for the worse. So that excellent interpreter of scripture, Mr. Calvin, takes this passage. On ver. 17. he says, "This, in my judgment, does not respect abuses in the Lord's supper only, but other evils, such as the apostle mentions in the two following verses. Some refer the divisions and heresies mentioned in verse 18, 19. to the disorder in communicating re-

proved

\* Indeed some have put this meaning upon the breaking of bread, mentioned in Luke xxiv. 30, 35. but very absurdly; since the evangelist plainly speaks of an ordinary refreshment: nor is it probable, that these two disciples, as yet, knew any thing of the institution of the Lord's supper.

“ proved in the following verses : But I take them in a larger sense : And surely, it is not probable, that the apostle would have used such improper and unusual terms to express that disorder.”

Such a frequency of communicating, as some plead for, seems to be inconsistent with our preserving due impressions of the solemnity of this ordinance. But it has been answered, that we may as well say, that frequency in prayer, in reading the scriptures, in meditation, &c. would lessen our esteem of these duties, as that frequency of communicating would lessen our impression of its importance. But to this we reply, that there is a difference between the sacrament and other ordinances, in this respect. It belongs to the design of the sacraments, that the sensible impression of the sign should be attended to with reference to its sacramental signification. In other ordinances, impressions on the outward senses are not of any such consideration. Hence it seems reasonable to allow, that such a frequency in partaking of the Lord's supper as would make the impression of the external signs on the senses cease to be an object of attention, may be really prejudicial to the solemnity of the ordinance; whereas the same frequency in prayer or meditation, in reading or hearing the word, in which the impression on the outward senses is of no such consideration, is not prejudicial, but highly advantageous and even necessary. The question is not, as it has been grossly misrepresented, whether we may be too frequent in the remembrance of Christ crucified; in acts of faith and love, and the like? But whether such a frequency as, according to the constitution of human nature, would entirely efface the sensible impression of the outward sign, be as consistent with the nature and institution of that sign, as a frequency which would have no such tendency?

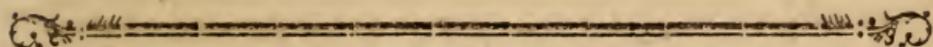
It is hoped, that the candid reader will not view the considerations now offered, as intended to discourage any attempt towards bringing about a greater frequency of the scriptural practice of communicating. With what ardour does the great author just now mentioned speak on this subject in his Institutions? The lukewarmness of church-members in this matter can never be sufficiently lamented. But, on the other hand, we are to beware of whatever tends to lessen our impression of the solemnity of this ordinance,

nance, in which, above other ordinances, (we say this without meaning to limit the sovereignty of God in the out-lettings or manifestations of the glory of his grace, which he allows his people in any ordinance, or at any time when he sees meet) the saints have still been ready to say, How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven. We are to guard against whatever tends to make professors secure in the neglect of due preparation. We are also to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. I believe that, were we suitably exercised, we would desire more frequent opportunities of communicating: but I also believe, that no church is authorized to determine positively how often in the month, or in the year, we are to communicate. With regard to the example of christians after the apostolic age, recorded in human writings; the early corruptions that seem to have obtained, especially in the administration of the sacraments, admonish us to be cautious of imitating them in any one thing in which we cannot see that they had scripture-warrant.\*

In the mean time, let church-members be careful to embrace opportunities of communicating. We cannot but warmly recommend the custom of ministers, elders, and people of different worshipping congregations joining together at the same sacramental occasion; as the opportunities of communicating are hereby rendered more frequent; the sphere of the usefulness of church-members to one another is enlarged; the communion that obtains among all the members of Christ's mystical body is more fully represented, and

\* "The disorders of the Corinthian church," says Mr. Thomson, "and of the seven churches of the lesser Asia, are recorded by divine authority in the book of Revelation, where you clearly see exceptions to their primitive love and scriptural simplicity; and as to the subsequent ages, those who are acquainted with their history, could easily point out strong objections to their primitive purity and scriptural simplicity. Even your quotations from the celebrated Chrysostom is an evidence of this. The eloquent Chrysostom complains, "In vain we stand at the altar; none care to receive." Did our blessed Lord, Sir, stand at an altar, when he instituted this ordinance, or his apostles, when they dispensed it."

and scripture prophecies concerning New Testament times are accomplished; as when it is foretold, that the inhabitants of one city, of one part of the country, should stir up those of another to spiritual exercises, Zech. viii. 21. and when the joint attendance of people of different places on gospel ordinances, is represented as their going up to worship the Lord of hosts at the feast of tabernacles, Zech. xiv. 16. But, above all, it should be our concern in communicating to have the spices flowing forth; to have the graces of the Spirit, such as, faith, love, repentance, in lively exercise.



## Of the Independent Scheme of Church Government.

It is a dictate of the law of nature, that those who are injured or oppressed by the presbyteries of particular churches, should appeal to the more general and superior judicatures of the church.

*Rutherford.*

**T**HE constitution of the church of God is to be learned from supernatural revelation. Its form of worship and government before Christ came in the flesh, was most particularly delineated in the scriptures of the Old Testament. What belonged to the ceremonial was done away when the New Testament dispensation took place. But what was of a moral nature is still retained. The practice of the apostles in those things which were not peculiar to the apostolic age; but are of a moral nature, and of perpetual use in the church, is recorded as a pattern to all succeeding ages. From the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that our Lord, during the forty days he was with them after his resurrection, gave them commands and instructions with regard to the constitution and government of the New Testament church. According to these commands, the apostles, under the immediate inspiration of

of the Holy Spirit, acted in settling the church with infallible exactness. Hence we infer, that the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, the ordination of ministers by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and other things recorded as the practice of the apostles, or of the churches under their immediate direction, were things which Christ had commanded to be observed to the end of time. Besides, what is literally expressed in the very words of scripture concerning the government of the church, whatever arises from the import of these words by necessary consequence, is also binding on the consciences of men.

INDEPENDENCY, seems to have had its rise among the Brownists and others, who, towards the beginning of the last century, separated from the church of England, as established by law. Of these Robinson, Cotton, and other refugees from Prelatical tyranny, settled in New England. What they had seen of the evil of Episcopacy, seems to have carried them into an opposite extreme. Afterwards, Independency spread so much in England, that in the year 1643, when the assembly of divines met at Westminster, a number of them appeared to be Independents. Since the period now mentioned, societies bearing that name have increased, and in our day their opinions have become, in a great measure, fashionable even among those of other denominations.

The evil of the Independent scheme will appear, when the truth in opposition to it is exhibited in some distinct propositions, and shewn to be taught in the sacred oracles.

PROPOSITION 1<sup>st</sup>. *The rulers of Christ's house have no warrant in his word to require of persons, that, in order to their admission to the communion of the visible church, they should declare their experience of the saving work of the Spirit in their souls.* It is true, several things ought to be required in order to a person's entrance into the communion of a particular church; such as, a competent knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel, especially concerning the person and offices of Christ; a profession of adherence to all his truths and ordinances; the outward practice of religious duties, public and private; and an inoffensive conduct towards men. It is also allowed, that pastors should endeavour, as particularly as they can, to know the state of their flocks, that they may

may be in a better capacity to distribute to every one his portion in due season, to awaken the secure and unconverted, to comfort the feeble-minded, and build up the effectually called in their most holy faith. But when the profession and outward practice of persons are such as have been just now represented, they ought to be admitted as members of Christ's visible kingdom, though they seem, as yet, unable to give distinct marks of their conversion. In this way the Israelites were admitted members of the visible church. In Deut. xxix. Moses declares that they entered into the covenant of the Lord their God, that they might be for a people unto him, while they were so far from being able to give an account of the work of grace in their hearts, that he says in the beginning of the chapter, *The Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, eyes to see, or ears to hear unto this day.* None will deny, that we may reason from the manner of admission under the Old Testament to the manner of it under the New, who acknowledge that the constitution of the church under both dispensations is essentially the same, the difference being in accidentals only. Let us observe who were admitted by John the Baptist: All Jerusalem and Judea and the regions round about Jordan, went out unto him, and were baptised. It is said, indeed, that they were baptised, confessing their sins. But when the papists quote this text in support of auricular confession, our divines have still maintained, that this was not a confession made by every one, of particular sins committed by himself; but rather, such as, in general, corresponded with the prescription of duty, which John gave his hearers according to their respective stations and ranks in society, as publicans, soldiers, and so forth. It seems, indeed, impossible for him to have heard the particular confessions of all the individuals in such multitudes. But whatever be said of this, we do not find that John delayed the baptism of any, till they were able to declare their experience of conversion. Nor do we find, that the apostles of Jesus Christ did so afterwards. It is said in Acts ii. 38, 46. that they baptised and added to the church 3000 in one day. These were received on a profession of the faith of the gospel. The admission of the Samaritans was in the same way, Acts viii. 13. Indeed a single instance cannot be  
produced

produced from the New Testament of any who made profession of the gospel, and were desirous of admission to the external privileges of the christian church, being kept from baptism, because they were unable to relate their experience of a work of grace in their hearts. If it be said, that persons were admitted by the apostles, not barely on their profession, but as it was accompanied with some visible effects of the word; such as the crying out of some under Peter's sermon, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* We answer, that though there were such visible appearances of the workings of the Spirit on the hearts of many who were received on this occasion, or at the very beginning of the New Testament dispensation, it will not thence follow, that this was the case with every one, or with the generality of the many thousands that were baptised by the apostles. In John iii. 26. it is said, that Christ *baptised*, namely, by the ministry of the apostles, *and all men came unto him*; that is, they were baptised on their coming to him, and professing their willingness to follow him. And shall frail mortals be deemed wiser and more exact, in admitting persons to be members of the visible church, than the adorable Head himself? While he calls the visible church the kingdom of heaven, he compares it to a net cast into the sea, gathering fishes of every kind both good and bad; to a marriage supper, where some of the guests are without a wedding garment; to ten virgins, of whom some are wise and some foolish; to a field where both wheat and tares grow up together. Such is the visible church described by the Holy Ghost; and it is a vain and unwarrantable attempt to make it any other, by pretending to admit those only who can give an account of the saving work of the Spirit on their hearts. We may learn particularly from the caution given to the servants in the parable of the tares, that Christ will not have the office-bearers of his church press towards the casting out of all tares or unrenewed persons; lest while they gather out the tares, they should pull up the wheat along with them, it being impossible for any finite mind to make an exact separation of the graceless from the gracious. The way of admission, against which we are speaking, is by no means sufficient to keep out the specious hypocrite, who may have a great deal of head-knowledge, and speak fluently about the

truths

truths of religion, wanting neither the ability to give an account of God's dealings with sinners in conversion, nor the presumption to apply them all to himself. Such a one cannot be refused by the Independents; he having all the formalities of their mode of admission; while another, who, by his unwillingness to join in fellowship with the visible church, and to be subject to gospel ordinances, gives probable ground to hope that he will be found among the elect of God, cannot, on their plan, be admitted to enjoy the peculiar pastoral care of Christ's ministers; for it is manifest, there are many sincere souls, who are weak in knowledge, or perhaps under many sensible and sinful infirmities, which make it difficult for themselves, and much more so for others, to judge, whether they be in a state of grace or not. If persons seeking admission to church communion, are to be kept out of it because they appear to be unregenerate; then even those appearing so, who are in communion, though not chargeable with obstinacy in any particular outward offence, but obsequious to the discipline of the church, are on the same account, to be excommunicated. Whereas, according to our Lord's rule in Matth. xviii. 17. obstinacy in some particular offence is the proper ground of excommunication. Besides, notwithstanding all the appearance of strictness and purity in this Independent scheme of church-communion, it is often used as a pretext for covering a most unwarrantable laxness, both in receiving persons into church-communion, and in retaining them in it. For, according to many advocates for this scheme, we are not to refuse church-communion to the erroneous, or to those who decline submission to an ordinance of Christ, if we can entertain a judgment of charity with regard to their state. Upon this plan, a particular church may soon be filled with open opposers of her own professed principles. Hereby a church lets go, instead of holding fast, what she has attained.

The church of Christ is denominated the *temple of God*, Ephes. ii. 22. purchased with his blood, Acts xx. 28. and the members are called saints, faithful in Christ, members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, and the like.

But these scriptures are to be understood of the church, not as visible, but as invisible. Sometimes the visible church is denominated from the better part, the saints, the faithful,

the kingdom of heaven: at other times, from the worst part, a stiff necked rebellious house, children that are corrupters. In neither case, is the denomination to be considered as applicable to every individual.

PROPOSITION 2d. *Christ hath given the power of governing the church to none but such as he hath appointed to bear office in it.* This power is called the keys of the kingdom of heaven, in allusion to the custom of delivering the keys of a house or city to any one, as a sign or token that the authority over it is delivered to him. These were given immediately by the adorable Head of the church to the apostles, Matth. xvi. 19. *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* xviii. 18. *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* John xxi. 21, 22, 23. *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.* Let us also consider that ample commission which our Lord gave to his apostles, recorded in Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. He delivered this commission after his resurrection, when he met with them in Galilee, at the mountain where he had appointed them, ver. 16. Here they receive a charge to *go and make all nations disciples, baptizing and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them.* To this commission a promise is annexed, importing that he will never fail to countenance and support them unto the end of the world. Some promises made to the apostles had a peculiar relation to their extraordinary character; as when he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and disease. Some were given them as private christians; as when our Lord says to them, *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* But some were made to them as stewards of the mysteries of God; when the things laid upon them were neither of an extraordinary nature, nor such as belonged to every particular christian, but things which are still incumbent on the ordinary

nary office-bearers of the church. Of this kind were the things specified in the commission just now mentioned: Accordingly, the promise annexed was made to them, as having it for their office to teach and baptize; and so to all those who should come after them in that office unto the end of the world. Thus the power of the keys was given by our Lord immediately to the first officers of the church, and not as the Independents allege, to the body of the faithful.

That power was given *for the benefit* of all the faithful, as the object of it; but not *to* them, as the subject of it. Indeed, the apostles were vested with it, for the purpose of planting and gathering the New Testament church, before that church, as such, had a being. If we observe how those who were first sent forth by Christ proceeded in forming churches, it will appear in what sense they understood his commission. As there is not the least intimation, that in the ordination of ministers, or in government, they ever acted in the people's name; so, wherever the people were obedient to the faith, they set apart some among them to teach and rule. Such as had been thus ordained by the apostles, joined together in ordaining others. Accordingly, we read of the laying on of the hands of the presbytery; but no where of the laying on of the hands of the people.

The different sorts of offices mentioned in Ephes. iv. 11. apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, are all said to be the gift of Christ to his church. Hence it is evident, that the powers which belong to these officers, (among which are those of teaching and ruling) are not from the body of the people, or committed to them, as their immediate subject, to be conveyed from them to pastors and teachers. Christ's giving pastors and teachers immediately to his church, is a very different thing from his giving a power immediately to the church of investing persons with these offices. The former is asserted in scripture, but not the latter. That the office-bearers of the church have a power of government, with which they are invested by the Lord Jesus Christ, is evident from the names and designations given them by the Holy Spirit. They are called, bishops or overseers, 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. Acts xx. 28. governors, rulers or guides, Rom. xii. 8. 1 Thes. v. 12. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24. elders, Acts xiv. 23.

xv. 2, 4. xx. 17. Tit. i. 5. 1 Pet. v. 1. pastors and teachers, Ephes. iv. 11, 12. ambassadors and ministers of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. 18, 20. These appellations serve to distinguish those that bear them from the flock or body of the people; and plainly import authority to judge and rule in the house of God. Most of them are used in the Greek version of the Old Testament, to express both the civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the Jewish state; and, in other writers, such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Demosthenes, Plato, to denote civil power over states, cities and armies. On the other hand, the church or body of the people, have such designations as make it evident, that they were objects on which this power was to be exercised. They are called a flock, 1 Pet. v. 3. an army, Song vi. 13. those who are to obey and submit themselves, Heb. xiii. 17. If the ministerial powers had been first committed to the church or body of the people, then gospel-ministers would not be ambassadors for Christ, nor act in his name, as the apostle declares they are to do, 2 Cor. v. 20.; but ambassadors for the church; they would have to act in her name, as having received their power from her. The instituted church of the New Testament is an organical body, having various members, such as, eyes, ears, feet, hands, 1 Cor. xii. 14, 15. wherein there are elders governing, and a people governed, Acts xx. 28. There is no such thing known in the word of God as a constituted visible church, which may exercise acts of church government without officers; as might be the case, if the powers of the office-bearers be all originally in the people. We have many epistles directed to the members of particular churches: but we do not, in them all, meet with any commission by which these members, as such, were authorised to invest any person with ministerial powers, to judge of his qualifications in order to his investiture therewith, or to exercise the keys of discipline; as Timothy and Titus, in the epistles addressed to them, are directed to do. If it had been the will of heaven, that the right of exercising the keys of discipline and government should be in the people, it is not conceivable, but that it would have been mentioned in the epistles directed to them.

OBJECTION. Paul directs the whole church of Corinth to excommunicate the incestuous person, 1 Corinth, v. 3, 4. *I*  
*verily,*

verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

ANSWER. We observe, 1. That the church of Corinth had a power of excommunicating obstinate offenders. This appears from the apostle's reproving the Corinthians for neglecting the exercise of that power in the case of the incestuous person, ver. 2. *Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you.*

2. As the power of excommunication belongs not to the civil magistrate, the christian church, in its own nature, being a distinct body from the civil state, and vested with positive laws and institutions, which are to be observed independently on the civil power; so neither does that power belong to the body of private christians as such. It is a power, as we have already observed, which Christ gave for the good of his church in general, and for that of every particular church, as it is a part or branch of the whole. But the subject in which it is reposed for answering the great ends of its appointment, is the rulers of the church; who derive it, not from the body of the people, but from Christ himself, whose ministers and stewards they are. And therefore the persons gathered together, in the name, or with the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver the incestuous person to Satan, may well be understood of the office-bearers of the church of Corinth, *the many*, as the apostle calls them in 2 Cor. ii. 6. Though the apostle says to the Corinthians, *when ye are gathered together*, it no more follows, that every individual among them was the subject of church power, who were to assemble to pass the sentence of excommunication, than it will follow, because the apostle says in chap. xiv. *Ye may all prophecy; every one of you hath a revelation*; that every church member there was a prophet. By those who were to be *gathered together*, here, we are rather to understand the officers of the church, than private members; since it belongs to the former, and not to the latter, to meet for acts of jurisdiction and discipline. Considering, that the Lord had much people in that city;

that many teachers were employed there; and that the churches there are mentioned in the plural number in 1 Cor. xiv. 34. it is manifest, that there were several worshipping congregations there. Hence, when the apostle speaks of the Corinthians being gathered together, it is rather to be understood of the whole church of Corinth, as represented by her office-bearers, than of the assembly of all the individuals of all these congregations. Though we deny not, that one of these congregations might be assembled on the occasion for the greater solemnity, and that they might accompany the deed of the office-bearers with their approbation. But the apostle gave this direction to the whole church of Corinth; not to any such particular congregation in it.

