

A SERIOUS
ANSWER
TO
A Late BOOK
STILED,
A REPLY to Mr Robert Steed's
EPISTLE concerning SINGING.
WHEREIN

The chief Scriptures and Arguments are examined, and the Weakness thereof shewed.

TOGETHER
With an ANSWER to the several Reflections, and false Charges, against both Churches and
Persons.
Recommended to the Elders, Ministers, and Members of the Baptized Churches.

John 4.24 God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth
Jer. 20.10. I heard the defaming of many. Report; say they, and we will report.

London, Printed in the Year, 1692

To the Elders, Ministers and Members of the Baptized Churches throughout *England* and *Wales*.

Beloved in our Lord;

It is a great Truth, that as we are not to omit any thing in the Solemn Worship of God that is of his Appointment; so we are not to admit any thing that is not of his Institution, under any pretence whatsoever to be intruded upon us. But it is greatly to be lamented that there is a proneness in Professors (except by Grace prevented) to turn aside from this Holy Rule, either through the Infirmary of the Flesh, or the Deception or Infection, which through Temptation they meet withal in the World, whereof there hath been and still is continually sad Experience. An Instance whereof we have in the matter we have now to present to your serious Consideration.

When it pleased the Lord in Times past to enlighten some gracious Holy Persons in that great Ordinance of Baptism, as it was commanded by but Lord and Saviour, and practised by Him and his Apostles, and the Primitive Churches. And therefore to cast off Infants Sprinkling, which was set up in the room of it as a Humane Invention. They were then also, on Scripture-Grounds, well weighed and seriously considered, convinced that the common way of praying to God, or praising of God (in what manner soever it were performed) by a composed Form (as usually then was, and still is the Custom of many Protestants) was not of Divine Institution, and therefore to be rejected. And accordingly it was in those Days laid aside by the Baptized Churches, whom the Lord then graciously and eminently owned by many signal Tokens of his Presence among them. But now to our great Grief, some whose Duty and Place it was to have settled, and further to have established the Churches in that Work of Reformation, are declined from it, asserting (with Heat and Confidence) that to sing by a composed Form, with a whole Multitude lifting up their Voices together, the Ignorant and Profane, the Unbelievers or Unconverted with the Church-Members, is an Ordinance of our Lord Jesus; which they practise, and with vehement Earnestness are contending for: whereby the Peace and Edification of the Churches is hindered, and the Minds and Consciences of many gracious Souls perplexed and intangled. By this they are not only building again what hath been destroyed, but thereby also there is plain Introduction unto a farther declining in Prayer, and others of the Holy Ordinances of our Blessed Lord and Law-giver. This common or popular way of Singing they also with great endeavour are labouring to promote in all the Churches, by their publick pleading for it; by Preaching and Printing in the defence of it. And therein they not only vehemently contradict and oppose whatever is presented by any from the Holy Scriptures, to deliver them or others from that Humane Invention which hath been so long rejected by the Churches aforesaid; but they also take a licentious Liberty to reflect upon them that would hinder their design in this matter; not only most falsly aspersing them, but also uttering a most false Accusation and Slander against the Baptized Churches in their first gathering, laying that to their Charge as a received Principle owned by them, which they had openly declared against to the whole World in their Confession of Faith, which was in those Days Printed and Published; whereby they stigmatize or brand them with the deepest Hypocrisy that depraved Mortals can be guilty of. These Things (which are matter of great Lamentation) are either evidently insinuated, or plainly declared, in a late printed Tract concerning Singing, in answer to a small Sheet published by Mr. *R. Steed*, which was intended chiefly for, and therefore written by way of Epistle to that Church to which he is related; which by some Friends that had perused it, was given also into the Hands of the Members of other Churches: wherein he only gives his understanding of what the Holy Scriptures speak concerning that Subject, without mentioning or reflecting on any others that are of a contrary Mind. But Mr. *Keach*, who is the chief Promoter this Controversy, so as to heighten it to a Contention, said, *It must be answered, and that he would answer it.* And we do not question on good grounds, but that he and Mr. *Whinnel* (by his Instigation) joined together to contrive that Answer which they have printed: Tho Mr. *Keach*, as we are informed, did say to some, that Mr. *Wh.* was not the Author of it. It's very probable that he was not the principal, but Mr. *K.* expects to have the greatest Honour in due time of that Enterprise, as being the chiefest Contriver of it. But that their Book might pass with the greater

Applause and Credit, it is in the beginning of it recommended by an Epistle as a very sober Answer, subscribed with several Names at the Conclusion of it: Some of those Persons, whose Names are there subscribed, are such as we have no Communion with, being such as are called Free-willers (or *Arminians*) holding a falling away from true Grace: And some others whose Names are set down, have professed that they did not subscribe it. And some that did give their consent, say, they had not done it, had it not been for Mr. *Keach's* Importunity: And one of the chief of them saith, that he never saw the Epistle till after it was printed, to which his Hand was subscribed. So that it's ushered in with a gross Forgery in the beginning of it, as it is carried on with unchristian Reflections and false Accusations, which certainly cannot consist with Christian Sobriety or common Honesty, whatever may be pretended. But Mr. *Keach* who knows how to take *Refined Gold* out of another Man's Mine or Lines, made ready to his Hand, and present it as his own finding, tho to the great prejudice of him whose indeed it was, may know also how to take the Liberty to subscribe other Persons Names, tho without their Consent. The serious Consideration of these Things, as they have been matter of Trouble and Sorrow to us, so they have engaged some of us, who have hitherto been silent as to these things, now, to appear for the Truth of our Lord against such Innovations. And therefore to endeavour that the Churches may not be abused, nor their Members deceived by such Artifices as these are. We do not intend to answer every seeming Argument and carping Cavil, or to take notice of every unseeming Reflection contained in that printed Book of theirs: But shall chiefly insist on the main Pillars of their pretended Reasons, for that sort of Singing which they would persuade the Churches to entertain as an Ordinance of our Lord and Saviour: For if the Foundation fail, the Building cannot stand. And we shall return a Reply to some of the most gross, most false and grievous Accusations and Reflections that are therein so boldly vented; and shall leave it with you in the fear of the Lord diligently and seriously to consider, and to search the Scriptures, waiting for the Spirit of Truth to lead you into this as well as into all other Truths, that either concern your most Holy Faith or Practice, whereby you may be preserved from turning aside to those Humane Traditions, from which you have been delivered, which we desire and pray that the Lord may bless unto you for these gracious Ends before mentioned.

That which we shall endeavour (with as much plainness and brevity as the matter will bear) to lay before you, are these following Particulars.

First, We shall detect and answer to some of those false Reflections and Accusations cast upon us and the Baptized Churches, which are contain'd in Mr. *Whinnel's* Epistle, and in the Book it self.

Secondly, We shall manifest the weakness of the Foundation on which they build their Practice of common or popular Singing, which will be apparent by an Impartial Examination of these following Enquiries.

1. Whether Singing to the Praise of God, according to the Phrase or Expression of it in the Holy Scriptures, be to be restrained, or only is to be understood of uttering the Praise due to the most High God by a Musical melodious Modulation, or tuning of the Voice, as they are pleased to describe it.

2. Whether Singing to the Praise of God, (according to the direction given us by our Lord in the New Testament) is to be performed by a composed stinted Form, by a whole mixt Multitude, with the Church-Members in the solemn Assembly of the Church, lifting up their Voices together in Consort.

3. Whether those Scriptures, *Col.3.16. Eph.5.19.* do command or justify such a sort of popular Singing in or by the Church as aforesaid, which they so earnestly contend for.

4. Whether that Hymn spoken of, *Mat. 26.30.* and *Mark 14.26.* or the Hymning, or (as it is

translated) the Singing the Praise of God by *Paul and Silas, Acts 16.25*. do further justify that Practice which they plead for. And,

First, Concerning their Reflections on us, or Accusations against us; we find Mr. *Whinnel* insinuating in the beginning of his Epistle, as if Custom, not Conscience, did hinder us from joining with them in their way of Singing.

To which we answer; *First*, That it is a very unbecoming Censure, in which there is not the least Grain of Truth or Charity exercised by him: The same rash and unjust Judgment may as well be given against him and others, for not conforming to the Common Prayer or the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, by those that are zealous for it: which we suppose he would reckon to be a very false and very uncharitable Censure.

Secondly, We do declare to him and to all Men, That the Lord knows it is not Custom, or a long disuse or neglect of it, that makes us averse to that Practice of theirs; But Judgment and Conscience, knowing on a deliberate and serious Consideration, that it hath no more Foundation from any Precept or Example of our Lord Jesus or his Apostles to warrant it, than common set Form of Prayer hath. In which we are the more confirmed by the weakness of the Arguments, which by them and others are produced for the Justification of it.

But *Secondly*, He doth positively affirm in that Epistle, “That they had no mind to have published their Thoughts to the World, or to have troubled the Churches with any Dissertations about it; but endeavoured to have a Friendly Debate with their Brethren who were conven’d to consult the Churches Welfare: But that their endeavours therein were obstructed by the Opposers (*viz. of that common way of Singing.*) And that soon after some of them from an imprudent Zeal, not only openly opposed it, but took to themselves a lawless Liberty to calumniate those who endeavoured the restoration of it, &.”

Answ. To all this bold Calumny we answer, that we believe he cannot prove any part of it to be true: It is a very false Suggestion, which is uttered either from a false Information or great Forgetfulness, or from a sinful Contrivance.

For first; Whereas he saith, they had no mind to have publish’d their Thoughts about it, &c. but that they were obstructed in their Desires and Attempts to have a friendly Debate, &c. We reply; What was the reason that before any Person, that was contrary-minded to that Practice of theirs, had said or printed any thing publickly against it, that this Opinion of theirs concerning Singing, was preach’d up, and frequently and vehemently pressed by several of them in variety of Assemblies; and asserted in Print, to the view of all Men, by Mr. *Keach*, in his Treatise call’d *Gold Refin’d*, and in his great Book of Scripture Tropes and Metaphors; and by Mr. *H. C.* in a select Treatise on that Subject, though with more Sobriety than any we have seen since, that hath been published on that Controversy by any of them? Had they no mind to publish their Dissertations about it? Was their publick Preaching and publick Printing for it, against their Minds; which was done by them before any Person did openly contradict them in it? Who can believe it? And all this before there was any motion or mention of a friendly Debate about it that we know of; neither as yet, do we know of any such Motion seriously made, except it were for a Liberty to introduce it by a major Vote in a Church of Christ, &c. which was long after they had endeavoured to promote it by their Endeavours aforesaid. If we were blame-worthy in this matter, it was in being so long silent, whereby they took the opportunity to leaven so many honest Souls, and to beguile so many Churches (if their Number be so many as they boast of) with this irregular Doctrine and Practice; hereby it was that to such a height of Confidence Mr. *Keach* was come, (who makes Breaches more than he repairs any) that when one did but once preach on that Subject of Singing in the Church to which he belongs on a Lord’s Day, far enough off from Mr. *Keach*’s Congregation; because he did it not according to his