**OBJECTION.** In the beginning of the reformation from Popery, some acted as ministers, and promoted that good work, who seem to have had no other external mission than the call of the people.

**ANSWER.** In a confused or unsettled state of the church, the gifts that the Lord has bestowed on a person, and the acceptance of his ministrations with the christian people, may serve as an evidence of his mission, when no other is attainable, and when there is no neglect or contempt of the scriptural order of sending ministers. But this extraordinary case is no argument against the principle, that ordinarily, and in a constituted state of the church, the ordaining and sending of ministers belongs to the office-bearers only.

**OBJECTION.** The ministerial powers are conferred by the suffrages of the people, given by lifting up the hand, intimated by the Greek word used in Acts xiv. 23.

**ANSWER.** We must distinguish between the power of nominating a person in order to his being invested with an office, or admitted to a particular charge, and the investiture itself. While it is justly maintained, that the latter belongs peculiarly to the office-bearers of the church, we allow that the former ought to be secured to the people. Ministers are not to act as lords over God's heritage, nor to impose a pastor upon a congregation without their consent. The text now quoted in Acts xiv. and the election of the deacons in Acts vi. are sufficient proofs of the people's right to chuse their own pastors. But mere election is no authoritative act; no act of jurisdiction.

**OBJECTION.**

OBJECTION. All the power of officers in the state is derived from the people. Why may we not allow this to be the case with church-officers also?

ANSWER. There is a difference between the two cases; in regard that God has made no positive appointment of the offices of any particular state or commonwealth; and therefore the people are left to follow the dictates of reason and found policy, in determining what civil offices they should have. Hence, while civil government, in a general view, is said to be the ordinance of God, Rom. xiii. 2. this or the other form of it is said to be the ordinance or creation of man, 1 Pet. ii 13. But a spiritual power of jurisdiction in the church arises from the positive institution of the blessed Redeemer, in whom it is lodged radically and fundamentally. The ministerial power, as we have seen, was given immediately to the apostles, in a commission which was to continue to the end of the world; and the method of its regular conveyance to their ordinary successors in all future ages, is expressly determined by a positive revelation. All things are of God: The people under God are the fountain of power in the state; and Christ as Mediator under God is the fountain of power in the church.

PROPOSITION 3d. *There is, according to the scripture, a church representative.* The word *church* sometimes in scripture signifies the catholic or universal church, which is invisible, and consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, and shall be gathered into one under Christ the Head, Ephes. i. 22. *God gave him to be Head over all things to the church.* ver. 23, 27, 32. Christ is the Head of the church and the Saviour of the body, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Matth. xvi. 18. *And upon this rock will I build my church.* Coloss. i. 15. *He is the Head of his body, the church.* This is a consideration of the church, not as the subject of an external polity and government, but as under the special and saving influence of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it signifies the catholic visible church, which consists of all those who, throughout the world, profess the true religion, 1 Cor. xii. 28. *God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.* 1 Cor. x. 32. *Give no offence to the church of God.* 1 Tim. iii. 15. *That thou*

*thou mayest know how to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth.* Of this church the children of professing parents are members. And hence they are said to be *holy*, and entitled to baptism, 1 Corinth. vii. 14. As there is thus a catholic visible church in the world, to which Christ gave apostles, prophets and teachers, with an external government; so there are particular visible churches denominated from remarkable cities; such as, those of Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus. Each of these is considered as a church or body with respect to its own members; and yet at the same time, as a part or member, in relation to the catholic body of professing christians. Sometimes the word *church* denotes a church representative; that is, the pastors or church rulers, regularly called and assembled together, for the joint exercise of the keys of government over a people making the same profession of religion. Thus, by the church in Acts. xviii. 22. which the apostle saluted on a transient visit, we cannot reasonably understand all the individual professors in Jerusalem, when their number was increased to many ten thousands, but rather the chief members, or the rulers only: In this sense we understand the term as it is used in Matth. xviii. 17. *Tell the church.* When our Lord, says Calvin on the place, directs us to leave our gift, which we mean to offer, at the altar, till we be reconciled to our offended brother, there is no doubt but that he instructs us by the form of ceremonial worship then in use. So, in this place, he alludes to the received form of discipline among the Jews: because it would have been absurd and unintelligible to his hearers, to have referred to the judicial procedure of the New Testament church, which was not yet in being. Now it is agreed among the most judicious interpreters and writers on the Jewish antiquities, that the church to which a Jew would refer such a case as that of which our Lord here speaks, was an assembly of rulers. Every synagogue had such an assembly, which is several times referred to in the New Testament. Thus Jarius was one of the rulers of the synagogue, Mark v. 22. And the rulers of a synagogue at Antioch, invited Paul and Barnabas to preach there, Acts xiii. 15. It belonged to these rulers to excommunicate the obstinate. This is the censure which Christ warned his followers to expect, John xvi. 2.

*They*

*They shall put you out of the synagogue.* So that if we allow, (what cannot well be denied) that the discipline of the synagogue is here alluded to, it will appear, that the church or assembly to which our Lord directs the case to be referred, and which had the power of excommunicating an obstinate offender, was an assembly of rulers. Nor was the assembly of the rulers of a synagogue the only ecclesiastical and representative court among the Jews. There is an intimation of a supreme ecclesiastical court, which was to be at Jerusalem, distinct from the civil, in Deut. xvii. 8. *If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates; then thou shalt arise, and get thee up unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose.* Ver. 9. *And thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire.* Ver. 12. *The man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest, or unto the judge, even that man shall die.* Here the disjunctive particle *or*, distinguishes the judges from the priests. And though, in ver. 12. it be said *priest*, it is said *priests* in ver. 9. So that priest and judge are to be taken collectively for two courts of judicature. There seem to have been two distinct judicatures in the time of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. 11. *Behold, said Jehoshaphat, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters.* Here are two distinct judicatures; if distinct presidents, and their having cognizance of distinct matters, the matters of the Lord, and the king's matters, entitle them to be so denominated. That the court among the Jews, alluded to in Matth. xviii. 17. was an ecclesiastical court, must be allowed, when we consider, that excommunication among the Jews was an ecclesiastical censure. Its design was the reclaiming of the delinquent, as the less degree remained only thirty days; and, on the person's confession of sin, it was shortened. The sentence was more severe, as the offence was more public, and more obstinately persisted in. If the excommunicated did not desire to be absolved, the sentence was, a second time, denounced against him.\*

Farther,

\* See Eaxtorf de Synogoga.

Farther, that by the church in Matth. xviii. 17. we are to understand a company of office-bearers, is evident not only from the sentence pronounced on the obstinate offender; but also from the power by which it is pronounced, being plainly intimated in the following verse, to be *the keys of binding and loosing*; keys, which, as we have seen already, were committed to the apostles in the name of the office-bearers that were to succeed them in the government of the church to the end of time. Indeed, to suppose that all the men, women, and children in a congregation, are to judge in matters of scandal, and even in the awful case of excommunication, is manifestly absurd. And yet if, by the church having the power of the keys, we understand church-members as such, then it must be unwarrantable to exclude any of them from voting in such matters; while we cannot find any passage of scripture in which all the males that are come to the years of discretion, exclusive of the women and children, are called the church.

PROPOSITION 4th. *A particular church, under the government of one presbytery, may include several worshipping assemblies.* We do not deny, that there may be a worshipping assembly so situated, that it may constitute a particular church, the office-bearers of which have the full powers of government and discipline. But when the members of this church are increased to such a multitude; that it becomes necessary for them to meet in several worshipping assemblies; though the officers of each of these assemblies or congregations ought to meet by themselves, as a court for determining matters, that peculiarly concern their respective congregations; yet there are cases of common concern, on account of which it is incumbent on all the office-bearers of these congregations to exercise the keys of government jointly over the whole body, and to meet together for that purpose. A power, says Rutherford, of governing well, and according to the rule of the word, added to another power of governing well and according to the rule of the word, is cumulative and auxillary, not at all destructive of the power to which it is added; nor does it constitute a new form of a church, or of church power; it only enlarges and extends the pre-existent form for the edification of more souls. Several worshipping congregations, united under one presbytery, are

are only a larger congregation. Such were the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus and Corinth, as they are represented in the New Testament.

That there was more than one worshipping assembly in each of these churches, we are led to conclude from the great multitudes that belonged to them. Thus, in Jerusalem we find, first, 3000 added to the church, Acts ii. 41. these in a short time are increased to 5000, Acts iv. 4. and afterwards it is said, the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith, Acts vi. 1, 7. Such were the numbers in the church of Jerusalem before the persecution about Stephen. After that storm was over, they were again multiplied, till at last it is said, that many myriads, or ten thousands (as the word used in Acts xxi. 20. signifies) believed. In Antioch, it is said, that, by the preaching of the men of Cyprus and Cyrene, *a great number believed and turned to the Lord*, Acts xi. 21. and afterwards under the ministry of Barnabas, much people was *added unto the Lord*, ver. 24. There was, no doubt, a worshipping assembly there, when the church of Jerusalem sent Barnabas. But when he and Paul had continued there a whole year, it is not credible, that, in such a large and populous city, there would still be but one worshipping assembly, especially considering the abundant down-pouring of the Spirit which attended the preaching of the apostles. At Ephesus Paul continued more than the space of two years; but it is not conceivable, that so powerful and successful a preacher would continue there so long a time, without gathering any more than one worshipping assembly, or such a number as could meet in one private house: For, in the apostolic age, and for some time afterwards, the places of worship were small and retired. The populousness of the city; the account which is given of the converts burning their books, to the value of 50,000 pieces of silver, before all men; the rage of Demetrius and the craftsmen raised to the highest pitch, by the success of Paul's preaching, will not allow us to believe, that there were no more members in this church than what could conveniently meet in one worshipping congregation. That the number of church-members was not less in the populous city of Corinth, appears from the assurance that the Lord gave Paul,

Paul, that he had much people there ; from Paul's continuing to labour among them a year and six months ; from the smallness already mentioned, of their houses of worship.

We are led to the same conclusion, by considering the number of office-bearers employed in each of these churches. Thus in the church of Jerusalem, after the day of pentecost, when the extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit was confirmed on the apostles, by which they were qualified for their office, and called to appear publicly in the discharge of it, they continued together in the city ; and, having gathered many to Christ, ordained seven deacons, Acts vi. When others were dispersed, Acts viii. 1. we find them still in Jerusalem. Afterwards we find not only apostles, but presbyters or elders there, Acts xi. 30. To the end that the apostles might give themselves wholly to prayer and the ministry of the word, they set apart seven deacons, who were to relieve them of the burden of the poor, and to serve tables. This surely supposes, that each of them had full employment in the work of the ministry ; though, as Mr. Henry observes, they had not occasion to study for what they preached, as we have. Hence the supposition of their preaching but seldom, or only in one worshipping assembly, seems quite absurd. In the church of Antioch we find several men of Cyprus and Cyrene preaching the gospel. To these the church of Jerusalem sent Barnabas : And, when the number of church-members was much increased, he found that he and his fellow-labourers needed the assistance of Paul. After Paul was come to Antioch ; there would be at least five or six ministers there. The plurality of public teachers there, is very plainly declared in Acts xv. 35. Paul and Barnabas continued in the church of Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. Surely, the continuance of all these at Antioch was not necessary to the public ministrations of one worshipping assembly. It is true, Paul and Barnabas are said to have assembled a whole year with the church, Acts xi. 26. But it does not necessarily follow, that they all assembled in one house or place for public worship ; for it is no unusual thing in scripture for the nouns, *church*, *synagogue*, or the like, to be taken distributively ; that is, for assemblies of the same sort, at several times and places, Exod. xii. 6. *The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall*

*shall kill the lamb in the evening.* This is not to be understood of all the Israelites meeting in one place for that purpose. They had neither priests, ark nor temple, when this command was given. Every head of a family was to slay the lamb, and thus it was slain by the assembly or church of the congregation taken distributively. When the apostle James says, *If there come into your assembly, or synagogue, a man having a golden ring, &c.* the word synagogue, or assembly, must be understood distributively; unless the whole body of the dispersed to whom the apostle wrote, had but one worshipping assembly, or place of meeting; a supposition manifestly absurd. Christ said, *I ever taught in the synagogue, and daily in the temple,* John xviii. 20. here, synagogue, in the singular number, must be understood of many synagogues, in which our Lord preached at different times. So that it might well be said, that Paul and Barnabas assembled with the church a whole year, tho' each of them preached during that time, to different worshipping assemblies. In the church of Ephesus Paul resided upwards of two years. On his second coming to that church, he found about twelve disciples, who had received the baptism of John; and, when he had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied: And, on his sending from Miletus for the elders of the church of Ephesus, Acts xx. 17. it appears, that there was a constituted church, furnished with a number of ordinary and standing presbyters. And therefore he says to them, *Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,* or, as the same word is rendered in many places, bishops: Thus, if we consider the apostle remaining in that church two or three years, the twelve prophets, and the ordinary fixed overseers of it; surely we cannot suppose that all these were employed in preaching to one worshipping assembly, especially, when christians had no large edifices for religious worship, capable of containing great numbers of people. Nor does the case seem to have been otherwise in the church of Corinth. There we find many prophets; who, though they had an extraordinary office and gifts, yet, as employed in doctrine and interpretation, acted the part of ordinary pastors. How can it be supposed, that these, with Paul, Apollos, and others who exercised the ministry in that church, had only one worship-

ping assembly in which they laboured? When the apostle says in 1 Corinth. xiv. 31. *Ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted*, he means, as Rutherford observes, that this was to be performed by course, and in different assemblies. It also deserves notice, that, ver. 34. their *churches* are mentioned in the plural number. We may add, the instance of the church of Samaria: When Peter and John came to help Philip in the work of the gospel, it cannot be supposed that they all went to preach in one house, or to one assembly.

Farther, that there was a plurality of congregations in what is called, in the New Testament, one church, appears also from the diversity of languages among the members. This was remarkably the case in the church of Jerusalem. At the time of our Saviour's coming, there were many among the Jews, who were either such as had come over from heathenism to the profession of the Jewish religion, who were called proselytes; or such as, though of Jewish extraction, had been born and brought up in other countries, to which their ancestors had been carried captive. A numerous party of these were called Hellenists, who understood the Greek language, and made use of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. Hence it is natural to suppose, that these proselytes and Hellenists would not understand the dialect made use of at that time among the Hebrew Jews. But as it is evident from the second and fourth chapters of the Acts, that there were many of each of these classes among the members of the church of Jerusalem; so their edification required, that there should be several worshipping assemblies, where each of them might hear the word preached in the language which they understood. The reason why the church of Jerusalem, of Antioch, of Ephesus, or of Corinth, is called one church, is not, that there was only such a number of christians there as might conveniently meet in one worshipping assembly: For we have seen, that the account which the scripture gives of each of these churches is inconsistent with such a supposition. Nor was the reason of this appellation, the church of Jerusalem, the church of Antioch, &c. the oneness of heart and mind among church-members in matters of religion: For that is the property of the catholic invisible church; and the profession of the faith made by the visible church

church ought to be the same in every part of the world. Nor did it arise, as some have alleged, from an arbitrary compact or agreement entered into by the apostles, in order to constitute themselves into a political or ecclesiastical body. For as this notion is without any foundation in the word of God; so it would make the constitution of Christ's house depend on the will of man, as much as that of particular civil societies.

The true reason of this appellation in the singular number, is, that however many worshipping assemblies there might be in each of these places, there was still only one presbyterial church government. Thus, while the church of Jerusalem gradually increased, till its members were many myriads, or ten thousands, it still retained the name of a church in the singular number, Acts ii. 47. v. 11. viii. 1. xii. 5. xv. 4. xi. 22. xviii. 22. Hence in all the accounts we have of the church of Jerusalem, its officers are still represented as the rulers or elders of that church; not of any particular worshipping assembly there.

That each of these churches was presbyterial, is evident from the presbyterial acts of the office bearers in these churches. The twelve, for some time, acted as presbyters in the church of Jerusalem. They acted as such in making a distribution of the church's goods, as every man had need, Acts iv. 35. They judicially determined how the common stock was to be improved to the best advantage. We have another more solemn judicial act of the apostles recorded in Acts vi. namely, the ordination of the seven deacons. What we consider in this light is not the institution of a new office, nor any thing which was peculiar to them as apostles; but what is imitable by the church in all succeeding times. They were immediately inspired by the Spirit to appoint a new office; but in ordaining persons to the exercise of it, such as Stephen, Philip, &c. they proceeded, just as an ordinary presbytery does. The twelve met. They never met to pen a portion of scripture, to raise the dead, or to do any other thing that was peculiar to the apostolic office. When omnipotent power, or immediate inspiration is in the case, there is no occasion for joint counsel or mutual assistance. The complaint is made by the Grecians in the court. Had they acted as apostles, they would themselves have nominated  
and

and chosen proper persons to be deacons; but, acting as a presbyterial court, they direct the people to nominate and choose them: And then as a presbytery, they proceed to appoint and ordain them. We find them acting in the same capacity, in sending members of their body to such places as they judged proper for the good of the church. Thus, when they heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Here it appears, that the apostles acted in a double capacity: As apostles, having authority to introduce standing officers into the church, and to settle every particular of the New Testament constitution; and as pastors, performing those acts of jurisdiction, which were to be practised by the ordinary office-bearers of the church, till the end of time. That the apostles acted in the latter of these capacities, is intimated, when they are expressly designed presbyters or elders, 2 John i. 1 Pet. v. 1. Why should what the apostles did, in cases which we allow to belong to the ordinary government of the church, be held extraordinary or peculiar to the apostolic office, more than their preaching the word and administering the sacraments? We have a remarkable example of some prophets and teachers in the church of Antioch acting jointly, or as a presbytery, in laying their hands upon and sending away Paul and Barnabas for the work of planting churches among the Gentiles, Acts xiii. 1, 2, 3. We have another instance in Acts xxi. Paul being come to Jerusalem, was received by the brethren. The day following he went in unto James, all the elders being present. Paul having declared what things God had wrought among the Gentiles, this meeting of the presbyters, First, glorified God for the good account they had heard: Secondly, they represented to Paul the offence which the multitude had taken at what had been reported concerning his manner of teaching: Thirdly, they agreed and determined, that, in order to remove the offence, he should purify himself after the manner of the Jews. This is the very course which a presbytery takes with an offence, which seems to be only taken, not given: They try a remedy which appears lawful and expedient; such as, Paul's purification of himself was conceived to be by this presbytery.