Sentiments, he coming the next day or shortly after, in much affection to visit him, Mr. *Keach* (having heard of his Preaching, as before mention'd) immediately falls upon him, as soon as ever he came into Mr. *Keach's* House, with a most severe and very uncivil passionate Reprimand, for daring to preach after that manner, contrary to his Judgment; as if he had the preheminance over all. But when Mr. *Marlow* did but endeavour to manifest the Weakness of Mr. *Keach's* Arguments for common Singing, which he publickly delivered in his Meeting-house, not on a Lord's Day, but on a select leisure-Time when he was like to have the Company of many persons of several Churches, a Time set apart yearly by him to preach up that with other Doctrines, on purpose contriv'd to influence all the Churches (especially in the City) with that Will-worship or Practice, O what a Clamour and Exclamation is there made against Mr. *M.* for it, by him and others of the same Perswasion with him! So that it plainly appears they had not a mind to be silent, as Mr. *Wh* falsly suggests they had, but to publish all they could, by all manner of ways, for the propagating of this Opinion; and to controul all with a high imperious Hand, that should stand in their way, or offer any contradiction to their Design. They had no mind to have their Arguments examined; they would indeed have none to speak but themselves.

Secondly; Whereas he saith they desired a friendly Debate with their Brethren, but were obstructed by the Opposers, &c. In this also we must charitably reckon, that he is very forgetful. For he was present at the General-Meeting of the Messengers, when he with others of them, were proffer'd a time for a friendly Conference on that Subject whenever they would desire it. Only it was by the unanimous Consent of the whole Assembly agreed, that it was not expedient to have the Controversy argued among them at that time, because it would unavoidably obstruct them in the Business they came about, which was for the general Good of all the Churches. Indeed at the last General Meeting, Mr. *Whinnel* did craftily and surreptitiously, in Combination with others, on the last Day of that Assembly, when the most part of the Country-Messengers were gone home, and many of the Messengers of the Churches in the City absent, a Time intended only for them that remained, to put in order what had been agreed on in the former days of their Assembling, that it might be presented to the Churches; then did he present something to be debated concerning Persons retaining their Communion with a Church whereof they were Members, though the Practice of common Singing were, contrary to their declared Judgments and Consciences, set up in it. Which being then so unseasonably presented in the Absence of the greater part of the Assembly, it was witnessed against by many then present, as that which was not fit to be debated at that time; it favouring more of a politick Contrivance than of Honesty and Candor. So that we are confident he cannot produce any time wherein a Debate of the Matter in difference, was obstructed or opposed, when there was a convenient opportunity for it.

Lastly; Whereas he accuseth those that differ from him in this matter, for taking a lawless Liberty to caluminate Persons with their Way of Singing. We answer; We know not, nor ever heard of any that did take such a sinful Liberty to caluminate any on that account: it must lie at their own doors. For when Mr. *Marlow* printed his first little Tract about Singing, in answer to what Mr. *Keach* had publickly preach'd for the proof of it, at the time aforesaid, forthwith four or five of them appear in Print against him with great Vehemency and Zeal, though with very weak Arguments; and some of them with many bitter and untoward Reflections. Mr. *Keach* falls upon him in a publick House with great Passion, without any Provocation given him by Mr. *Marlow*, except his answering his Arguments for common Singing. One Sheet among the rest was printed and published by Persons that would not, or were ashamed, to write their Names at length, which was a piece, as we may call it, of Raillery, where there was little else but the uncivil Abusing of Mr. *M.* which to render him the more infamous, was publickly tendered to Persons in some of the Baptized Churches in the City of *London*.

Which if Mr. *K.* was not the Instigator and Contriver, yet it is well known that he did promote the Publishing of it. But we need go no further than the perusal of this Book, printed in answer to Mr.