5. *The due subordination of church courts, as of several sessions or congregational elderships to a presbytery, or several presbyteries to a synod, of several synods to a general synod or assembly, is sufficiently warranted by the holy scripture.* This subordination, in all the degrees of it, is of the same kind: Sessions, presbyteries, synods, are made up of the same officers; their power is the same as to its nature; and they are all regulated by the same sacred laws. The church of Christ, in a particular part of the world, may have more or fewer of these courts, as the number and local situation of the office-bearers admit. In order to establish the subordination we speak of, two things are necessary to be shewn; first, that several congregations are warrantably united under one presbytery; and secondly, that several presbyteries, or churches represented by presbyteries, are authorized to meet together in a synod or provincial assembly. The truth of the first of these propositions has been already proved; the second will appear from the following considerations:

First, If there be a catholic visible church, then it may be under the government of synods or general assemblies, as well as of sessions or presbyteries. The church of Christ which the apostle speaks of in 1 Corinth xii. is both visible and catholic, or universal. It is *visible*; for it is plain, that the apostle speaks of it under the notion of an organical body, having eyes, ears, hands, feet, &c. as it has a visible ministry and various gifts externally exercised. He speaks of it as having visible seals, such as baptism, by which it is distinguished from all other societies of Jews, pagans and others, who profess not Christ Jesus, ver. 13. He speaks of the church as a body in which the members know one another to be either in a mournful or in a comfortable condition, ver. 23, 33. Surely church-members do not know one another to be in either of these conditions, considered as members of the invisible, but rather as members of the visible church. He speaks of the church as furnished with visible officers, ver. 28. God hath set some in the church, first, apostles, secondarily, prophets, thirdly, teachers. It is *catholic* or universal: For what the apostle says of it, cannot be understood as limited to a worshipping assembly, or a particular church; but applicable to that which comprehends

all that make a suitable profession of faith in Christ and obedience to him, both Jews and Gentiles, ver. 13. all that are baptised into one Spirit. He speaketh of a church that has the benefit of all the diversities of gifts which the Holy Spirit distributes to church-members, as the working of miracles, the gifts of prophesying, of interpretation, &c. He describes this church as a body, the members of which are bound to care for and suffer with one another, ver. 26. a duty which is surely incumbent on particular churches, as well as individual professors towards one another. In fine, the church here spoken of, is that in which God set, apostles, prophets, teachers. Surely, the church to which all these offices, ordinary and extraordinary, belong, is the catholic visible church. The consideration of particular churches as members of this catholic church, will suggest several reasons for synods and higher courts of judicature; such as, that, as the unity of several worshipping congregations is manifested and promoted by their being under the government of one presbytery; so is the unity of several presbyteries, or of the particular churches they represent, by being under the government of one synod. And that as it belongs to a presbytery, to manage such matters as are of common concern to all the congregations or worshipping assemblies represented by it; so it is reasonable, that affairs which are the common concern of several particular churches should be managed by a synod, in which these churches are duly represented. *De majoribus rebus omnes consultant.* Christ hath instituted the government of the church for promoting the unity and edification of the whole. Hence it may be justly said, that the exercise of it in the higher courts, as in synods and general assemblies, aiming at the good of a greater part of the catholic church, attains the end of Christ's institution, in a greater degree, than the exercise of it in the congregational eldership or presbyteries. The perfection of this plan of government requires, that all the particular churches in the world should be united under the government of one general council.

Secondly. We argue for a subordination of church courts, from our Lord's rule, Mat. x. iii. 16, 17. *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him*

*him alone. If he will hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.* It is plain that, as, according to this rule, the authority of two for the removal of offences is greater than the authority of one; and the authority of the church is greater than that of two persons: So, by a parity of reason, the authority of a presbytery, including several congregational elderships, is greater for the removal of offences, than that of one of these elderships; and the authority of a synod, including several presbyteries, is greater for the same purpose than that of one of these presbyteries. Again, as an offended person, when the offender is obstinate, is bound to tell his offence to the church, that is, a congregational eldership or a presbytery; so if the offended brother be in one church, and the obstinate offender in another; or if there be two churches between which a difference hath risen, which they are unable to compose; there must be a church, a superior court of judicature, such as a synod or a general assembly, having jurisdiction over both parties, to which the determination of the case ought to be referred. Otherwise we must suppose, (what is utterly unworthy of the wisdom and goodness of the church's Head) that the plan of government, which he hath given to the church, makes provision indeed for the removal of offences which take place between individuals in the same worshipping congregation; but not for the removal of such offences as take place between individuals in different congregations, nor for the removal of the more dangerous offences that arise between different congregations or churches. What, shall we suppose that the glorious Head of the church allows and warrants those that are obstinate in heretical doctrines, or in scandalous practices, to pass without any censure, because they are combined together under the name of a church or congregation? The offence between the Hellenists and the Hebrews, of which we have an account in Acts vi. and which, as we have seen, was removed by the presbytery of Jerusalem, appears to have been between two congregations. By the church here we are to understand an assembly of office-bearers, to whom our Lord hath committed the keys of binding

binding and loosing. To them he says, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.* To them he makes this promise, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* This is to be understood of two or three, or any greater number or assembly of his servants met together in his name; and therefore it is a ground not only for the office-bearers of one congregation, but also for those of many congregations, meeting together for the joint exercise of the keys of government, to expect his gracious presence and effectual blessing to accompany their proceedings and determinations according to his word. This argument is confirmed, by considering that our Lord, as we observed before, here alludes to the usages of the Jewish church. The church, or assembly of the rulers of the synagogue, was the court before which the case of an obstinate offender was to be brought. But if the case was too hard for this court, it was to be referred to a higher court of judicature erected at Jerusalem, Deut. xvii. 8, 9, 12. Here we argue, not for the same courts which the people of God had under the Old Testament, but for what is analagous to them, and what answers the same moral purposes. God made provision in the plan of government which obtained under that dispensation, for preventing the hurt that might arise either to individuals or to the church in general, from the rash or erroneous judgment of a synagogical court: And we cannot suppose that he hath made less provision for that purpose, by the plan of government which he hath given to the New Testament church; for then it would follow, that the privileges of the church under the New Testament are inferior with regard to her polity or government, to those which she enjoyed under the Old; but this is absurd; for it belongs to the method of God's dealing with his church and people, that succeeding dispensations should include all the advantages of foregoing ones.

¶ The subordination for which we plead, is implied in this rule, *The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets,* 1 Cor. xiv. 32. By a parity of reason, each office-bearer is to be subject to a presbytery; a presbytery to a synod, and so forth.

Thirdly,

Thirdly. We argue for the subordination of church-courts, from the example of a synod recorded in Acts xv. We may observe several things recorded concerning this synod, for the imitation of succeeding ages in the government of the church.

1. We have here an approved example of presbyterial procedure in referring controverted questions, or such as cannot well be determined by a session or presbytery, to a superior judicature. *Certain men came down from Judea to Antioch, and taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.* Paul and Barnabas resolutely opposed this doctrine. They had no small dissension and disputation with these judaizing teachers. But when the presbytery, or the office bearers at Antioch, found that they did not come to an harmonious determination of the question, *They determined, that is, they appointed by their judicial authority, that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this matter.* And this reference was made not only for advice, but for a judicial determination: For the affair was not referred back to be decided by the church of Antioch; but was finally determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

2. We have here an approved example of the office-bearers of two or more churches meeting together, and constituting a synod. We have seen that the church of Jerusalem and that of Antioch, were both presbyterial churches. But we cannot allow that the church of Antioch referred the matter to be determined by the church of Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas, and certain others were sent, not to the church of Jerusalem, but to the apostles and elders who were to meet there. Hence the decrees of the synod, are called the decrees of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, not those of the church there. One particular church cannot warrantably make authoritative decrees that, as such, are binding on another.\* But it is plain, that some of the church of Antioch,

\* The connexion of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania with the General Associate Synod in Britain, has been represented as inconsistent with this principle. But the unfairness of such a representation will appear, when the two following things are considered:

tioc'h, of that assembly there in which there had been so much dissension and disputation with the judaizing teachers, were members of this synod. For, that church appointed Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of them, that is, of the members of their presbyterial assembly, to go to Jerusalem, to join in a synodical assembly with the apostles and elders of the church of Jerusalem. The acts and decrees of this synod are called the decrees of the apostles and elders who were present at it, ver. 12, 22. xvi. 4. among whom were Paul and Barnabas, and certain others with them, as well as the elders of the church of Jerusalem.

Thus, we have here the office-bearers of two churches, met together to determine a matter, in which they were both concerned: And if the office-bearers of two churches may warrantably meet to determine matters of common concern; why may not the office-bearers of three, or more churches, meet together for the same purpose? But farther, we have reason to think, that the churches of Syria and Cilicia had members in this synod, as well as the churches of Antioch and

sidered: 1. This principle must be understood as respecting such parts of the church as are co-ordinate, or of the same denomination; as if one session were subordinate to another, one presbytery or one synod to another, or the general assembly of one nation to the general assembly of another. It is obvious, that this is not the case with the relation between the Associate Presbytery here, and the General Associate Synod. They are not co-ordinate as to number, or as to the rank which they hold in the organical body of the whole Secession church. 2. We are to distinguish between the duty of acknowledging the subordination of a part of the church to the whole, and the exercise of that subordination, as in an ordinary course of references and appeals. The latter, we own, must be regulated by the opportunities which local situation affords. But the former must be regulated by numbers, and by the duty of one part of the visible church to maintain, as much as possible, a visible union with all the other parts of it; not in sinful courses, but in the Lord, and in a joint and stedfast adherence to the whole cause of Christ. Thus, while the Associate Presbytery in this land, consider themselves as a smaller part of the diffusive body, maintaining a testimony for truth, they ought to be subordinate, in the sense above expressed, to the whole; that is, to all the other parts of that body represented by the Associate Synod; whether the exercise of that subordination, in matters of faith, (not personal causes) by references and appeals, be greater or less.

and Jerusalem; in regard that the former, as well as the latter, were infested with the doctrine of the judaizing teachers, and the decrees of the synod were directed and delivered to them as formally binding on them. It seems to have been on account of the delegates in this synod, from various churches, that the inspired writer makes use of these general expressions, *All the multitude*, ver. 12. *the apostles and elders, with the whole church or assembly*, ver. 22. *the apostles, elders, and brethren*, ver. 20. The whole multitude, the whole assembly, seem to be collective names, expressive of the same persons, with the apostles, elders, and brethren. There is much ground for the observation which has sometimes been made, that the word *brethren*, as it is used here, and in many other places of the New Testament, denotes persons in office. Thus, in Acts xx. those who are called elders, in ver. 7. bishops or overseers, in ver. 28. are termed brethren in ver. 32. In the same sense, the word may be understood in Acts xvi. 2. xvii. 6. nay, the word is often applied to church-officers as distinguished from private christians, 2 Cor. i. 1. 1 Thes. iii. 2. Heb. xiii. 23. Philem. 1. 2 Cor. ii. 13. viii. 16, 22, 23. xii. 18. ix. 3, 5. Philip. ii. 25. 1 Pet. v. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 15.

The Independents say, that by *the whole church*, here, we are to understand the whole multitude of professing christians at Jerusalem. But to this we answer, 1. That it has not the least appearance of probability, that the many ten thousands in the church of Jerusalem, were called to deliberate and debate on the question, concerning doctrine and discipline, that had come from Antioch. 2. Why was it necessary, for all the members of the church of Jerusalem to be present? Was it necessary in order to the decrees of the synod being obligatory on their practice and conscience? But was it not as necessary for all the members of the churches of Antioch, of Syria, and Cilicia, to be present on that account? If it be said, that they were present by their delegates or commissioners; we ask, If this was sufficient in the case of the churches of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, why should we suppose that more was necessary in the case of the church of Jerusalem? We know no solid reasons that can be assigned, for supposing that the presence of church-members

bers in general was more necessary in the case of the latter, than in that of the former.

3. We have here an approved example of the manner in which a church court ought to proceed in the management of a controverted question, in order to come to a decision. The members of this synod acted in parity. Paul was an apostle, and Barnabas was called an apostle, Acts xiv. 14. and a prophet, Acts xiii. 12. and, as such, they were not subject to the appointment of any particular church. But, being sent by the church of Antioch, they acted according to their mission, as ordinary presbyters of the church. When we say, that Peter, Paul, and James, did not act in this synod by immediate inspiration, as in penning the scriptures, we do not say, that they had not a greater measure of the Spirit directing them, than what is commonly allowed to the ordinary office-bearers of the church; but only that what they did was the same thing, in point of duty, which others are called to do; as when they preached or prayed. It is to be observed, that, while the end of their meeting and reasoning was to give such a determination of the case that had come from Antioch, as would prevent the spreading of the error, and remove the offence which had taken place, several of them, as Peter, Paul and Barnabas, spake what tended to the determination of the question, namely, that the ceremonial law was a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers could bear; and that both Jews and Gentiles are saved by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if no more had been said, the question would not have been fully determined, and no rule would have been given for preventing the Jewish converts, on the one hand, from insisting on the observation of their ceremonies as necessary; or the believing Gentiles, on the other, from offending the Jewish converts by eating blood, meats offered to idols, and things strangled. The apostles and elders in this synod, obtained light, as to what determination was necessary to be made on the question before them, by degrees, by hearing the mind of different members, by reasoning from word and providence, and, at last, by taking the suffrage of the apostles, elders and brethren. On the whole, we must either suppose, that the apostles dictated the determination of this question, as they penned their epistles, by their apostolic authority, as under  
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the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or that they acted on this occasion, as the ordinary office-bearers of the church ought to act, in the like cases. On the former of these suppositions, nothing can appear more superfluous and insignificant, than the manner of proceeding now described; in the latter, nothing seems more natural and reasonable. How absurd would it have been for Paul, or any other apostle, having written an epistle by immediate divine inspiration, to submit it to the judgment of the elders of any particular church, and to inquire, whether they would have any thing added to it, or altered? The pretence, that the apostles dictated the determination of this question by immediate inspiration, receives no countenance from the expression (used in the epistle sent to the churches of Antioch, Syria and Cilicia) *it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us*; this being no more than what any synod may warrantably say, when its sentence is founded upon and agreeable to the mind of the Holy Spirit speaking in the scriptures. Such a sentence is undoubtedly his voice, especially to the churches represented by the synod declaring it. The pronoun *us* here used, referring alike to the apostles, elders and brethren, shews that the sentence of this synod was given forth by the joint suffrages of the ordinary as well as the extraordinary office-bearers.

4. We have an approved example of a synod's authoritative determination in matters of doctrine, of order and discipline. Here we may observe, that the power of a synod does not take away or diminish the power of a session or presbytery to determine matters that concern their own congregations. The former power is only cumulative, as they speak, or assisting to the latter. A synod may annul a particular deed of a presbytery, that is wrong or irregular; yet the former may not hinder the latter from judging in causes of the same nature afterwards. The power of a synod, or any other church-court, is not properly legislative, but ministerial. It is not a power of making new laws, but only of declaring the laws which Christ hath given to his church, and of applying them to particular cases, as they occur. It is a power that is purely spiritual, not extending to civil causes as such, nor to the inflicting of civil punishments. It is a power, however, not merely of giving advice, but of decreeing or determining authoritatively. Surely, nothing

less can be imported in such expressions as these: *The apostles and elders at Jerusalem ordained decrees, and laid burdens on the churches.* They were such decrees as would bring church censure on the contemners. We may observe the exercise of a threefold power, exemplified in these decrees: 1st, A dogmatic power, by which the grand article of justification by the faith of Christ without the works of the law, was asserted, and the contrary error, concerning the necessity of circumcision, and other Jewish ceremonies, to salvation, was condemned, ver. 24. compared with ver. 11. 2dly, A diatactic power, by which the synod enacted a regulation for removing and avoiding offences, agreeable to the general precepts of the word for maintaining peace, order and unity in the church of Christ. They guarded against the offence of the believing Gentiles, by prohibiting any to require of them the observation of the ceremonial law; and, against the offence of the believing Jews, by enjoining the Gentiles to abstain from meats offered to idols, from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. These things belong to the precepts, to which the Jews required an assent of persons who were to be received as profelytes. 3dly, A critic, or judicial power, in the censure passed upon the false teachers, who are branded with the ignominious names of troublers of the church, subverters of souls, and liars. There was no express determination of this matter before. Hence it was not necessary to proceed to a higher censure of these false teachers, till it should appear that they persisted obstinately in their course, notwithstanding the decision now made.

We conclude this essay with an account of some of the dangerous consequences of casting off the subordination of church-courts.