Steed. Surely it laid upon them no necessity to answer it, as Mr. *Wh.* would suggest. For he writ it for the Church to which he belongs: They cannot say he calumniated or reflected upon any of them, or medled with any of their Books. And the less need had they to write, if it be true, or that they believe what they say (*pag.* 3.) of their Reply, That all his Arguments were fully answered in their former Books before that Epistle was printed. Why then if it were so, they needed but to refer him and others to those Books, and set down the Pages where those Answers were to be found, and never have troubled themselves to write, or others to read their needless and tedious Repetitions. But what, was it a Crime in their Eyes, that the Members of other Churches had the sight of it? Must nothing be seen or read by others but what they will allow of, without sustaining the penalty of their Contradiction, Reflection and Calumny? He gave no publick notice of in an Observator for the whole Nation to know it? But if they did think in conscience they must answer, his Arguments, could it not be done without such untoward Reflections and Accusations? There's scarce a Leaf wherein there be not some untoward Slurs or other inserted. Sometimes he is rendred by them a Promoter of Enthusiasm and the Notions of the *Seekers*, or an Upholder of the Way of the *Quakers*, with other such like Invectives. Some of their Expressions seem more like unsavoury Jears and Scoffs than a sober Reply though interlarded with the Titles of *Honour'd and Dear Brother*, which may be inserted as a covering for their uncivil treating of him, or as Oil upon the Sacrifice to make the Fire of their Indignation to pierce the deeper. But what do such causeless Reflections, or such groundless Accusations serve for? certainly, for nothing but Exasperation, or to manifest unmortifi'd Pride and Passion. The Lord grant that if Mr. *Th. Wh.* or Mr. *K.* print any more Epistles or Books, they may put on more Sobriety, Truth and Candor, than they have in this: Which we mention, because he and Mr. *Keach* in that Book, do threaten and boast that they will examine or answer every Treatise that shall come out to hinder their Design in this matter. Which Threatening of theirs we trust, by the Grace of God, will quicken us to be so much the more diligent to defend the Truth of Christ in this matter; and not to give the least place to them in this Controversy by silence, as we have formerly done. For as we are bold to say, that Mr. *Whinnel* hath most falsly accused us, to say that any of us have taken a lawless Liberty to calumniate Persons that would endeavour to set up this sort of Singing in the Churches: So we do as boldly, in the fear of the Lord, declare that the Way of common Singing, which they contend for, is after the Rudiments of the World, after the Traditions of Men, but not after Christ. It is their lawless Liberty they take thus to accuse and represent us without cause, in this Epistle and the like, that hath necessitated us for Truth's sake, that it may not suffer by such false Reports, to declare such things concerning some of them, which otherwise we should have buried in oblivion.

But it was not enough, it seems, that we should be thus scandalously represented by Mr. *Wh.* in the Epistle, that did not give a sufficient vent to their Indignation, when we look into the Book, where we might expect nothing but Answers to his Arguments, there also (as we said before) we must be exercised with the reading their needless, causeless Reflections on Mr. *Steed*, and with their most false slandering of the Baptized Churches in their first gathering. We shall say little to their taunting Reflections against him, or their imperious treating of him, in their Answer to him: Only whereas they impertinently say, that Mr. *Knowles* preach'd up the Singing they plead for in the Forenoon, and that he preach'd against it in the Afternoon: We, upon enquiry of the Members of that Church (that were present at that time in the Assembly) find it to be utterly false, a meer Invention put into the Head of some unwary Person to vent, which Mr. *Wh.* and Mr. *Keach* greedily take up to proclaim without Modesty, Sobriety or Verity, on which we may with great cause use their own exclaiming Expression, *Sad Case!*

But it is not with Mr. *Steed* only that they thus deal; but they exhibit a very grievous and a very false Charge against those of the same Profession, that were more ancient in it than the Authors of this Reply, who vent this Scandal, or any of those that by their Epistle have commended the same. When those ancient Brethren were convinced of their duty, That Believers, upon Confession of their Faith, were the only Subjects of Baptism, and accordingly, sate down together in Communion as a

Congregation or Church of Christ; and many in the Nation began to enquire into the truth thereof, they met with many harsh Censures and false Charges cast upon them to make the Truth of Christ contemptible, (*viz.*) That they were corrupt in the Doctrines of the Gospel; That they denied Subjection to Magistrates; that they held, that to maintain Ministers was Antichristian, &c. They to clear themselves, and to take off those false Charges, did think it their duty to publish to the Nation a Confession of their Faith; which when drawn up, was read in the Churches, being then seven in number; and consented to by all the Members, not one dissenting, and subscribed by two of each Church in the name of the rest. Which Confession of Faith was five times printed in that year 1644, and from that, to the year 1651, without the least alteration of any one Article of what was first printed: which Confession gave such general Satisfaction to most Christians of all sorts of differing Perswasions from us, that it took off from many that Prejudice and Offence that was formerly taken by them against our Profession. What the Judgment of those Churches in their first Constitution, was, concerning the Maintenance of Ministers, may be seen in the 38th Article, in these words, *We do believe that the due Maintenance of Ministers should be the free and voluntary Communication of the Church: That according to Christ's Ordinance, they that preach the Gospel, should live on the Gospel, &c.* And accordingly did then, and we have ever since made it our Practice, as a Duty required of all the Members of the Church that are able to give. True it is that our Churches since the first, have not been filled with many of them that have the Riches of this World, (*the Poor receive the Gospel.*) But this we can say with comfort, and appeal to the Lord herein, That according to our Abilities, we have given to the Maintenance of our Ministers, nor have any had any just cause to complain to the contrary (that we know of); although it hath been, and is our trouble, that we have not been able to make so great a Provision for them as we desire. Herein we would be understood in this, that we now assert concerning the Churches, that we mean principally as they were in the beginning: And we do find, to our great Grief, that which was then falsly charg'd upon us by those that did not know us, is now as falsly (with a far greater Aggravation of their Sin) charg'd upon us by some of us, who might have satisfied themselves, had they perused our Confession of Faith. But either they were willingly ignorant, or negligent in enquiring, but resolv'd to calumniate; and therefore in the 9th Page of the said Book, they charge us with the same things, in these words "*It is a Question whether the said Baptized Churches in those times, did not as unanimously conclude and declare too, that for a Gospel-Ministry to have a yearly Allowance, or a competent Maintenance, was a humane Invention Or Anti-christian. We speak (say they) in part upon our own Knowledg, and by good Information we have had from others*".