1. To deny this subordination, is to say, as we have already hinted, that Christ hath given his church a very defective plan of government; that is, such a plan as provides some remedy for lesser evils, such as the offence of an individual in a congregation; but none for greater and more dangerous scandals; as when there is a schism between the members of one church and those of another. Nay, without the subordination of church-courts, there is hardly any ground

ground for the authoritative exercise of church-discipline, even within the limits of a congregation; these limits being uncertain, depending upon the momentary determination of individuals: For it cannot be pretended, that the scripture formally determines how many persons shall belong to this or the other worshipping assembly, or how far the boundary of it shall extend; and on the supposition of which we speak, there is no superior court to determine this matter. Hence a number scandalous persons, in order to avoid the congregational censures, have only to form themselves into a separate independent society; and then, on the plan in question, the congregation has no more right to censure them, than they have to censure the congregation. However far they go astray, they have none over them in the Lord to admonish them. We have a scripture rule for the office-bearers whom Christ hath given to the church, meeting together as they have an opportunity for the exercise of the keys of government in his name; but we have no scripture rule for the formation of two independent congregations, contiguously situated, as in the same city: They may pretend they have the general rules of the word; but Papists, and prelates have the same pretence for their respective schemes of church government. Thus, the Independent scheme, renders the connexion even among the members of a congregation quite loose and uncertain. The protestant churches owe it to the general spread of Independent notions, that they are now crumbled into innumerable sects; every party of mal-contents assuming to themselves the power of making a church of their own, upon the slightest grounds, and sometimes without pretending to give the church, or the world, any rational or scriptural ground at all.

2. To deny presbyterial subordination, is to say, that the authority of one church, however few its members and officers, is greater than that of many churches equally pure, joined together in one body; as if the authority of one of the United States were supposed to be greater than that of the whole; and as if a threefold cord might be more easily broken, than one of the folds of which it is composed.

3. Without presbyterial subordination there is little ground to expect, that the church of Christ at large, or any considerable part of it, will be uniform in doctrine, worship, discipline

discipline and government. The primary bond of ecclesiastical conjunction, is, indeed, an acknowledgment of the truth, as it is contained in the holy scriptures, the only rule of faith and practice, *Isai. viii. 20. Gal. vi. 16. 2 Pet. i. 9.*; but a confession of particular articles of revealed truth, contained in the scriptures, but neglected and opposed by many bearing the christian name, is, in the present state of the church at large, necessary as a subordinate bond of union. For, as one justly observes, such is the boldness and wickedness of men, that they wrest the holy scriptures to their own destruction; such is their cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, that they father their lies upon the holy scriptures; they even pretend scripture for their gross and pernicious errors. Hence confessions of faith, and public testimonies, are necessary, as means of confessing the truth in opposition to the sleight of men who pervert it; and necessary to evidence, that we receive the holy scriptures in their genuine sense. Now it is plain, that, without presbyterian subordination, there is no ground to hope for the union of many worshipping congregations in maintaining the same confession, or testimony for truth; for, without that subordination, there is no ecclesiastical authority to which they, in common, own subjection in the Lord; and, as such a testimony cannot be said to be held by a congregation, or worshipping assembly, where no person is censured or excluded from sealing ordinances, for the open rejection of it; so it can as little be said to be held by a number of such congregations, while any of them may cast away this or the other article of it, without being liable on that account to any church censure. Hence, it has been justly observed, that the Independent scheme, is an enemy to confessions, and other subordinate standards.

4. According to the opinion of Independents, there is no provision made in the scriptural constitution of the church, for the propagation of the gospel among the heathens and infidels. For upon their plan, a minister is under the direction of his own congregation; and a congregation has no power without its own bounds, no power of sending him any where else. It seems to be owing to the secret prevailing influence of Independent principles, that many, forgetting or despising the blessed provision which Christ's own ordinance of presbyterian

byterial church government makes for the propagation of christianity among the heathen, have had recourse to human devices for that purpose. Some profess to go among the Indian tribes to preach the gospel, upon some notion in their own minds, without any external mission; but *how can they preach, except they be sent?* Missionary societies are also formed, the members of which do not pretend to act as office-bearers of any particular church, and yet take upon them to judge who are to be sent to preach the gospel to the heathen, and to send them accordingly, not considering that it belongs to a presbytery to send ministers any where, Acts viii. 14. xiii. 1, 2, 3. Besides, while these societies are composed of persons of different religious persuasions, they cannot avoid being instrumental in sending some, who they have ground to believe, will propagate what is sinful and erroneous; as if we were not as much bound to convey the christian religion pure and entire, to other countries or nations, as to preserve it so in our own.

5. The Independent scheme is most tyrannical, as it admits of no appeal from the sentence of a congregation, however injurious.\*

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\* Whoever desires fuller information on this subject, may consult Rutherford's *Due Right of Presbytery*, Aiton's *Constitution of the Christian Church*, and a sermon of the late Mr. Muir of Paisley, on *Courts of Review*.

## Of the Government of the Episcopal Church.

I wish no precedence of place were allowed in the church of God.

*Gregory Nazianzen.*

It is agreed on all hands, that in the age of the apostles there was no difference between bishops and presbyters.\* *Cassander.*

**A**N aspiring disposition appeared among the disciples of Christ, whilst he sojourned on earth: For there was a strife amongst them, which of them should be accounted the greatest: John in his 3d epistle, speaks of a Diotrephes, who loved the pre-eminence. There is hardly a particular church free from the bitter fruits of this temper. But of all these fruits, there has been none more remarkable, or of longer continuance, than Prelacy. Jerome, who lived in the fourth century, declares, that the setting up of bishops over presbyters, was by the church's custom, not by the decrees of the apostles, and that it was introduced for the preventing schism. But, as Whitaker, an eminent divine of the church of England, observes, the remedy was worse than the disease.† Episcopacy seems to be growing unpopular, and many wish to see the dignitaries of the church brought down. In some, this desire proceeds from the hatred of christianity itself, with which they falsely suppose these dignitaries are connected. In others, it proceeds from the capricious humour of the age, or from the ungenerous pleasure which the vulgar take in seeing men reduced from elevated stations of worldly honour to a level with themselves. The first of these motives is most detestable, and can be found with those only, who are given up to all impiety: The other two must be despised by every considerate person.

But

\* *Covenit inter omnes, olim apostolorum ætate inter Episcopos et Presbyteros discrimen nullum fuisse.*

† In his book *De Ecclesia*, Quæst. i. cap. 3. sect. 29.

But there are not wanting solid principles, upon which we justly regard the fall of Episcopacy as an event devoutly to be prayed for ; and, though we wish the bishops all happiness as men, and as christians ; yet, as to their church power, we long for the time, when they shall be brought to the rank of other ministers of Christ.

It is proposed to represent, in this essay, the principles which the holy scriptures warrant us to hold in opposition to Prelacy.

First. *The government of every constituted church, ought to be administered, not by one, but by a plurality of office-bearers.* Thus, in the xviiiith chapter of Matthew, when an offence cannot be done away in private, our Lord directs the offended party to *tell the church* ; that is, the assembly of office-bearers, to whom the keys of binding and loosing, of admitting to, and excluding from the sacramental seals, are committed. This is very plain, in the accounts we have in the New Testament of particular constituted churches. Thus, the twelve apostles resided for some years in the church of Jerusalem, and carried on the government of that church jointly, without any one of them being elevated, as a bishop, over the rest. They could not all be bishops, in the Episcopalian sense, there ; for it is a maxim with Episcopalians, that in one church there should be but one bishop. We find the apostles performing acts of jurisdiction jointly. They jointly laid their hands on and appointed the deacons. They jointly sent Peter and John to Samaria. They jointly gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. We find that there were many bishops in the church of Ephesus, all employed in feeding or ruling the church, Acts xx. 23. and also in the church of Philippi. Hence Paul directs an epistle to the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi. Thus we find ordination performed by a plurality of presbyters, 1 Tim. iv. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.* The Greek word here translated *the presbytery*, is found in other two places only of the New Testament, Luke xxii. 66. and Acts xxii. 5. in both which places, it signifies a college or company of rulers. Thus, at Antioch, a plurality of office-bearers were employed in sending away Paul and Barnabas, Acts xiii. 1, 2, 3. Such do-  
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minion as is implied in one bishop having the sole rule or government of one church, appears to be that which is forbidden by our Lord in Luke xxii. 25, 26. Matth xx. 24. where dominion is not to be understood of that only which is tyrannical. Dr. Whitby on the last of these texts says, " I do not think that Christ only here forbiddeth such  
 " dominion as is attended with tyranny, oppression and con-  
 " tempt of their subjects. 1st, Because Luke useth only the  
 " simple verbs which bear no such ill sense. 2dly, Because  
 " kings and governors are not always guilty of this mal-  
 " administration. 3dly, Because Christ does not oppose to  
 " their government a just dominion, but a ministry only." In support of the notion of a monarchy in each particular church, the Episcopalians urge several things; as 1st, That the apostles had a power over ordinary presbyters, and that the apostolic power is transmitted to bishops. Answer. We deny that the apostolic office, as it was distinguished from that of teaching presbyters, is continued in the church. It appears to have belonged to the apostolic office, as such, that the person invested with it should be one who was an eye witness of Christ's resurrection, Acts i. 21, 22.; who had an universal commission, and who was under the infallible direction of immediate inspiration, in delivering to the church what he had received from the Lord Christ. In these respects, the apostles had no successors. They are much deceived, says Spanheim, who would bring down the apostles to the order of the bishops of particular churches. We allow, that they might be called bishops in respect of what was common to them with ordinary bishops: but it cannot be proved, that this was any more than what was common to them with presbyters. 2dly; They suppose that the twelve apostles, whom our Lord first appointed, had a paramount power over the seventy disciples whom he afterwards sent forth, and that the bishops succeed to the former, and the presbyters to the latter. Answer. Both these assertions are justly denied; the first, because the seventy did not derive their power from the apostles, but immediately from Christ, " They enjoyed," says Dr. Stillingfleet, in his *Irenicum*, " the same privileges, they were sent upon the same errands, " namely, making way for Christ's entertainment in the " several cities they went to; yea, all things were parallel  
 " between

“between them and the apostles in their mission.” The last, because the mission recorded in Luke x. did not constitute the seventy disciples governors in the christian church, which was not yet in being. Their commission was only temporary. It is not credible, therefore, that the seventy had successors among the office bearers in the christian church; since they themselves received no commission to be office-bearers in it. 3dly, They suggest, that James was constituted bishop of Jerusalem, Acts xii. 17. Answer. James’s power (though the ancients allowed that he had been before only a disciple) was now the same with that of the apostles themselves. But, for James, after he was advanced to the office of an apostle, to become a bishop, would be such an irregularity, as would be for a bishop to be made a deacon. Besides, there is no proof, that James ever acted by himself, or otherwise than in conjunction with the elders of Jerusalem, in the government of that church. 4th, They urge, that Timothy and Titus were bishops; the one of Ephesus, the other of Crete. Answer. This is sufficiently confuted by the following words of Dr. Whitby: “If by saying Timothy and Titus were bishops, the one of Ephesus, the other of Crete, we understand, that they took upon them these churches, or dioceses, as their fixed and peculiar charge, in which they were to preside for term of life, I believe, Timothy and Titus were not thus bishops: For, 1st, Both Timothy and Titus were evangelists. Now the work of the evangelists was this; to lay the foundation of the faith in barbarous nations, to constitute them pastors. And having committed to them the cultivating of these new plantations, they passed on to other countries and nations. 2d, As for Titus, he was only left in Crete to ordain elders in every city, and to set in order things that were wanting. Having therefore done that work, he had done all that was assigned him in that station; and therefore Paul sends for him the very next year to Nicopolos.” We may add, that the elders of Ephesus, were already bishops, Acts xx. 28. as were also those whom Titus ordained at Crete, Tit. i. 5, 7. So that in each of these places they only needed an evangelist to direct and assist, till their government was settled, and things brought to a fixed order. Farther, we may observe, that Paul’s beseeching

ing Timothy to abide at Ephesus, is an argument that he was not an established bishop there: For we cannot conceive the apostle would only beseech a bishop to reside in his own diocese: He would surely have told him, that he could not do otherwise without grossly neglecting his duty. 5thly, Epaphroditus, say they, is called the apostle of the Philippians, and therefore he must have been their bishop. Answer. The *voces signatae*, or titles of the office-bearers of the church, are sometimes used in their primary or common signification. Thus the  $\Delta\iota\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu\omicron\sigma$ , deacon, sometimes signifies any ministering servant. In like manner,  $\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\sigma$  is sometimes put for any one that is sent as a messenger. John xiii. 16. Though the appellation, an apostle of Jesus Christ, always denotes a person in office; yet your apostle, or the church's apostle, does not. Now that Epaphroditus was an apostle, as being sent by the church of Philippi, is evident from the words of Paul, Phil. iv. 8. *I am full, having received of Epaphroditus, the things which were sent from you.* 6thly, The high priest was chief ruler in the Jewish church; so one bishop ought to govern each particular christian church. Answer. It has been shewn by Stillingfleet and others, that the christian church was formed, not on the model of the temple, but upon that of the synagogue. The order of the temple was ceremonial or typical; and is done away in the coming of Christ; christians having no other high priest over them than Jesus Christ. We are by no means to suppose, that the orders of ministers among christians are to be adjusted to those of the Jewish priesthood.

Secondly. *There is no ground in scripture for the supposition, that a presbyter, having the power of preaching the word and administering the sacraments, is a different church officer from a bishop; or that the powers of ordination and government belong of right to the latter only, and not the former.* For not only the name, but also all the acts and qualifications of bishops, are ascribed to presbyters or elders. Remarkable to this purpose, is that passage which we have in Acts xx: 17, 28. and Paul sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church; and when they were come to him, he said, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers; or, (as the same word is translated in other places) bishops, to feed the church*

*church of God.* It is evident from the connexion, that the church, of which the persons here spoken of were elders, was no other than the single church of Ephesus. These officers, called *presbyters* or *elders*, ver. 17. are called *bishops*, in ver. 28. They were all ministers of the church of Ephesus. This was the flock, to which they were charged to take heed, not only in teaching, but also in ruling; for, to feed officially in the language of scripture, is to rule; and there is no hint, that they had any superior church officer among them. Another passage, shewing that the office of a presbyter and a bishop is the same, we have in 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. *The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof.* In the former text elders are called bishops; here they are said to feed or rule the church of God, *ἐπιτροπουvτες*, performing the office of bishops; an expression fully holding forth, that they have the power of ordination and government, as well as that of dispensing word and sacraments. The same thing is evident from the apostle's direction in his epistle to Titus, chap. i. 5, 6, 7. *For this cause I left thee in Crete that thou mightest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children; not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God.* To suppose the office of a bishop to be another and higher office than that of a presbyter or elder, makes the apostle argue as inconsistently, as if one should say, such qualifications are necessary in an inferior officer; for they are necessary in one that is superior. Learned men have observed, that the Syriac version of the New Testament, the most ancient version extant, has not two words, one to signify a presbyter, and the other a bishop, as in the original Greek, and in modern translations; but one word for both. *I left thee in Crete to ordain elders in every church; for an elder must be blameless.* Farther, in the third chapter of the first epistle to Timothy, the apostle having described a bishop as apt to teach, and as ruling the church of God, he passes on without the least hint of an inferior teaching presbyter, to describe the office of a deacon. Surely if it had it been necessary for Timothy to ordain teaching presby-

ters different from bishops, the apostle would have spoken of them distinctly, as well as of deacons. Ordination, the power of which is much insisted on, as vested peculiarly in bishops, is expressly ascribed to presbyters, 1 Timothy iv. 14. and church-censure is said to be inflicted by them, 2 Cor. ii. 6. for these who say that there should be only one bishop in one church, will not allow *the many* here mentioned to be bishops. Now if there be neither name nor qualifications, nor acts mentioned in scripture, that distinguish the office of a bishop from that of a presbyter; we may safely conclude, that they ought not to be distinguished at all. Dr. Hammond and Dr. Dodwel, two principal Episcopal writers, were so far in the right, when they allowed that there are no such distinct officers to be found in the New Testament; though they contradict one another; the former holding that, in scripture times, there were no presbyters; and the latter strenuously maintaining, that, in these times, there were as yet no bishops.

The scripture seems to represent the power of dispensing the gospel and the sacramental seals, as a more important part of the trust committed to ministers, than the power of ruling. *Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine.* To bear rule in the church is not so honourable as to bear Christ's embassy of reconciliation. To set apart one to the work of the ministry is, surely, not more solemn or important than the act of setting apart the elements to represent, seal and apply the body and blood of Christ. If ordination and government had been the chief parts of the ministry, we may reasonably suppose, that they would have been mentioned first and most expressly in our Lord's commission, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. Mark xvi. whereas preaching and baptizing are more expressly mentioned, while ordination and government are only implied. When Paul speaks of the principal part of the ministry committed to him, he gives preaching the preference. *Christ sent me, says he, not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.* Is it not then preposterous, that those who are warranted to do what is greater, to dispense word and sacrament, should not be allowed to do what is less, to act as rulers in the church?

An extract may here be added of an epistle of Jerome to Evagrius. "I hear," says he, "there is one so mad as to prefer the deacons to the presbyters, that is, to the bishops. For since the apostle clearly teaches, that bishops and presbyters are the same, how can a servant of tables and widows, proudly prefer himself to those at whose prayers the sacrament of Christ's body and blood is consecrated. You require a proof. Hear a testimony. Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons. Would you have another example? In the Acts of the Apostles, Paul speaks thus to the elders of one church: Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to rule the church of God. And that none may contentiously plead, that there were many bishops in one church, hear also another testimony, whereby it is most evidently proved that bishop and presbyters are the same, Tit. i. 5, 6, 7. For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain elders in every city;—if any be blameless: For a bishop must be blameless, &c. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Peter also in his first epistle, says, The elders which are among you I beseech, who am also an elder and a witness;—rule the flock of Christ, and inspect it; which inspection is more emphatically expressed by the Greek word here used, it being the word whence the name bishop is derived." In another place, the same learned father says: "Among the ancients bishop and presbyter were the same, but by degrees the whole care was devolved in one, that the seeds of division might be taken away. Let the bishops know that they are greater than presbyters, rather by the custom of the church than by the truth of the Lord's disposition or appointment; and that they ought to govern the church in common."

The Episcopalians, who rely much upon the ancient fathers for the support of their cause, are greatly perplexed by this testimony of one of the most valuable of them, especially in respect of his knowledge of church history, and of the language of scripture. Some of them say, that Jerome means,

that bishop and presbyter were one in name, but not in degree: But it is plain, that this construction of Jerome's words, would turn the reason, which he made use of, to repress the insolence of the deacon, into a ridiculous punning upon the words bishop and presbyter. Besides, if it was not a distinction of mere names, which was devised as a remedy of schism; then it was not the identity of mere names, which was the pretended cause of schism. When certain power, which had been always in the church, was appointed to some under the denomination of bishops; it is plainly implied, that it was not so before, but was common to them with presbyters.

The history of the period immediately after the death of the apostles, being very imperfect, it seems hardly possible to determine precisely when this change took place. But it is more than probable, that in the second and third centuries the difference between the bishop and the preaching presbyters in a city, was no more than this, that the former was a sort of continued president or moderator among the latter, as his colleagues. Thus, in the second century, Victor bishop of Rome, writing to Dionysius, bishop of Vienna, has these words: "The college of the brethren salute thee. Salute the brethren who are with thee in the Lord. Eubalus, one of our college, who carries this epistle to Vienna, is ready to live and die with thee." What Victor calls *collegium nostrum*, our college, was the company of fellow-presbyters (for a college denotes equality) among whom he presided. Tertullian, who lived a little after the time of Victor, has these words: "Certain approved presbyters preside, who have obtained that honour, not by price, but by testimony." Hence it appears, that these presidents, as to their office, were no other than presbyters. Origen, who lived after Tertullian, on these words in the xiiiith chap. of Matthew, *It shall not be so among you*, has this remark; "Let not those who seem to have some pre-  
cedency in the church, act as lords of their brethren, nor exercise power over them." It is no evidence, that Origen was satisfied in his own mind, that bishops were superior in their office to presbyters; when he reckons them brethren, and leaves no more than a seeming precedency to the former. Cyprian, who was bishop of Carthage in the third century,

century, calls the presbyters his colleagues ; and declares that he could do nothing in the government of the church without them. "None of us, says he, is a bishop of bishops, or can force his colleagues to obedience." *Collegæ* in the Latin tongue, which Cyprian used, signifies persons who have the same charge and enjoy the same office. When persons are subject to one another, they are not colleagues. 'To the same purpose is the inscription of Caldonius's epistle to Cyprian, "Caldonius to Cyprian and his co-presbyters, residing at Carthage."\* He immediately adds ; "If ye have any thing to signify by common council, write to me." Nay, Augustine, long afterward, calls the presbyters that were with him his colleagues. In an epistle of Firmilian, bishop of Cesarea, among Cyprian's epistles, we have these words ; "We, the seniors and presidents, should yearly assemble together, for the management of those things that are committed to our care. All power and interest is lodged in the church, where the elders preside, who also possess the power of baptizing, of laying on hands and ordaining." It is obvious that Firmilian does not allow the power of baptizing to any who have not also that of ordaining. Basil, bishop of Cesarea, who was after Firmilian, and died about the year 378, on the words of Christ to Peter, "Feed my sheep," observes, "that Christ gave an equal power or authority to all pastors, who were to come afterwards. And it is a sign of this, that they bind and loose in like manner as he did." In the beginning of the fourth century, Eusebius, bishop of Cesarea, speaking of the ordination of Origen says, "Theoctistus bishop of Cesarea, and Alexander bishop of Jerusalem, when they judged Origen worthy of the highest authority and honour, laid their hands on him, that he might perform the office of a presbyter."

In the third, and in the beginning of the fourth century, a bishop in a city like Rome or Carthage, appears to have been one who presided in the meeting of his colleagues. But those called the country bishops appear to have been still no more than the pastors of their respective congregations. The bishops which are said to have been in the Roman

\* Cypriano et compresbyteris Carthagini consentitus Caldonius.

man province of Africa could be no other. At a conference which Augustine and the bishops of that province had with the Donatists, there were two hundred and eighty-six bishops present, and one hundred and twenty absent; and two sees were then vacant; which makes in all four hundred and eight; besides two hundred and seventy-nine Donatist bishops. Justin Martyr's Πρεσβυτερος, president of the brethren, is allowed to be such a bishop as was, at the same time, the ordinary pastor of a congregation.

We cannot now be particular in tracing the progress of Episcopacy. But there were especially two steps, by which the increase of this corruption was hastened, till it attained its height in the papal domination. The first was the abolishing of the country bishops, and the subjection of the country presbyters to the bishop of the adjacent city. For obtaining this end, several canons were enacted. Thus, in the provincial synod of Laodicea, about the year 364, it was decreed, that bishops ought not to be ordained in villages or small towns, lest the name of bishop should be brought into contempt; but in remarkable cities, whence they were to derive their name; and visitors were appointed, whom the bishop of each city was to send as his vicars, to inspect the remote country places under his jurisdiction. The other step was the superiority which these city bishops obtained over one another, according to the eminence of the cities from which their dioceses were denominated. Thus, by the seventeenth canon of the council of Antioch, it was decreed, that, on account of the great confluence of people to that city, its bishops should have the pre-eminence above others. A new plan of government in the church was now proposed, resembling that of the state. In consequence of the adoption of this plan, the bishop of Rome soon began to be acknowledged as the greatest bishop in the world.

Thirdly, *Not only presbyters, or elders, who labour in word and doctrine, but also such as only rule, belong to the scriptural constitution of the christian church.* For these elders, who are to concur with the pastors in the government of the church, we have a very plain warrant in 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine.* Here is a genus, or general, agreeing both to elders that only rule well, and to those  
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that not only rule, but also labour in word and doctrine. Here are two participles, *προεστῶντες* and *κοπιῶντες*, each of them accompanied with the article *ἰ*. Here are two sorts of elders, plainly distinguished by the discretive particle *μαλιστα*, especially. I appeal, says Mr. Rutherford, to all the best writers in the Greek language, such as, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Aristophanes, Pindar; and also to the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament; to the whole New Testament; whether one parallel place can be produced, where two participles, so qualified, are to be understood as belonging to the same subject. If any one doubts whether *μαλιστα*, especially, be a discretive particle, denoting different subjects, let him consider the use of it in Tit. i. 11. 1 Tim. iv. 10. v. 8. Gal. vi. 10. Philip. iv. 22. 2 Tim. iv. 13. Some tell us, that the Greek word rendered, *labouring*, signifies remarkably laborious, and that the distinction here is only between elders that are more, and those that are less assiduous in their work. But it is plain, and could not be denied even by Bilson, a most zealous Episcopal writer, that the verb here used denotes that sort of labour which is incumbent on all the rulers of the church, 1 Thes. v. 12. We beseech you to know *τες κοπιῶντες*, those that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord. The opposition here is not between ruling well and labouring; but between ruling well and that particular sort of labouring which is in word and doctrine. Besides, if the apostle had intended to represent the most remarkably severe labour, he would rather have used *μοσχευ* than *κοπιω*: The former seems to imply more intense and grievous labour than the latter. We do not say, however, that the latter is never applied to remarkable labour; but that this is not a necessary signification of it. It is even used to signify the least degree of labour; as when our Lord says of the lilies, they toil not, Mat. vi. 28. the meaning is not, that they have not the greatest labour; but that they have not the least. Nor is the gloss of others better, who say, that the latter part of the verse means, that they who rule well are worthy of double honour, chiefly, because, or in regard that they labour in word and doctrine. But if this had been the apostle's meaning, he would have said, as Didoclavius observes, *ἰ μαλιστα κοπιῶντες*, or, without the article, *μαλιστα κοπιῶντες*,

not *μαλιστα ὁ κοπιωντες*. Besides, before we could accede to such a gloss, it would be necessary, first, to produce a passage out of some good author exactly parallel, where there are two participles, each of them attended with an article, where the latter of these participles, having *μαλιστα* before its article, denotes the reason of a thing without any difference of the subject. And then, since the sense, in which Presbyterians take this word, is, without controversy, the most common, (as is evident from the passages already quoted, in which the word *μαλιστα* is used) to establish the gloss now mentioned, it would be also requisite to shew, that the connexion of this passage with what goes before and follows it, renders so unusual a sense necessary in this place. The want of the adversative particle *δε* is nothing against our construction of this passage: It is omitted in some of the examples already quoted, as in 1 Tim. iv. 10. where the particle *μαλιστα*, especially, distinguishes those who believe from all other men. See also Tit. i. 10. But it is objected, that they who rule well are worthy of double honour, that is, of maintenance. Now, say our opponents, how does it appear, that they who are invested with an office which leaves them at full liberty to follow their worldly business, ought to be maintained by the church. Answer. Though we grant that double, that is, abundant honour (for so the word double is to be understood, Isa. xl. 2. Jer. xvii. 18.) signifies maintenance, yet that it signifies that only cannot be shewn. Hence, where maintenance is not necessary, double honour may be rendered by other suitable expressions of the church's respect and esteem. Besides, the difference stated in the text between the elders that only rule, and them who both rule and labour in word and doctrine, implies, that a constant maintenance is not so necessary to the former as to the latter. It is, says Didoclavius, as if the apostle had said, the elders of the church are worthy of double honour, at least, those who labour in word and doctrine. These, especially, are the oxen who tread out the corn, and who being separated and set apart to the work of the gospel, are not at liberty to follow any other employment for the support of themselves and families. It must be owned, however, that even ruling elders are hereby entitled to maintenance from the church

church in their straits, and to a recompense for the avocations from their necessary worldly business, which a due attendance on this office will frequently occasion. It is true, that such is the negligence of our times, that they do not receive their due. But this will as little make them no church officers, as Paul's receiving no stipends from the Corinthians, made him no apostle of Christ. But while they prefer the service of Christ to their private interest, they will not be losers; for God will not forget the work and labour of love, which they shew toward his name.

Such rulers seem to be represented as distinct from the teachers of the word, in 1 Corinth xii. 28. where the abstract terms, *helpers, governments*, are put for the concrete, that is, for *helpers, governors*. "Those of the presbyters that preached not," says Thorndyke on this text, "are called here by the apostle governments, and deacons, helpers, or assistants to the government of presbyters: So that it is not to be translated helpers in governments, but helpers, governments."

Another passage to this purpose, is in Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. where the apostle having represented the christian church as an organized body, (the members of which are endued with different gifts, and designed for different offices, to be exercised for the good of the whole) proceeds to give an account of the different orders of standing officers in the church. These he reduces to two general heads, namely, *prophecy* and *ministry*; persons exercising the functions expressed by these words being understood. The former is required to *prophecy*, that is, to exercise the office of preaching the word, *according to the proportion of faith*; and the latter to *wait on their ministring*. These two generals are subdivided into certain classes. Prophecy comprehends *him that teacheth* and *him that exhorteth*; a division much the same with that of pastors and teachers in Eph. iv. 11. Under ministry we have two classes, that of the deacon, or of *him that giveth*, and that of the ruling elder, which is meant by *him that ruleth*.

Whether we suppose, that this office was instituted in order to prevent the apostles and pastors from being too much diverted from the ministry of the word, by having the whole burden upon them of inspecting the manners of the people,  
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and exercising discipline, or in order to secure the liberty of the church from the tyranny of an usurping ministry, or that it was instituted for both these ends; the necessity of its continuance is manifest, these ends being requisite in every period of the visible church. The people, as one observes, must always look upon it as a privilege, that no other discipline is exercised on them, than what their own neighbours, as well as their ministers, judge reasonable. Besides, it is one of the appointed means of preserving the purity of church-communion, that the power of admitting to, and of excluding from, sealing ordinances, is not in the hands of one, but of many office-bearers.

These observations on the office of an elder, may not be improperly concluded in the words of an ancient commentator, on the first epistle to Timothy. "Age," says he, "is honourable among all nations: Whence, first the synagogue, and, afterwards, the church had elders; without whose counsel nothing was done in the church. By what negligence it is fallen into disuse, I know not; unless it be through the sloth or rather pride of the doctors, whilst they would have none esteemed of any consequence but themselves."

Fourthly, *The office of deacons, according to the scripture account of their institution, was to serve tables or manage the poor's stock.* Where there is such a stock, and many poor to be relieved, the ordination of deacons, in a congregation, is requisite. But they are not, in all cases, essential to the constitution of a gospel church, their office being included in that of elders. The Episcopalians hold, that it belongs to the office of deacon to preach and baptise. Stephen, say they, preached, and Philip preached and baptised. But these examples are nothing to their purpose, unless they could shew that Stephen and Philip preached as deacons, or by virtue of that office. As for Stephen, he did no more in his apology, than what any of the witnesses of Christ, brought before rulers, ought to do. In such a case, even a woman ought to confess Christ, though she may not exercise the office of a preacher, 1 Corinth. xiv. 34. As to Philip, he was an evangelist, Act. xxi. 8. To which office he was, no doubt, promoted, after he had exercised the office of a deacon well: For, says the apostle, "they who do so, purchase to themselves

themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Fifthly, *It is grossly absurd for any particular church to acknowledge a civil magistrate as her head, or as having the power of judging and determining matters that belong peculiarly to the doctrine, worship or discipline of the church.* The king is acknowledged as the supreme head or governor on earth, of the churches of England and Ireland, and the judge of all ecclesiastical causes in the last resort. The principle of this ecclesiastical supremacy ought to be rejected with abhorrence, by the whole church of Christ. The officers and other members of the church are members of civil society; and, as such, they are as much subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the civil magistrate as any other. But the church is the kingdom of Christ, *a kingdom which is not of this world.* The civil magistrate has received no commission to exercise authority in that kingdom. All the ministrations of church-officers ought to be in Christ's name. In these matters they are not the servants of men, but of Christ alone.

Sixthly, *It is unwarrantable for office-bearers of the church to accept, in ordinary cases, civil offices and preferments.* It is utterly unbecoming the ministers of Christ to appear, like the bishops in the English parliament, as temporal lords and legislators in the state. In the patriarchal age, instances of the same person being invested with both civil and ecclesiastical authority, seem to have been more frequent. Thus, Melchizedic was both a king and a priest. But when God gave the people of Israel the form of a state, and also that of a church, he appointed each of them to have its proper officers; nor could the same person ordinarily and regularly bear office both in the one and in the other. Priests and Levites were officers in the church; kings and judges in the state. We have seen that they had distinct civil and ecclesiastical courts, Deut. xvii. and 2 Chron. xix. We allow, that the tribe of Levi, being increased to great multitudes, as many of them were distributed into classes, as were sufficient for the divine service; the rest, even in the more pure and incorrupt periods, were employed as officers in the state; but it does not appear, that any, belonging to the classes now mentioned, were so employed.

We acknowledge, too, that when the church and commonwealth had fallen into a state of great disorder, the same person was sometimes raised up extraordinarily to act in a civil and in an ecclesiastical character. Thus Samuel was a Levite, a prophet, and a judge. And in the degenerate times of the Jewish church, between Judas Maccabees and the coming of Christ, the priests were often aspiring to civil preferments. Besides, much of the order that obtained in the Jewish state, was of a temporary nature, as connected with the ceremonial and typical dispensation of the Old Testament, and on that account, every instance among them of the priests acting in a civil capacity, is not an example for the imitation of christian pastors. We may learn, however, even from the constitution of Israel, that, in general, the affairs of the church and of the state, being of a different nature, ought to have different administrators. But we are taught more fully by the example of Christ and his apostles, how the ministers of the word ought to conduct themselves with regard to state matters. Our Lord Jesus declined the business of determining a dispute about an inheritance, as foreign to his office, Luke xii. 24. Upon the same principle, he refused to pass sentence on the adulterous woman, John viii. He would not permit one to delay preaching the gospel at his call, even for the sake of (what the law of nature might seem to require) attending the funeral of a deceased parent, Luke ix. 59, 60. But what would he say to those who do not scruple to postpone that work for the sake of an unnecessary attendance on parliaments and civil judicatures. The apostles, while they continued at Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, declared, that they judged their office required them to be disengaged as much as possible from secular business, when they appointed the seven deacons, Acts vi. 2, 3, 4. The apostle Paul teaches us, that the pastors of the church ought to give themselves wholly to the work of the ministry, 1 Tim. iv. 15. and that as the strictness of the Roman discipline required, that no one who was enlisted as a soldier, should engage in husbandry, trade, or any other occupation, that would hinder him from a constant and exact execution of the orders of his commander; so ministers of the gospel ought to beware of secular engagements,

gements, whether public or private; since they have been separated to the work of the gospel, and owe their time and all their talents to him, who says, *Feed my sheep*, 2 Tim. ii. 4.\*

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## Of Public Covenanting.

The soldiers who receive their wages from Cesar, swear, that they will never prefer any thing to his interest. And will you not swear to God, whose bounty is incomparably greater than Cesars. *Arrianus.*

**I.** PUBLIC Covenanting is a joint act of the members of a particular church, by which they declare their adherence to the Lord as their God in Christ, and their resolution, through grace, to believe and obey his word, and, particularly, to hold fast any measure of real reformation that has been already attained, and to strive against all contrary errors and corruptions.