To this Charge we answer, That nothing can be more falsly asserted, or more slanderously uttered: For if this their Charge have the least shadow of Truth against the Baptized Churches in their first beginning here in *England*; they must needs be the grossest sort of Hypocrites, in professing the contrary by their Profession of Faith, and yet believing and practising quite otherwise to what they solemnly professed as their Faith in that matter. And we believe they cannot give one true Instance that any Church of the Baptists, that are found in the Faith, ever did in the least conclude or declare against a competent Maintenance for a Gospel-Ministry, as a humane Invention or Anti-christian, since those times. To conclude, as to this matter concerning their unworthy Reflections and false Accusations, tho we might instance in more of one sort or other in that Book) we must declare that we do wonder that any Persons, professing Piety would commend that Book as a sober Disclosure without any Limitation or Exception, against these gross and fulsom Slanders, which with so much Confidence are delivered, whatever their Judgments be concerning the Controversy about Singing. Moreover, We hope the Baptized Churches, their Elders, Ministers and Members, do hereby, at least, see great cause to suspect, and to be very cautious in believing that Spirit that would persuade them to the way of common or popular Singing, which would make way for its Entertainment, by such notorious Falsehoods and abominable Slanders, which were certainly devised by the Father of Lies, thereby to offend or stumble the Weak, tho otherwise honest and well-meaning.

Having now answered to some of their unrighteous and scandalous Reflections, we shall endeavour

(as the Lord shall enable us) to manifest the Weakness of the main Pillars of their Assertion concerning the Singing before mention'd: For we shall not spend our time to answer every Particular in that Treatise, (the Weakness whereof is most evident to any that will but take any serious notice of it) it would be very tiresom and altogether needless.

First then, we shall enquire whether Singing to the Praise of God, according to the Expression of it in the Holy Scriptures, be to be restrained, or is only meant of declaring those Praises by a Musical Melodious tunable Voice.

To which we answer, That Singing or Uttering the Praise of God, are convertible Terms, according to the Language of the Holy Scriptures: As for instance, *Cant. 2. 12. The time of the singing of Birds is come, &c.* that, as able Interpreters tell us, is meant, that a Rejoicing or Praising-time is come. *Deut. 32. 44. And Moses spake all the words of that Song unto the People;* and in v. 43. it's said, *Rejoice, O ye Nations, with his People:* which is elsewhere called Singing, and sometimes Shouting. Doubtless there was never a greater Song of Praise uttered to the Honour of Christ, than that *Luke 19. 37, 38.* when the Disciples rejoiced and praised God for all the mighty Works which they had seen; Saying, not Singing, *Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Peace in Heaven, and Glory in the Highest.* That Musick uttered by them with their Voices, made more Melody than any composed Songs that can be sung in Metre. And as Mr. *Caryl* tells us upon that Scripture, It was Musick the *Pharisees* did not like, but would have them rebuked for so doing.

Obj. It is indeed frequently and earnestly pleaded by the Authors of that Book, That Singing or Song bears the Acceptation of a Musical Melody with the Voice amongst all Mankind.

Answ. To which we answer, That if it hath pleased the Spirit of the Lord in the Holy Scriptures, to make use of those words in another sense, what have we to say to it, or dare any that are truly pious to contradict it? That Singing is in the Old Testament as well as in the New, used in a Metaphorical Sense, is apparent: As where Singing to the Praise of God is ascribed to inanimate Creatures as well as to others. See *Psal. 65.13. Isa. 49.13. Jer. 12.* So *Job 38.7.* if we take the Morning-Stars for the Angels, as some do, they need not the faculty of Speech; or, as others, take the words for the whole Creation in their respective Kinds; then the word *Sing* must be taken figuratively, even for their Praising their Great Creator by ways suitable to their several Natures; however, a Supposition to the contrary would be highly ridiculous. So in like manner in the New Testament; as for instance, *1Cor. 14. 15.* where it appears, that Singing and giving of Thanks be convertible Terms. But especially we desire it may be considered seriously what may be the meaning of the Mind of God in that Scripture, *Heb. 2. 12. I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren; in the midst of the Congregation will I sing Praise to thee.* This Text was a Prophecy of Christ our Saviour, quoted from *Psal. 22. 22.* For the opening of which, we shall repeat the Exposition that the excellent Person Dr. *Owen* gives of it, as followeth;