We have many examples of public covenanting recorded in scripture: It was practised in the times of Moses, Joshua, Hezekiah, Josiah, Nehemiah. It is enjoined as the duty of the church of God, Psa. lxxvi. 11. *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God.* It is urged, however, that it was a peculiarity of the Old Testament dispensation. But if it was so, it must have belonged either to the judicial or to the ceremonial law. It could not belong to the judicial law; for that respected their civil polity, not the manner or form of religious worship. Nor to the ceremonial; for it cannot at all be considered

\* The reader who desires to see a fuller discussion of the Episcopal controversy, may be referred to Calderwood's *Altare Damascenum*, the writings of Mr. William Jameson of Glasgow, and others.

considered as among those things, carnal and unprofitable in themselves, which were types or shadows of good things to come. How can it be denied to be a moral duty, since, with regard to the matter of it, (namely, our avouching the Lord to be our God in Christ, and our engaging in the strength of promised grace, to cleave to him, and to walk in all his commandments and ordinances blameless) it is a duty required in the first commandment of the moral law; and with regard to the form of it, (that is, swearing by the glorious and fearful name of the Lord our God) it is a duty required in the third commandment? It is set forth in scripture prophecy as an exercise in which the New Testament church was to be engaged. We have a remarkable passage to this purpose in Isai. xix. 18, 21. *In that day, when an altar should be to the Lord, not at Jerusalem, the only place where an altar was warrantable after the building of the temple to the end of the Old Testament dispensation, but in the land of Egypt, ver. 19. and when the Lord of hosts should bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, ver. 25. that is, in the New Testament-day, five cities in the land of Egypt shall speak the language of Canaan, shall make a pure confession of Christ's truth; yea, they shall make it, on proper occasions, with the solemnity of an oath; they shall swear to the Lord of hosts. They shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. See also Isai. xliv. 5. It is true, that some expressions used in these prophecies, as altar, sacrifices, &c. must be understood, not literally, but figuratively, New Testament-worship being thus set forth under the names of what belonged to the ancient ceremonial worship. But it will not follow, that *swearing to the Lord*, which never was any ceremonial usage, is to be understood figuratively, or otherwise than *knowing the Lord and crying to him*, mentioned in the same passage.*

Such as allow the duty of *personal* covenanting, are chargeable with inconsistency in their opposition to public covenanting. For if one person may enter into a covenant of duty and gratitude, why may not two, three, or any greater number, do so? Surely the perfection of the divine law requires the public as well as the private performance of a duty, if the nature of the duty admit both. But that covenanting with God may be practised by us, in our public  
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and joint capacity, cannot be doubted; since we know that it hath been actually so practised with the divine approbation.

Nor can they be free from the charge of inconsistency, who oppose public covenanting; and yet grant that it is a duty, as implied in baptism and the Lord's supper. It is a general truth, that whatever is a duty as implied in other duties, and hath been distinctly and formally practised by the church of God, may still, on proper occasions, be so practised. We know, that covenanting, under the Old Testament, was as much implied in circumcision and the passover, as it can be supposed to be now in baptism and the Lord's supper. And yet the church was then bound to practice it distinctly, or by itself. It is therefore a grievous inconsistency, to say of public covenanting, that it is a duty as implied in baptism and the Lord's supper, and yet no duty as practised distinctly and by itself.

In fine, many of the opposers of public covenanting, profess adherence to the Westminster Assembly's Larger Catechism, as agreeable to the holy scriptures. Now, according to that form of sound words, one of the ordinances of Christ, distinct from the sacraments, which we are required by the second commandment, to receive, observe, keep pure and entire, is "vowing" or swearing to the Lord.

II. Public covenanting is seasonable at present. If it is now our duty to maintain a particular testimony against the errors and corruptions which overflow the visible church, then it is now our duty to practice public covenanting.—In regard that this is one way in which the church of God has been in use to maintain a testimony against particular evils at the time of their prevalence. Thus, the people of God in Aſa's reign, testified against idolatry, 2 Chron. xv. and after the Babylonish captivity, against the intermarriages of the Israelites with heathens, Ezra x. 2, 3, 4, 5. against buying on the sabbath the wares or victuals which the people of the land might bring to them on that holy day; against the vigorous exactions of debts, Neh. x. 29, 31. In regard that it is a mean of promoting the stedfast adherence of church-members to such a testimony, amidst the temptations to lukewarmness and wavering, with which they are surrounded. So the covenanting of Israel at Ho-

reb is represented in Deut. iv. 9, 13. *Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life, but teach them thy sons and thy sons sons, especially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb.* In regard that it is a proper mean of ascertaining the sincerity, resolution, and unanimity of the covenanters, in holding their testimony against the evils which now prevail, to one another, to other parts of the visible church, and to such as obstinately persist in the evils testified against. In regard that this way of confessing Christ, as king in Zion, is a piece of homage due to him, especially at a time when his name or authority, as stamped upon many of his truths or institutions, is generally denied. Philip. ii, 9, 11. *God hath highly exalted him, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father; compared with Isai. xlv. 23. I have sworn by myself, that unto me, every tongue shall swear.*

III. The people of Israel, having entered into a solemn covenant of duty and gratitude at Sinai, the Lord dealt with them ever afterward as under covenant obligation; still representing their departures from him, as having the aggravation of covenant-breaking. It is observable, that in Ezek. xvi. 59. the Lord charges Israel at the time of the Babylonish captivity, with despising the oath and breaking the covenant, even the covenant, mentioned in the 8th ver. of that chapter, which they had entered into when they came out of Egypt. He charges them with the breach of that covenant, in the same terms which Zedekiah, in the 18th ver. of the next chapter, is charged with breaking the oath which he had personally taken to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. That the continuing obligation of the covenant of duty, entered into by the people of Israel, was no peculiarity of the Old Testament dispensation, but the same sort of obligation which arises from a covenant entered into by any particular church under the New Testament, appears by considering, that the obligation was founded in two things: 1. In the continuing obligation of the matter of the covenant. With regard to those things to which we are under a primary and perpetual obligation by the moral law, it is plain, that the secondary or subordinate obligation

ligation to such things, arising from our solemn engagements, must be perpetual. 2. In the nature of a particular society, of a church or nation; as it continues the same society, notwithstanding the continual succession of members. These two things being the same under the New Testament dispensation, that they were under the Old, the continuing obligation of a covenant of duty entered into by a particular church, must be the same.

Why are the people of Britain still to be considered as under the obligation of these covenants, which were entered into by the church of Christ there, about the middle of last century? We answer, because the people who entered into them were such as might, by their number and stations, properly represent the nation. To assert, that the obligation of these covenants, (as it was held by the martyrs who suffered in Scotland between the Restoration and the Revolution, and by those who have since espoused their testimony for the principles of the Reformation,) is no other than an obligation arising from acts of Parliament in their favour, or from the established connexion in Britain between the church and state, argues either great ignorance of the subject or great malevolence. These covenants were still understood to be obligatory on the people of Britain, on account of their having actually entered into them; a fact, which is quite independent on acts of Parliament, or the established connexion between church and state.

Even in the United States of America, a particular church, the majority of whose ministry and members, have, either themselves or their ancestors, come from Britain or Ireland, since the covenanting period now referred to, is justly considered as under the obligation of these covenants.

When the members of a particular church are thus already under the obligation of a covenant for religion and reformation, their subsequent acts of covenanting ought still to include (as did the instances of covenanting in Israel after the time of Moses) an acknowledgement of the obligation arising from the solemn covenant-engagements formerly entered into; a confession of sins, both as breaches of God's law, and as breaches of covenant; and a renewed engagement to duty adapted to present circumstances.\*

Of

\* See Mr. Morison's *Present Duty*; where the scripture doctrine of public covenanting is set in a very clear and convincing light.

## Of Occasional Preaching.

No one can warrantably exercise the office of a minister without being called. For as civil offices require a lawful call, so do ecclesiastical. *Leidecker.\**

**I**T is usual in this country for congregations, even of those denominated Presbyterians, to meet on the Lord's day for public worship, while no one appears among them in the character of a person regularly called to preach the gospel. The meeting is as public, and there is the same access for all sorts of people to attend it, as when a minister preaches. On these occasions, some leading men select a psalm or hymn to be sung, pray, read a portion of scripture, or deliver discourses or exhortations on such religious subjects as occur.

Thus, while there is nothing extraordinary in the state of the church to justify a departure from the order which Christ hath appointed to be ordinarily observed, persons, who do not pretend to have any call to the ministry, take upon them to exercise their gifts publicly, to be the mouth of God to the people in the public delivery of his word, and to be the mouth of the people to God in public prayer.

This practice is justly disapproved of for such reasons as the following :

I. The public preaching by which faith comes, is the preaching of it by those that are sent of God : This is evident from Rom. x. 14. *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? How shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? According as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

\* *Ministrorum peculiare munus nemo u'la ratione obire potest, nisi legitime vocatus. Uti enim politica munera requirunt vocationem, sic etiam ecclesiastica. Leidecker.*

*God.* Here it is plainly taught, that, as faith, or believing in the Lord, is connected with the public preaching of the word; the latter being an ordinary standing mean of beginning and increasing the former; so it is the public preaching of the word connected with a divine mission: that is, no public preaching is to be accounted an ordinary standing mean of begetting and increasing faith, but such as is exercised by those who are sent and commissioned by Christ.

Some would represent this mission, or sending, as no other than a person's gifts or fitness for teaching. But it is plain, that the qualifications necessary for an office of the church, whether ordinary or extraordinary, were always distinct from the divine call to it. Thus, what we read in Jer. i. 5. *I sanctified thee; I ordained thee a prophet,* and in ver. 7. *Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak,* is to be understood of Jeremiah's mission. But the words which we have in ver. 9. *Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put my words into thy mouth;* point out his qualifications for the office of a prophet. When Christ breathed on the disciples, he communicated the gift of the Holy Spirit. But when he said to them, *Go and teach; as my Father sent me, so send I you;* he gave them an authoritative commission. When it is said, *The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, Ezekiel, or the other prophets;* it means, that the Lord gave them not only ability,\* but also authority† to prophesy. The latter of these is still necessary, as well as the former; and, though God does not now give ministers a commission, by an immediate voice from heaven, or in a vision, there is an ordinary way in which he gives them one, that is, the way of being duly examined and solemnly set apart to the office by a presbytery, 1 Tim. iv. 14. *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophesy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.* ver. 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man.* Tit. i. 5. *I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest ordain elders in every city.* The notion, that the possession of gifts is sufficient, without any divine call or mission, to warrant a person to dispense

\* Δυναμις.

† Εξουσια.

the word publicly, is quite inconsistent with the scriptural representations of the public dispensers of the word. They are stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1. But surely none, however qualified, would be allowed to act as a steward in a well regulated family, without a commission from the head of it. They are ambassadors for Christ, 2 Cor. v. 20. But no one, whatever his political knowledge and ability may be, can justly act as an ambassador from any civil power, without being authorized by that power.

Some urge, that a person, who has not yet received a formal outward call, may have an inward call to speak the word in public. But with regard to this inward call, we may observe, that if it consist in the singleness of his views, and a prevailing inclination to serve Christ, and do good to souls, it more properly belongs to the qualifications or fitness for the office, but cannot supersede the necessity of a regular call. On the other hand, if this inward call be some unaccountable impulse or impression on the mind, leading the person to disregard the external order of the house of God, there is reason to be apprehensive, that it is a delusion of Satan. Besides, hearers are to receive ministers as sent by Christ. Therefore the mission of ministers must be something which the hearers can know and judge of. But they cannot do so with regard to a call which lies in secret and inward impressions on the mind.

II. In the ordinary constituted state of the church, those who are warranted to dispense the word publicly, are such as ought to give themselves to reading, 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. Such as ought to watch that they may speak suitably to the various cases of their hearers, 2 Tim. ii. 15. Matth. xxiv. 45, 46. Such as ought to beware of entangling themselves in any other calling, 2 Tim. ii. 4. All this is manifestly inconsistent with the duty of private church-members, who have worldly callings, which they ought to follow with fidelity and industry. Hence it is by no means becoming for private church-members to be public dispensers of the word.

III. The practice in question, takes away the distinction between the exercise of gifts in the way of a public office, and the exercise of them in a private way. The heads of families are to dispense the word to their children, and  
others

others under their charge, Gen. xviii. 19. Isa. xxxviii. 19. and fellow christians to one another in private conference, Col. iii. 16. Mal. iii. 16. Zech. viii. 21. Heb. iii. 13. Private meetings for joint prayer, and spiritual conference, are highly commendable. But all this is quite distinct from the dispensation of the word in the way of office; that is, a dispensation of it in public, directed to all men, Matth. xxviii. 19. *Go, teach all nations.* Mark. xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world: Preach the gospel to every creature;* with ministerial authority, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Tit. ii. 15. by such as, upon trial, have had this truth committed to them by the office-bearers of his house, 2 Tim. ii. 2. The scripture makes a plain distinction between public ordinances and the private exercises of his worship, Psalm lxxxvii. 2. *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

IV. This practice is contrary to the principles of the reformation, exhibited in the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, and the Form of Presbyterial Church Government, agreed on by the Westminster Assembly. Larger Catechism, in the answer to Quest. 156. "All are not to be permitted to read the word publicly to the congregation;" that is, as Mr. Fisher rightly explains it in his Catechism, "None ought to read publicly to the congregation, except those whose office it is, not only to read the word of God, but to explain it to the edification of others, Neh. viii. 8." In the Form of Presbyterial Church Government, that venerable assembly says, "It belongs to the office of the pastor, to pray for and with his flock, as the mouth of the people unto God. He ought to perform this in the public execution of his office, as a part thereof. It belongs to his office to read the scriptures publicly; and to feed his flock by the preaching of the word; according to which he is to teach, convince, reprove, exhort, and comfort."

What we have now said, as to the unlawfulness of private christians doing what belongs to the office of the ministry, is to be understood with reference to a constituted state of the church; or with reference to a state of the church which is so corrupt and confused, that there is no regular or sound public ministry; as was the case, in a great measure, during the height of Antichrist's reign. In such a state of the church,

church, persons might be under a necessity of acting for the relief of their fellow-christians in a way which would be quite unwarrantable, where there is a regular ministry. Thus, under the Old Testament, before the giving of the law, persons might build altars and offer sacrifices any where; but afterwards, there was no legitimate offering of sacrifices but at the tabernacle or the temple. Before men have entered into the state of civil society, any person may inflict even capital punishment, for crimes which manifestly render it necessary for the safety of themselves and others; a thing which, in civil society, being wholly intrusted to the civil magistrate, no private person may take upon him to do.

The prophets spoken of in 1 Corinth. xiv. were among the officers that God gave to the New Testament church, 1 Corinth. xii. 28. Ephes. iv. 4. In a former essay we spoke of the nature of their office. When the apostle says in 1 Corinth. xiv. 31. *ye may all prophesy*, the expression must be understood of all that were called to that office, (with whom, it seems, the church of Corinth abounded; not of persons out of office. From the times of Moses and Samuel, it appears that the prophet was still a person invested with an office. Deut. xviii. 18. 1 Sam. iii. 20. As to the note of universality, *all*, it is easy to produce abundance of passages where it must be taken in a restricted sense, according to the nature of the subject, Luke. ii. 1. John ii. 10. &c. The reason of the use of it here is plain; namely, that they might all prophesy successively, in opposition to their speaking together in a confused disorderly manner.

It is objected, that christians are bound to edify one another in love; and therefore they should exhort and comfort one another publicly.

Answer. We deny the consequence; women are bound to love one another, and to exhort and edify one another, Tit. ii. 3, 4. yet they are expressly forbidden to speak in public. 1 Corinth. xiv. 34. 1 Tim. ii. 12. The same act which is duty in one person, may be a heinous sin in another. To support the ark, and to burn incense unto the Lord, were acceptable services in the priests; but in Uzzah and Uzziah were highly criminal, and brought upon both the one and the other a signal mark of the Divine displeasure. These are set up as monuments to warn all succeeding

ing generations of the tremendous hazard of meddling in sacred things without a divine call or warrant.

Farther, it is alleged, that when the private persons, of whom we speak, deliver in public what they judge to be edifying, it is only in the way of exhortation: They do not preach; they pretend not to explain scripture; or to teach with ministerial authority.

Answer. We ought to say nothing about the things of God, but what is the sense, if not the very words, of scripture. There are various modes or ways in which the word may be spoken, such as those of affirming, denying, reasoning, explaining particular words or phrases in the scriptures, counselling, exhorting, reproof. But the public dispensation of the word, which belongs to the ministry, comprehends all these modes of declaring the word. The office of a minister in preaching the word, as the Westminster assembly observes, is to teach, convince, reprove, exhort and comfort. As the priest said to Uzziah, *Not unto thee does it appertain to burn incense unto the Lord; but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense.* So there is good ground to say to private persons who take upon them to declare the word of God in public: Not unto you does it appertain either to explain the doctrines or to exhort to the duties of God's word, in the ordinary public worship of the church; but unto the pastors and teachers, who are regularly called and set apart to the office and work of feeding the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

This paper may be concluded with a quotation from a valuable writer, containing an answer to what has been offered as arguments for lay-preaching, from two passages of scripture. One of these passages is Acts viii. 1, 4. *At that time, there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad through the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word.* Hence it has been urged, "That not delegated preachers, but the church in general, proclaimed to their fellow sinners the gospel of the Lord Jesus." Were this passage literally interpreted, it would follow, that the apostles remained at Jerusalem, without having

having any church to which they could minister. For it is said, that all were scattered abroad, except the apostles. Hence, the *all*, is here, as in many other places, to be understood in a limited sense. The limitation of this language to the ordinary teachers, is favoured by a concurrence of circumstances. The very mention that is made of the apostles, naturally suggests this idea. Why are they alone mentioned, when we are certain, that many others remained at Jerusalem; if it be not to inform us, that they were the only ministers of the word who remained there? The particle here rendered *except*, intimates, either that the apostles were the only persons belonging to the church, who continued at Jerusalem, or that they were the only persons who did so, of one description, that is, invested with the character of public teachers. It is not said of those who were scattered, that they went *teaching*, but that they *went preaching the word*; a phrase which, in other places of scripture, is constantly used with respect to persons in office. When it is said, that *they who were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word*, the inspired writer instantly adds; *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.* Is it not most natural to conclude, that they who *went every where preaching the word*, were persons intrusted with official character, as Philip was? Is there any reason for supposing that he had any private christians associated with him in the work of the ministry. The Doctors Gill and Guyse, though both Independents, understood the *all* here, of the ordinary teachers.

Great stress has been laid on the example of Apollos, Acts xviii. 24. 28. It has indeed been asserted, that he passed over to Achaia to preach, because he was *so disposed*. But this is not a fair inference from the language of the inspired historian. It is an obvious fallacy. An important link is left out. The inclination of Apollos to go into Achaia, and his passing thither to preach, are not immediately connected. For in ver. 27. a double connexion is stated, first, between his inclination and the recommendation of the brethren; and then, between his actually passing into Achaia and his success in preaching there. He did not *pass into Achaia to preach there*, merely because he was *so disposed*: But because he was disposed to go thither, *the brethren wrote,*

wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him. Now, it is highly probable, that these brethren were the elders of the church of Ephesus; especially as there is such a change of the term, as seems to denote, that a distinction is stated between them and the church-members in general to whom they wrote. *The brethren* wrote exhorting *the disciples*. If this be the proper sense of the term, we have here the essentials of a mission. Apollos was, in the most strict sense of the term, a minister; for he is so designed by the Spirit of inspiration. He was, no less than Paul, a minister of Christ, and steward of the mysteries of God. The eloquence and fervency of Apollos are not mentioned as the reason of his speaking and teaching; but of his doing so diligently.\*

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## Of Occasional Hearing.

They continued stedfastly in the apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer.† *Acts of the Apostles.*

**I**T is inquired, whether the members of a church, which is in a state of separation from another church, may, without sin, occasionally attend on the administration of public ordinances in that other church?

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\* See this subject more fully treated, in Dr. Jamieson's excellent Remarks on Rowland Hill's Journal.

† Here *doctrine* is, by the Spirit of inspiration, so intimately connected with fellowship, as necessarily to teach, that there is a real fellowship in doctrine. The same thing must be said with respect to prayer. There is undoubtedly a fellowship in public prayers. Whoever attends public worship in any church, appears there as joining in the public prayers for God's blessing to that church, in that extent in which they are ordinarily presented. Doctrine and prayers are here mentioned, not only in the strictest connexion with fellowship, but also with breaking of bread. These are all thrown together, to intimate that they are not properly separable.—See a sensible letter on Bigotry, in the Christian Magazine, printed at Edinburgh, for December 1798.

It is here supposed, that the stated ground of separation between these churches, is the maintainance of some important articles of truth and duty, by the one, which are obstinately rejected by the other. This being the case, we say, it is unwarrantable for the members of the one church to attend upon, or countenance the administration of public ordinances in the other. This we maintain for such reasons as the following :

1. This practice is contrary to all these passages of scripture which enjoin us to beware not only of false doctrine, but its teachers. We are enjoined to *mark such as cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, and to avoid them.*\* Nothing is plainer, than that they who teach those doctrines, and justify those corruptions, which render a state of separation necessary, are *causing divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned*; and are therefore to be *avoided*; that is, we are not to countenance their public administrations, lest we be chargeable with countenancing the corrupt schemes, whereby they cause divisions and offences.

2. The attendance of church-members on the dispensation of public ordinances, in a church, from which they are in a state of separation, is inconsistent with the weight and importance of a warrantable separation. If that separation were warrantable, which is only on account of the greater convenience of attending on public ordinances, or of something more pleasing in the style or delivery of the preacher, we might then, upon the absence of the ordinary pastor, attend on the ministry of one of another communion, though his gifts were not so agreeable, nor his situation so convenient: But a separation of that sort, would sacrifice the peace and unity of the church to private convenience and humour; would harden persons, whose evil character, in Jude xix. is, that they *separate themselves*; and must be abhorred by every man of principle and conscience. But a warrantable separation is a quite different affair: The grounds of it are so weighty, as to render an occasional, as well as a stated attendance on the public ordinance of the church communion, from which we are in a state of separation, unwarrantable.

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\* Rom. xvi. 17.

3. An occasional attendance on public administrations, in a church-communion, from which we are in a state of separation, tends to subvert the order and discipline of the church of Christ. It cannot be denied, that the errors and offences of those church-communions, from which we are justly in a state of separation, being open violations of God's law obstinately persisted in, are in their own nature sufficient ground of church-censure. But how does the holy scripture direct us to behave towards those who are the proper objects of church-censure? It certainly directs us to behave to them in such a manner as may be expressive of the sense we have of the evil of their ways; in such a manner as may make them ashamed; in such a manner as is directly contrary to the countenance given to corrupt church-communions, by our attending on their public administrations: *2 Thes. iii. 6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us. ver. 14. And if any man obey our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* There are two ways in which a church may censure even those who are out of her communion. The first is, by a judicial and authoritative condemnation of their errors and corruptions. Thus Zion is said to *condemn in judgment every tongue that riseth up against her.* The second way is by the contrariety of her pure profession and holy practice to the profession and practice of others.

4. Occasional attendance on the public administrations of a church-communion, from which we are warrantably in a state of separation, does not comport with that watchfulness and jealousy over our own hearts, which are so suitable to our condition in the militant church. For these are administrations in which it is acknowledged by the persons we are speaking of, there is much of *the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge*; if not in what is actually delivered in their hearing, at least, in the profession of religion which is made in such a church-communion, and to which all the public administrations there are in a designed subservience. Many do not scruple to attend on the administration of false teachers, being apprehensive of no danger from them; for, say they, we are not so ignorant as not to know what is

to be received as true, and what is to be rejected as false. To such we say, the Lord forbids you not only to *believe* the instruction that causeth to err, but even to *hear* it, Prov. xix. 27. he commands you to cease from giving even an outward attention to it: And, therefore, in your attendance thereon, you are manifestly going out of the Lord's way; you are trampling on his authority. And while you are doing so, your confidence that you shall not be seduced, is but vain presumptuous leaning on your own understanding, and you are running a greater risque, than you would do in eating food mixed with poison. Whilst you are thus venturing out of the plain road of duty, you are in great hazard of being left to follow the bent of your corrupted nature, and to embrace error instead of truth. You should consider, that there is a *hellish* energy attending error, as well as a heavenly energy attending divine truth; for we read of the *working of Satan with all power, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish*. It is true, that, even when we have the best ground to expect a pure dispensation of word and ordinances, public speakers are not exempted from inadvertent and unguarded expressions: But we are to judge of a dispensation of ordinances in any church-communion by the scope and tendency of it; and we are to judge of these by its peculiar and distinguishing principles and avowed practice. And according to our judgment, thus formed, we ought, or ought not to attend.\*

## 5. An

\* The needless reading of erroneous books, that is, of books which are well known to be intended and calculated for the propagation of gross error, is to be avoided. Yet there is a difference between reading of an erroneous book and attending on the ministration of an erroneous teacher; for, First, As it is more especially by the preaching of the word, that church-members are converted and edified; so it is more especially by the preaching of error that they are seduced. Secondly, In the preaching of error there is a prostitution of the sacred office of the ministry, which is not in the mere proposal of opinions in common conversation, or in books. Thirdly, It cannot be pretended, that in the private reading of a book published by an erroneous teacher, there is any public countenance given to him in the character of a church-officer, or any sort of church-communion with his followers, as there certainly is, in attending on his public administrations. Fourthly, The private

5. An occasional attendance on the public administrations of a church-communion, from which we are justly in a state of separation, is contrary to the due exercise of charity towards our fellow church-members; for supposing, (what we are far from allowing ever to be the case in fact) that a church-member had attained such a measure of knowledge and establishment in the truth, as to be in no danger of receiving hurt to his own soul, by his attendance on the public administrations of the erroneous; yet he cannot but know, that the weaker sort of his fellow church-members are in great danger, who may be emboldened to attend on the same administrations by his example. Is he not hereby chargeable with putting a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way? This is, properly, in the scripture sense, giving offence to our brethren: For giving them offence, is not; as is commonly imagined, displeasing them, but rather being an occasion of their falling into sin.

6. An occasional attendance on the public administrations, in different and opposite church-communions, is contrary to the right manner of attending on gospel ordinances, which our Lord enjoins upon us, when he says, *Take heed how ye bear.* For, in the *first* place, this occasional attendance on ordinances is a self-contradictory attendance. A person's attendance on the public ordinances of one church, says, he approves of the constitution and principles of that church; and that he is *one body, one bread*, with the other members of it; but all this is contradicted by his attendance on the public ordinances of another church, which is in a state of separation from the former. In the *second* place, it is a partial attendance

private reading of books is of the nature of that private communication of sentiments to one another, which is previously necessary in order to a state of church-communion. Thus, reading is a proper mean of acquiring the information which is needful to determine us whether we ought to join in such a particular church-communion or not. If we find, in the use of this and other means, that we ought not to attend on the public administrations of any particular church, we should, according to the opportunities of our place and station, warn others of the danger of attending on them. Hence the examination of erroneous books, so far as it is performed with honesty and judgment, is a real service to the church of Christ.

attendance on ordinances. When persons, in the supposed case, attend on the public administrations of a church-communion, from which they are in a state of separation, they are chargeable with putting asunder what God hath joined together, namely, the preaching of the word and the dispensation of the sacraments. Where will they find a divine warrant to receive one as authorized to preach the word to them, from whom it is unwarrantable to receive the sacraments; or to join in communion with a particular church in her public exercises of divine worship, as prayer, praise, and hearing the word preached, while it is unwarrantable to join with the same church in baptism and the Lord's supper? Paul appears to represent the public and authoritative dispensation of the word as the principal part of the trust that was committed to him as a minister of Christ, 1 Corinth. i. 17. *Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach*, Eph. iii. 8. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.* In the *third* place, the occasional attendance on the administrations of different church-communions, is, from the nature of it, apt to be prostituted to carnal purposes. This sort of attendance is not necessary to the enjoyment of the gospel and its ordinances, in purity and simplicity: For these may be had in a stedfast adherence to *one* church-communion. But the great inducement to that sort of attendance, is, that thereby men's vain curiosity, or fondness for something new in the gifts of a speaker, or in his manner of address, is gratified: On this account, men *heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears.* Nay, persons are often induced to this sort of attendance out of complaisance to their friends or neighbours; or because, according to the atheistical temper of the present age, it is accounted a mark of liberality and enlargement of mind. In the *fourth* place, some give evidence, that they make an idol of ordinances, by their attendance on them in church communions from which they are in a state of separation. This is the case of those, who do not scruple to turn aside from the path of duty, to what they cannot deny to be sinful, for the sake, as they pretend, of the public ordinances.

## Of the Light which is said to be rising on the Church with regard to the Duty of Singing in Solemn Worship.

To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. *Isaiab.*

**A** LIGHT is said to be now rising on the church, by which, we are told, it appears, that the singing of the book of psalms, is wholly, or in part, to be laid aside from the solemn worship of the church of God, as unsuitable to the New Testament dispensation; that christians ought to make psalms for the use of the church in her solemn worship; and that they ought to esteem psalms, thus composed by themselves, as more proper to be sung in New Testament worship, than those which are to be found in the Old Testament.\*

It is allowed, that the church may receive an increase of light with regard to truth and duty; but as there is both a true and a false light, it behoves us carefully to distinguish the one from the other; for the latter is gross darkness. The following differences between them ought to be observed:

1. The true light carries conviction to the consciences of men, as being no other than the light of God's word. Whatever the true light discovers as truth or duty, bears this inscription, *Thus saith the Lord, or, Thus it is written.* But false light always tends to bring us under some other influence or authority than that of God speaking in his word. Thus in the present case, there is no plain scripture-warrant for setting aside the scripture-songs from the solemn praises of the church, and for substituting human compositions in their place. A great deal, indeed, is said about the suitability and advantages of human compositions; and about the disadvantages of the use of the scripture-songs: But is there any such thing written? Does the scripture teach us,

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that

\* The preface to an Examination, &c.

that we ought not to sing the book of psalms? Is this position to be found either in the express words of scripture, or in necessary consequences arising from the words? With regard to 1 Cor. xiv. 26. it cannot be pretended to be an instance of the singing of uninspired psalms in the ordinary solemn worship of the church; nor can the uttering of a psalm by a New Testament prophet, ever, in itself, warrant those who are no prophets to dictate psalms for this purpose. The other passage in Col. iii. 16. is as little to their purpose, while it cannot be shewn, that the apostle meant *psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs* of human composition, to be sung in the solemn and formal worship of the church; and while the psalms indited by the Spirit of God bear titles equivalent to these three designations.

2. The true light never shews us one truth or duty, without shewing us its agreement and connexion with the other truths and duties of God's word. The increase of true light with regard to any one of them, tends to establish us in our adherence to all the rest. False light, on the contrary, leads us to sacrifice many truths to one favourite opinion: Thus, in order to support the scheme of singing human compositions in solemn worship, we are forbidden to sing any psalm, as the words of David or Asaph, as describing their own frames or exercises, and recorded for our instruction. For the sake of this idol, the Old Testament church is given up to absolute ignorance of the meaning of their own typical worship, and of Christ himself, the blessed medium of the communication of spiritual blessings to their souls. For the sake of this idol, the words of scripture are denied to be the words of the Holy Ghost.

3. The true light leads us to cleave to whatsoever conformity to the word of God, his church has already attained, in doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; according to his solemn charge, *Hold fast that which thou hast*. But false light leads men to a contempt of such attainments. Thus the light about singing hymns of human composition in solemn worship, prevails much among the avowed enemies of Reformation principles; among Methodists, Baptists, Moravians, &c. The true light will increase our regard to the scriptural examples and attainments of those who have gone before us. Christ directs his people

to go forth by the footsteps of the flock, Song i. 8. to ask for the old paths, Jer. vi. 16. But false light leads men to disregard and disparage the examples of the church and people of God.

Thus, in the present case, the advocates for the scheme of singing other than the scripture-songs in the solemn worship of the church, make light of the contrariety of their scheme to the profession and practice of our reforming ancestors. But, certainly, there are several things which entitle their example in this matter to a very serious consideration; things which will be found to be very weighty, when the Lord arises to plead his cause with backsliding churches and professors.

1. Our reforming ancestors in Britain and Ireland, about the middle of the last century, were favoured with a very signal out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, giving them remarkably clear views, not only of particular articles of revealed truth, but of the system of it in general. Of this the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Church Government, and the Directory for Public Worship, agreed on by the Westminster Assembly, are lasting monuments. Nor is the oath of God, into which the multitude of church-members, in Britain and Ireland, entered, ever to be forgotten.

2. It was more especially the concern of our reforming ancestors in that period, to attain purity of worship, and to bear an ample testimony against all those human devices by which it had been corrupted.

3. Presbyterians, in the last century, appear to have been unanimous in their opposition to the singing of hymns of human composition in solemn worship, which was then practised by various sects.\*

Though our ancestors were far from pretending to be infallible, yet we should not lightly charge them with actual

\* In Hornius's Ecclesiastical History there is a list of the errors that began to be propagated in England about the year 1645; among which we find the following: "That the sacred songs and psalms of David ought not now to be sung; and that the songs which christians ought to use are hymns of their own composition." See Manton's commentary on James v. 13.

ual error. Now either they who took the singing of the book of psalms for suitable New Testament worship, or their opponents who reckon it ceremonial and antiquated, must have been chargeable with error and delusion. With whom the delusion was, we may know by a diligent and impartial attention to the Lord's word, accompanied with prayer; for delusion may be known by such marks as the following: 1. The want of an zealous regard to the truths of God on account of their having the stamp of his authority, 2 Thess. ii. 10. 11. Rev. iii. 16. 2. Fondness for novelty, or something to tickle the ear and engage the fancy in matters of religion, 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4. Deut. xxxii. 17. 3. Men's proud conceit of their own understanding and righteousness, disposing them to treat any plain and explicit testimony against their corruptions with contempt, and to represent those who adhere to such a testimony as a sect unworthy of notice, John. vii. 46, 47, 48. Acts xxii. 21, 22. Luke xix. 6. 7. Neh. iv. 1, 2. 4. Indifference and inattention to what is, especially, present duty, Matth. xvi. 3. Isai. xxii. 12, 13. Luke xix. 41. 42. 5. Taking up with their own thoughts, imaginations, or reasoning, as their rule in matters of religion, Prov. xiv. 12. Deut. xii. 8. Judges xxi. 25. Isai. lxxv. 2. viii. 20. 6. An obstinate rejection of the truth, under a pretence of the want of evidence, while they disregard that which is offered, Jer. xlv. 15, 16, 17. Hosea iv. 17. John. xi. 47, 48, 53. x. 24. ii. 18. 7. Boasting of light and other spiritual gifts, Rev. iii. 17. 1 Kings xxii. 24. 8. Deep security, Jerem. vi. 14. 1 Thes. v. 3. Isai xxix. 10.

## Of the Rules for Interpreting Scripture.

Let us prophesy according to the proportion [or analogy] of faith.  
*Epistle to the Romans.*

**I**T is observed in a Discourse on Singing Psalms, that if the literal sense of a passage of scripture be contrary to the current of scripture-doctrine; if it be trivial, affording no spiritual or practical instruction; if it be unsuitable to the scope and connexion of the place; then it is necessary to depart from the literal sense.

To this passage the following objection has been made: "This is not the rule by which we may know when a passage is to be taken figuratively: but the rule is this, when the literal sense would involve an absurdity, we must conclude it is figurative; and also when the scripture itself discovers any particular passage to be so. There are some scripture passages which have what may be called a double sense."\*

**ANSWER.** Some have defined the literal sense to be, that which the Holy Spirit first intended to signify by the words, whether they be used in the simple grammatical sense or figuratively. This is indeed the only true signification of the words of scripture, from which we are never to depart. But here, in speaking of the literal sense, we mean that sense only which the words of a passage obviously bear, being taken grammatically, or according to the letter; as contra-distinguished from the sense in which some passages or expressions are to be taken, according to the rules of figurative language. The question then is, when a particular passage is to be taken in a literal, and when in a figurative sense. This being premised, we offer the following observations on the subject:

1. What the objector lays down as a rule, may, and indeed ought to be understood in a sense perfectly agreeable to

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 55. 58.

to what was said in the Discourse: Because all the things there specified, as rendering it necessary to take a passage of scripture in a figurative sense, are such as involve great absurdity. For it is a great absurdity to suppose that the scripture contradicts itself. But this is manifestly the case, if a text be supposed to contain a sense contrary to the current doctrine of scripture. Nor is it less certainly the case, if it be supposed, that there is nothing contained in the sense of a text that is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, or for instruction in righteousness; since the scripture itself declares, that *all scripture is given by inspiration, and is profitable* for these purposes; and that *whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we thro' patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope,* 2 Tim. iii. 16. Rom. xv. 4. Some can see little or no instruction in the account of Sampson's collection of so many foxes. But there is no necessity here to depart from the literal sense for want of instruction; since the connexion of it with Sampson's just resentment, and the consequent overthrow of the enemies of God's people, is abundantly instructive, and affords rich matter of meditation.\* Nor is it necessary, for the sake of instruction, to depart from the literal sense of the list that is given of the dukes of Edom; for these are a cloud of witnesses to the fulfilment of the promises of temporal benefits which had been made to Esau. And as the Edomites are represented as in a flourishing condition, while the chosen people of God were in a state of poverty and oppression: hence we learn, that we are not to think it strange to see the ungodly getting their good things, while the godly are in adversity. To give one instance more; some can find no instruction in the mention of twenty-nine knives, among the vessels of the house of the Lord brought back from Babylon, Ezra i. 9. But surely the particular account which we have of these vessels and utensils, is intended to point out the special care, and particular providence of God exercised about the concerns of his worship, and the accomplishment of a remarkable prophecy, Jer. xxvii. 21, 22. *The vessels that remain in the house of the Lord shall be carried to Babylon, and there shall they be until the day that I visit them,*

\* See Bishop Hall's contemplation on this part of sacred history.

them, saith the Lord; then will I bring up and restore them to their place. We may sometimes not readily apprehend the instruction contained in a particular passage of scripture; but to conclude there is none in it, is rash, blasphemous, and absurd. If at first we can see little or no instruction in a text considered by itself, let us attend to its connexion with, and dependence on what comes before, or what follows, and we shall hardly fail to see something of the propriety and usefulness of it: And supposing we should not be able to see so much, if we have a due reverence of the scriptures, we will believe there is, in many passages of scripture, precious instruction, which, as yet, we have never apprehended.\* But farther, it is absurd to suppose, that a text may be taken in a sense unsuitable to the scope and circumstances of it. For an exposition of any part of a discourse, which is not suitable to the purpose of the writer, and has no coherence with what goes before or with what follows, must be either foreign to the mind of the writer, or must prove his discourse to be impertinent and ridiculous. It is an ancient rule of interpretation, that the true sense of any passage in any discourse, is to be gathered from antecedents and consequents.