“First, *What* Christ will moreover do; *He will sing Praises unto God.* And,

Secondly, *Where* he will do it; *In the midst of the Congregation.*

The Expression of both these is accommodated to the Declaration of *God's Name*, and *and Praising of him in the Temple.* The *singing of Hymns* of Praise unto God in the great Congregation, was then a principal part of his Worship. And in the first Expression, two Things are observable; (1.) What Christ undertakes to do, that is, to *praise God.* Now this is only Exegetical of what went before. He would *praise* God by *declaring his Name.* There is no way whereby the Praise of God may be celebrated, like that of *declaring his Grace*, Goodness, and Love unto Men, &c. - (2.) The *Cheerfulness and Alacrity* of the Spirit of Christ in this Work, he would do it as with *Joy and Singing*; with such a frame of Heart, as was required in them, who were to *sing the Praises of God*

in the great Assemblies in the Temple. (3.) Where would he do this, *in the midst of the Congregation*; the great Congregation, as he calls it, v25. This is, the great Assembly of the People in the Temple. And this was a Type of the whole Church of the Elect under the *New Testament*. The Lord Christ in his *own Person, by his Spirit, in his Apostles*, and his Word, by all his Messengers unto the end of the World, setting forth the Love, Grace, Goodness and Mercy of God in him the Mediator, sets forth *the Praise of God in the midst of the Congregation*. I shall only add, that whereas *singing of Hymns unto God* was an especial part of the instituted Worship under the Old Testament, to whose Use these Expressions are accommodated; it is evident that the Lord Christ hath eminently set forth *the Praise of God* in his Institution of Worship under the New Testament, wherein God will ever be glorified and praised. This was that which the Lord Christ engaged to do upon the Issue of his Sufferings; and we may propose it unto our Example and instruction." Thus Dr. *Owen* on that that Text, *Pag. 256*. And again on the same Text, *Pag. 258*. "Moreover, the Lord Christ by declaring, that he will *set forth the Praise of God* in the Church, manifests what is the *Duty* of the Church I tself; namely, to *praise God* for the Work of his Love and Grace, in our Redemption by Christ Jesus. This he promiseth to go before them in; and what he leads them unto, is by them to be persisted in. This is indeed the very end of *gathering the Church*, and of all the Duties that are performed therein, and thereby. The Church is called unto the *Glory of the Grace of God*, *Eph. 1. 6*. that it may be set forth in them, and by them. This is the end of the Institution of all Ordinances of Worship in the Church, *Eph. 3. 8,9,10*. and in them they set forth the Praises of God unto Men and Angels; this is the Tendency of *Prayer*, the Work of *Faith*, and the Fruit of *Obedience*. It is a fond Imagination which some have fallen upon, that God is not *praised* in the Church for the Work of Redemption, unless it be done by Words and *Hymns* particularly expressing it. All *Praying*, all *Preaching*, all Administration of Ordinances, all our Faith, all our Obedience if ordered aright, are nothing but giving Glory to God, for his Love and Grace in Christ Jesus in a due and acceptable manner. And this is that which ought to be in our Design in all our Worship of God; especially in what we perform in the Church. *To set forth his Praise, to declare his Name*, to give Glory to him by believing, and the Profession of our Faith, is the end of all we do." Thus we have the Testimony of that worthy Person, that Singing to the Praise of God, is not to be restrained, according to the Scripture, to a Musical, Melodious, Tunable Voice.

But further, we judg it worthy to be observed, and seriously considered, the Mind of God concerning that Singing mention'd, *Rev. 14. 2, 3, I heard a Voice from Heaven, as a Voice of many Waters, &c. and they sung as it were a new Song before the Throne, &c.*

Note; First, it could not be a Song prepar'd in Meeter, or any of the Songs mention'd in the Old Testament. Because,

Secondly, It was a Song they only could learn that were redeemed from the Earth.

Thirdly, This they did with Harpers harping: The Meaning of which, as Learned *Forbes* tells us, was the Hearts of the Redeemed Ones.

Fourthly, The Matter and Substance is there expressed: And Learned *Mede*, by this Song, tells us, the whole Mystery of Evangelical Worship is in it contained. And *Brightman* on *Rev. 15.2*. tells us, that *Drufins* on that Place saith, they are called the Harps of God, because God sendeth the Joy of his Spirit into their Hearts, wherewith they may be able to give God his due Praise. And by this Song of the Lamb, saith *Brightman*, is meant that whereof mention was made, *Rev. 14. 3*. wherein they do magnify God the Father for the Grace of their Adoption in Christ. The Joy of their Heart is called a Song by a Metonymy, the effect ariseth out of Faith in the Righteousness of Christ, whereby we feel the fatherly Love wherewith God doth imbrace us; which Song hath been always sung by the Saints in all Ages.

So that whereas they tell us, where-ever Singing is mention'd in Scripture, it must be understood with a tunable Voice; it appears they did not consider these and such like Scriptures. We shall only mention one more, *Job 29. 13 I caused the Widow's Heart to sing for joy*; whereby it appears there is Heart-singing as well as by Expression in Meeter with the Tongue. In which Text, it appears that Joy and Singing are convertible Terms.

From all which, and many other Scriptures that might be quoted or alleged, it evidently appears, that Singing to the Praise of God is not to be restrained to a melodious tunable Voice, in the direct stated solemn Praising of God in his Church: And that there are Praises sung to God (in the Language of the Scripture) in Praying and Praising, and in all the Administration of Holy Ordinances, when there is no tunable or musical Voice heard among them; as appears from what hath been mention'd from *Heb. 2. 12*. Which we shall further make evident by these following Considerations.

First, We may conclude it to be a certain Truth, that no sober Person will deny that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, wherewith our Blessed Lord furnish'd his Church upon his Ascension, to be complete and sufficient for the fitting of his People unto every good Word and Work, for every part of his Worship; *Eph. 4.8, 11, 12, 13*. yet there we find no Singing-Masters appointed; which would have been absolutely necessary, if musical or tunable Singing with the Voice, was a Gospel-Ordinance. The Old-Testament-Church had such as taught to sing Praise, *1Chr. 25.7 2Chr. 25.13*. which if the New-Testament-Church had needed, we may reasonably judg or conclude she should have had them to a higher Degree than the former. For the Worship prescribed in the Gospel, ought to exceed that under the Law; therefore if Musical Singing be that which is now required, then the best Voices in Singing do most acceptably perform that Duty to God, at least in the outward part of it: and therefore it would be absolutely necessary that all Christians, both Men and Women, should learn from such as can teach them, to elevate their Voices and Tunes in the highest Strain: Seeing they call this an Ordinance of the New Testament, and that no other can be called Singing, though Persons with never so great a Sense of the Majesty of God, and of their Mercies received, with the greatest spiritual Melody and Inlargement of Heart utter his Praise; but no such Gifts being given, nor any such Art required, we may safely conclude, it is not a Gospel-Ordinance.

Secondly, If Musical singing with the Voice be a Gospel-Ordinance, as they assert, then assuredly the Songs of Praise recorded in the New Testament, would have been written in Greek Verse, as an example for others to have followed them in their Language: But that it is otherwise, is manifest to all that can read the Greek Testament. Moreover, It is not said that those that uttered those Songs, did it with a Musical tunable Voice; but only that they spake after a solemn and audible manner those Praises: As may be seen from the Song of the blessed Virgin *Mary*, to those mention'd in the *Revelations*.

Lastly, Whereas they frequently say, that we admit or allow of no singing Praise to, or praising of God in the Church, but what is in Prayer. We answer; We are indeed for praising of God with our Supplications to him for Mercy: But if the Holy Spirit fills any that are qualified for the Administrations of his House, with the Joy of the Lord, and so with the matter of Praise; such may express it (without mentioning any Petitions) with a solemn, cheerful, audible Voice, as the Spirit of the Lord may give Utterance, either with or without a tunable Voice, to the Glory of God, and Refreshing of others: Which is singing Praise in the New-Testament Language, whereunto they have not, nor can they prove, that according to the Scripture-Dialect aforesaid, a musical tunable Voice is essential. We shall now come to the second Enquiry, which is as followeth.

Quer. 2. Whether singing the Praise of God in the Church of Christ, ought to be by a composed Form, by the whole Multitude assembled, Professors with the Profane or Ignorant; or the Church-Members of all sorts lifting up their Voices together in Consort?

In answer to this Question, that we may the more distinctly resolve it, we shall divide it into several Branches or Particulars, and speak to them severally. Namely,

First, We shall consider whether singing the Praise of God in the Church of Christ, may be performed by a composed stinted Form?

Answ. 1. In answer to which, we desire it may be remembered, that the Institutions left by our Lord Jesus in the Gospel, as they are very plain, so they are more Spiritual, and require more of the Spirit than under the Law; therefore we have a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit promised: It being a State of more Grace, as well as of more Truth. Therefore our blessed Lord and Saviour, as he procured by his Death, so by his Resurrection and Ascension, he sent his Holy Spirit unto us, to fit us for the Worship of God, that we might have more intimate Converse with him, in the Observation of what he hath commanded, *Mat.28.19.*

2. In the great Gospel-Duties of Prayer and Praising God, he hath graciously promised the assistance of the Holy Spirit, both what to pray for, as well as how we are to pray; *Rom. 8.26. For we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us.* Where we observe, that which respects the manner and frame of Heart in Prayer, respects also the matter of Prayer. Indeed we are poor Worms, and know not how to order our Cause before him, unless we are assisted both in Matter (in the time of Worship) as well as Manner. And as it is in Prayer, so is it in Praises, which Duty ought certainly to be as spiritually performed as Prayer; and we need as great assistance of the Holy Spirit to Praise, as to Pray. But if Gospel-singing the Praise of God, be with a Musical Voice, and the Form before composed in Verse, then we know what to praise God for: The Minister, or some one, brings that Matter composed in writing, or in print, in his Pocket; and then what need will there be of the Spirit of God to help us what to pray for?

3. But if it be objected, that we ought before-hand to consider the Mercies we have received. We readily grant it; and do affirm, that also in Prayer we ought to consider our Wants, to beg Supplies; and our Sins, to beg Pardon: But also in presenting them before the Lord, we need the Assistance of the Spirit to order our very Requests before him. And that it's the Experience of every Servant of God, that in Prayer to God, and in praises of God, their Hearts are enlarged in matter far beyond the Preparations of matter in either of those Holy Exercises. This is one of the most pregnant Arguments used against stinted Forms of Prayer, by those Ministers that so do; even that it is a stinting the Spirit of God in that Duty; as also contrary to the blessed Design of the Lord Christ in his Ascension, mentioned *Eph. 4. 8.* And therefore we cannot see but it must necessarily follow, but that if a set-Form of Praises, composed and brought into the Church in the publick Worship of God, is lawful, or as an Institution appointed by him; then certainly a set-Form of Prayer ought to be provided also, as a part of the publick Worship of God, for the Peoples Prayers. And certainly, would they but seriously consider their own Arguments that perswade them to be against set-form Prayer, the same would confute their Notions against set-form Singing, if indeed they be against set-form Prayer. For they that can so vehemently plead in that Book for reading Songs of Praise, and for reading Sermons, and call it Preaching in the Church; why should they not be for reading Prayers there also? especially when their Arguments for both are for the most part the very same that others urge for set-form Prayer. As for what they most impertinently alleag for their Vindication in this Matter, from the Song of *Moses*, and the Hymn mentioned *Mat. 26. 30.* with *Col. 3. 16.* they will be considered in their due place.