2. But by what is absurd, the objector seems to mean something different from and previous to the consideration of the analogy of faith, or the scope and circumstances of the

\* With regard to having recourse to the supposition of a figure or allegory, where it is difficult (we cannot, consistently with the end for which the whole scripture was given, allow it ever to be impossible) to find the meaning of a passage, *where the structure of its sentences may be perplexed, the terms ambiguous, or where it may refer to customs and facts with which we are unacquainted, or the subject may be beyond our comprehension, &c.*\* We are in such cases, to acknowledge our ignorance; and that we are in no condition to determine whether such a text ought to be understood literally, or figuratively. In such a case, we may venture to say, that the rash attempt of some learned men, to accommodate the literal sense of texts to their apprehensions, by pretended emendations of the text, and by artful criticism, have done as much harm to the church of God, as the most obviously impertinent attempts of others to find allegories and mystical meanings in such parts of scripture.

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 56.

the text: "For," says he, "you must first determine by another rule, whether the text be really literal or figurative: and having determined this, then the sense must be regulated by the analogy of faith, or the scope of the place, or both." So that the absurdity he means is not what arises from inconsistency with what is plainly the doctrine of the bible, or with the manifest design of the Holy Spirit in such a passage; but inconsistency with his natural reason and pre-conceived opinion. Here we certainly differ from him. For, in the *first* place, though the literal sense of a passage or expression, taken by itself, or without regard to the context, be consistent with reason or common sense, yet it will not always follow, that it is not to be taken figuratively. It is necessary to understand the following passages figuratively, though there is nothing in the literal or grammatical sense of them that is inconsistent with reason or common sense; Song ii. 12. *Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.* John xii. 4. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall unto the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth fruit.* xi. 9. *Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbled not, because he seeth the light of the world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.* Upon the principle of the objector (namely, if a passage of scripture can, by any means, bear a literal meaning consistent with reason and common sense, it must be taken literally) the Socinians proceed, when they deny the allegorical and spiritual meaning of the Song of Solomon; representing that part of the sacred scriptures as an Eclogue, like those of Theocritus and Virgil; in which Solomon, in the character of a shepherd, sings his love of Pharaoh's daughter; a supposition, however, which has been shewn to be as contrary to the history of the bible, as it is to the supernatural and spiritual design of it. In the *second* place, it is most dangerous to conclude, that the literal sense of the text involves an absurdity, previous to the consideration of the analogy of faith and the circumstances of the text; and, upon the footing of such a conclusion, to determine that the text is to be taken figuratively. This is the very

very course that Socinians take with those texts which, literally understood, set forth the vicarious nature of the death of Christ. Hence they say, that redemption by the blood of Christ, is not a proper, but only a figurative or metaphorical redemption; and the true reason of the assertion is, that they have already concluded, that a proper redemption by a satisfaction to divine justice is impossible and absurd. In the same manner, they consider themselves under a necessity of taking all the places of scripture, in which Christ is called God, in an improper and figurative sense; as when angels or civil magistrates are so called.

To prevent misconstruction, we may add, that it is not here meant, that there can be any thing really absurd or contradictory to right reason in the sense of scripture; but that when we meet with a passage that appears so to us, we should conclude, not that we are to understand it figuratively; but rather, that it sets forth some mystery, which is above the sphere of our reason, or that we do not as yet understand it: In which case it must be the height of rashness to determine how the words are to be taken, till we have examined them more closely, or, till we have considered their connexion with what goes before and with what follows; and have compared them with other passages that relate to the same subject.

3. What the objector says, about some passages of scripture having a double meaning, is very exceptionable. For while he tells us, that the only rule for determining what passages have this double sense, is, "the discoveries of the mind of God in them by his inspired messengers;"\* what he says implies, that a person may have a just view of the whole sense of a particular passage, according to the scope and connexion of the place where it is; and yet the same passage may have a quite different sense put upon it by an inspired messenger. The objector seems herein to agree with the Papists, who hold, that different co-ordinate senses may justly be put upon the same words of scripture. With many orthodox divines, we judge the true sense of scripture to be one only, for such reasons as the following:

First, the scheme of the scriptures having more co-ordinate senses than one, has no foundation in the scripture

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itself.

\* An Examination, &c. pag. 53.

itself. Bellarmine and other Popish doctors, produce various places of scripture, which, they say, are to be taken literally in the Old Testament, and yet are explained in a spiritual and mystical sense in the New: Such as those places which speak of the coming of the Israelites out of Egypt, of their passage through the Red sea, of the manna, of the water that came out of the rock, and the like. With our divines, we answer, that in some places of the New Testament, where they pretend, that a new sense is put upon some places of the Old Testament, there is no such thing; there is only an accommodation of the words, to express or illustrate a subject, to which something that is meant by the words in the place where they are found in the Old Testament, is in some respect analogous or parallel. There seems to be such an accommodation of the following expression in the nineteenth Psalm, *Their words to the world's end*, in Rom. x. 18. Nor do we deny, that there are in scripture many allegories, that is, continued metaphors, and various types, that is, not only words signifying things, but things signifying other things. But with regard to such passages, we observe, that the literal and the spiritual significations of them, do not properly constitute two co-ordinate senses, but two parts of one and the same comprehensive sense.

Secondly, If a passage had two co-ordinate senses, it could not be understood according to the known rules of human speech, namely, those delivered in logic, rhetorick, or grammar. But it is contrary to the perspicuity of scripture (than which there is no other property of it more certain) to say, that any part of it cannot be understood according to the known rules of human speech; since God speaks in his word in condescension to our capacity, and in order to be understood. We allow, that unregenerate men do not rightly apprehend spiritual things, according to the representation of them in the word: but that is not at all owing to any obscurity or ambiguity in the manner of expressing these things; but to the unsuitableness of the spiritual and sublime nature of the things expressed to their natural apprehensions. The words are the fittest that human language could afford, for expressing those things; and all their commentaries and discourses on them are no farther to be valued, than as they serve to point out that fitness, and to direct our attention to it. It

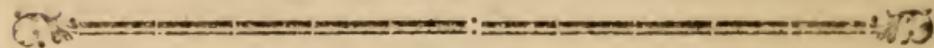
must also be owned, that we experience an obscurity in the typical and allegorical parts of scripture ; which arise from our want of the knowledge of what is truly signified by the words or typical things ; a knowledge which never could be said to be absolutely unattainable ; or from our over-looking some of the numerous circumstances that are often necessary to be attended to, in order to the right understanding of such passages.

Lastly, we cannot conceive, that our Lord and his apostles, in arguing with the Jews and others, from passages in the Old Testament, understood these passages otherwise than according to the common rules of logic, grammar, or rhetoric ; that is, they took them in a sense, which the people they had to deal with, were obliged to acknowledge to be the true one.

OBJECTION. How does it agree with this doctrine concerning the unity of the sense of scripture, to make the sacrifices under the law both typify the death of Christ, and represent the services of believers ?

ANSWER. The death of Christ was, in a primary and proper sense, a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and by the offering of sacrifices under the Old Testament it was shadowed forth as not yet accomplished. But this is no way inconsistent with the consideration of the act of believers, in bringing or presenting these sacrifices, as on their part an instance of obedience. For though the offering of sacrifices, in the peculiar consideration of it, as an institution of the ceremonial law, was purely typical, *a shadow of good things to come* ; yet in the more general consideration of it, as an instance of obedience to God's command, it was of the same nature with any other part of the religious worship required by the moral law. The offerer of a sacrifice, so far as he was rightly exercised, acted faith in the death of Christ, as the sole ground of his pardon and acceptance with God ; he made the revealed will of God the only rule and reason of his obedience, and solemnly dedicated himself and all he had unto God. The offering of sacrifices, being thus considered in a moral view, as an instance of acceptable service to God, is fitly made use of in scripture to express the service of believers in general. We do not mean, that it typifies those services, but that it serves to express or represent them, just  
as,

as, in Jer. viii. the stork, the crane, the swallow, represent all the birds of each of these species; and as in Isai. ii. 4. the ceasing of the use of swords and spears, represents the ceasing of military operations in general. So here, there are not two different senses; but, as it is frequently the case, one sense comprehending two things; namely, the ceremonial institution typifying the death of Christ; and the moral and spiritual service of the offerer, serving to represent or express other instances of acceptable obedience. So it is used to express prayer, Psal. cxli. 2. offices of charity, Heb. xiii. 15. godly sorrow for sin, Psal. li. 17.



## Of the Duty of Electing Persons who profess the true Religion, to Civil Offices.

The people, considered in their political capacity, should, by their deed of civil constitution provide, &c.

**A**S the following question has been much agitated of late, so, it is hoped, a few hints concerning it will not be deemed improper.

The question is, Whether a people, in their political capacity, may provide, by their deed of civil constitution, that no other shall be chosen to occupy places of eminent power and trust, than such as make a credible profession of their willingness to concur in the true religion and reformation?

In handling this question, it is necessary, indeed, to be explicit in declaring the distinction between church and state; the one being of a spiritual, the other of a temporal nature; they having no right to interfere with one another, in the exercise of their respective authorities.

But it seems to imply no such interference, nor to be any way inconsistent with scripture or reason, for a people to agree

gree among themselves, that they may promote none to the magistracy but such as make a profession of sound religious principles. This agreement of the people being all that can be meant by their deed of civil constitution in the question, the making of such a deed seems to be no more than a plain scriptural duty.

A christian, in choosing, for example, a representative in the legislature of the state, ought to attend to the religious, as well as to the political character of a candidate. He ought to honour such as fear the Lord, Psal. xv. 4. and he may declare his resolution to do so. Now, why may not a civil society make the same declaration? What may warrantably be done by one person in his political capacity, may be done by a civil society. It is as competent for a society to declare of what description they will choose persons to a civil office, as it is for an individual to do so. Some affect to distinguish between the people's declaring a certain class of men eligible or ineligible to a certain office, and their declaring, that they will actually choose or refuse them. But what is meant by a society's declaring a person eligible or ineligible to an office, but the declaration of their will to choose or refuse him? Now, a society's declared will to choose, is so much the same with its actually choosing, that the difference between them (at least as it affects the present question) is too fine and subtle to be discerned by common capacities. The preference thus given to person's professing sound religious principles, is no infringement of any man's right; it touches neither his personal liberty, nor his conscience, nor his simple reputation. As for that eminent reputation,† upon which the choice of persons to public offices is supposed to proceed, it cannot be extorted; it is voluntarily given or withheld; as not being among the natural unalienable rights of mankind.

The question, then, is merely, whether a civil society has a right to choose men of such a description, or not? The state of the question is quite altered, when it is supposed to be about

† Puffendorf in his treatise *De Officio Hominis et Civis*, Book ii. Chap. 14 enumerates intensive or eminent reputation among the imperfect rights, that is, rights which cannot be vindicated by force or legal prosecution. *Estimationem intensivam si quis aliis etiam bene meritis denegaverit, non injuriam facit; sed dumtaxat ob inhumanitatem et velut incivilitatem male audit.*

hout an imposing or compelling power exercised towards any member of civil society. For, in simple election, there is no jurisdiction, or exercise of magisterial power at all.

The sacramental test in England is justly considered as a grievance; because it occasions not only an impious prostitution of the Lord's supper, but also, as it is managed there, a contemptuous disregard of the most proper evidences of a pious disposition in candidates for civil offices; and because it is manifestly designed for the support of an oppressive hierarchy.

But it is urged, that this is a blending of civil and religious matters. The difficulty of answering this objection lies in ascertaining its meaning. Does it mean, that hereby the people do something in their civil capacity, which they ought to do as church-members only? This cannot be pretended; because they do nothing but what it is allowed each of them may do as an individual, even in his civil capacity. Does it mean, that religion, by the resolution supposed, is made a condition of men's enjoying the natural rights of citizens? Neither can this be pretended; because the resolution in question is only the will of the majority of the society to choose such a one to a civil office, to which no one has a natural right. Does it mean, that the supposed resolution would lead individuals to the disowning of magistrates, who had not religious qualifications? This cannot be said with any colour of reason; because the supposed resolution is here considered as what is competent to the majority only of the society: We owe allegiance to whatever magistrates are set up by the majority, though they should not be such as we would choose. Or, lastly, does it mean, that we ought not to consider the interest of Christ in the management of our civil affairs; so as to order the latter in subordination and subservience to the former: This is what no christian dare say. We are to acknowledge the Lord in all our ways, and, in every capacity.

Some may perhaps object, that the expression, "magistrates should be obliged to concur in religion and reformation," seems to imply more than merely the election of religious persons to be magistrates. We answer, that such language had come into common use, from the notion that has much prevailed about the hereditary right of such as have been once admitted to be magistrates. But the truth is, neither has any

man a perfect right of obliging a civil society to make him their magistrate, or to continue him as such; nor has any civil society a perfect right of obliging him to be or continue their magistrate: And therefore the sense of the expression must be, that the civil society should agree to choose unto, or continue in the magistracy, no other than such as give proper evidence of their willingness to concur in religion and reformation; that evidence being made the condition upon which they are to hold their office. The expression in question, as used by the Associate Presbytery, cannot be understood otherwise than as now explained, consistently with their declaration, "that those  
" only do properly fall under the denomination of magistrates  
" who are in the possession and exercise of magistracy by  
" the will and consent of the civil society."

F I N I S.



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 Nathaniel Weakly

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 Hugh Holmes  
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 Matthew Mathers  
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 James Scroggs  
 Samuel Wilson  
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 Jno. Woodburn

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 John Forsyth  
 John Hamill, 9 copies  
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 Joseph Hamill  
 Robert Hamill  
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 Thomas Nisbet  
 John Sloan

*M<sup>c</sup>Connellsburg.*

James Nisbet

*Westmoreland County.*

Robert Hamill

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 William Alexander  
 John Allison  
 Benjamin Anderson  
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 David Atcheson, jun.  
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 John Atcheson  
 John Atekheson  
 David Thompson Archer  
 Hugh Allison  
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 John Baird

Robert Boyd  
 Christopher Buchannan  
 John Buchannan  
 James Ballentine  
 Samuel Barr  
 Alexander Burns  
 Jno. Boyd  
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 Samuel Caldbreth  
 Jacob Donaldson  
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 Thomas Dunn  
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 James Herron  
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 preacher of the gospel.  
 Ebenezer Henderson,  
 preacher of the gospel.  
 George Hamilton  
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 Samuel Johnston  
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 Thomas Johnston  
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William Ledlie	Alexander M'Koy
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Robert Martin	Brice M'Gihon, 24 cop.
John Miller	Samuel Morehead
James M'Laughlin	John M'Gill
James Miller	Andrew Munro
Peter M'Kee	James M'Cready
Samuel M'Cane	Thomas M'Call
David Mathers	Robert M'Curdy
Samuel M'Kee	Charles Moore
Joseph M'Kee	Andrew Mann
Thomas M'Kee	Thomas M'Nary
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George M'Comb	David M'Rory
James M'Michall	Abijah Merrie
Robert M'Dowell	William M'Farland
John M'Cimmon	John M'Williams
David M'Nary	William M'Gregor
Ifaac Miller	20 cop.
Samuel M'Bride	William M'Clane
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Robert Ralston	John Thompson
James Ross	Rev. Robert Warwick,
John Ralston	17 cop.
Archibald Ralston	William Wotherspoon
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John Smith	Henry Westly
William Strain, 10 cop.	James Young, 2 cop.

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Ebenezer Bane	James Lawfon
William Bane	James Lindsay
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John Black	Samuel Miller
John Banning	Samuel M'Clellan
Rev. John Cree, minister of the Gospel	Samuel Mealy
Walter Currie	William Mealy
George Currie	John M'Ewen
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John Campbell	David Steele
William Gibson	Thomas Tait
James Harper	Robert Tait
Andrew Harper	Joseph Tait
Daniel Heirs	Thomas Wilson
Andrew Kinnear	Hugh Wilson
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William Fowler	Thomas King	Henry Smith
William Gouell	Thomas M'Cullough	David Taylor
Robert Guin	James Miller	Elias Viehers
Rev. Abraham Craig, M. A.	<i>Synthianna, Harrison County, Kentucky.</i>	

N. B. The following name came too late for insertion under the proper head.

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By the late Rev. THOMAS HALYBURTON,  
Sometime Minister of the Gospel at CERES, and after-  
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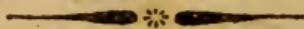
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