Secondly, We shall enquire, whether for a mixed Multitude, Professors and Profane, Believers and Unbelievers, to sing in Consort in the Church, be an Ordinance of our Lord Jesus, according to his New-Testament-Institution.

1. We desire it may be seriously considered that there is not the least mention of it in the New Testament, by any Precept or Example, wherein we are directed in the Worship of God. Certainly if our Lord Jesus was most faithful in the House of God, and if his Apostles did faithfully declare the whole Counsel of God to the Churches, then they would not have failed to have declared this also: So that it is purely a Humane Invention, without any shadow of ground for it in the Scriptures before mentioned, which are the only Rule to guide us in the solemn instituted Worship of God in his Church. If this Arguments hold good against the common Practice of Infants Sprinkling (called Baptism) as undoubtedly it doth; then it doth also as evidently prove that this way of common Singing is a Tradition of Men, and not an Ordinance our Lord Jesus.

2. As there is not the least mention of it, as aforesaid, so it is directly contrary to what our Lord Jesus hath plainly declared, both as to the Qualification of the Worshippers, as well as to the manner of Worship in Gospel-Times; *Joh. 4. 23. The true Worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, &c.* Can the Unbelievers, the Ignorant and the Profane, thus worship the Father? are they thus qualified? or are they capable so to do? So that this Practice of theirs is a plain Contradiction to the Will of our Lord and Law-giver, in that Affair of Solemn Worship, which therefore ought to be rejected by all the upright in Heart.

3. Hereby there is an Opportunity given them to make, or to speak a Lie before the Lord, to take his Name in vain, while they speak that which they do not understand, and utter that as the frame of their Hearts which they do not receive in their Minds, nor can they know them, or truly affect them, while they remain in an unconverted Estate, because they are spiritually discerned. Now to be accessory unto, or to promote such a Transgression in the solemn Worship of God, which they unavoidably do who set up this common way of Singing, is a Practice that cannot be justified. There is more to be added to shew the great Irregularity of this common Practice, which must be referred to its proper place.

Object. But they object, That we admit them to be present, and to join with their Hearts in our publick Prayers, which is as much, or more than lifting up their Voices in singing in the Church.

Ans. To which we reply; That it is true we do admit them at the time of Prayer and Preaching to be present, and so we can and do to the Spectators and Hearers, when we partake of the Lord's Supper: not knowing by what means the Lord may work upon them, or give them Repentance unto Life. But that which is affirmed, that they join with us with their Hearts in Prayer, is no true Assertion: They do not so join with us, because they cannot. For the Holy Spirit, who knows the Hearts of all Men, plainly tells us, that Persons while Unbelievers and Unconverted cannot so do, as is most evident from that Scripture, *Rom. 10. 14. How can they call on him, on whom they have not believed?*

Object. But they say, Some have been converted by their Singing; for Psalms are full of Instruction, &c.

Ans. 1. We grant that Psalms are full of Admonition and Instruction: but we deny that the Musical Tunes do instruct, but the Matter it self that is sung. And if it be Matter it self that doth only instruct, as you would seem to acknowledg, then it is not Musick, but the Matter.

2. Tho some should be converted by their Musical Singing, yet it cannot be a Rule to judg that way of Singing to be an instituted Ordinance of Christ in the Church. Some we know have declared they have been converted by the hearing of Common Prayer; yet we suppose they will not therefore acknowledg that Common Prayer is an instituted Ordinance of Christ. Also some have professed that they have been converted by partaking of the Sacrament in the way of the Nation And thereupon, it is not many Years since several Learned Men employed their Wits in writing large Treatises to prove it to be a converting Ordinance. And therefore, that all without Exception ought

to be admitted to it. But we do suppose it is not their judgment.

Object. They again pretend they do not join with Unbelievers, but Unbelievers with them, in that Work.

Answ. 1. Then by this poor Excuse, if Unbelievers will come and partake with them at the Lord's Supper, of the Bread and the Wine, they may permit them so to do, and pretend that they do not join with Unbelievers in that Ordinance, but they with them: And so quickly bring the World and the Church into One; that is, Christ and *Belial* to have Communion together, unto which this Practice and the Reason for it have a direct Tendency.

2. If they plead for this Practice as lawful, as that which is a converting Ordinance, as that which is warranted by the Word of God: Certainly they do more than permit, they do admit and call them to it.

Object. But it is further and earnestly urged, that it is a natural Duty that all without exception are enjoined to do.

Answ. 1. We grant that Worship was due to God by the Light of Nature: And say further, that Spiritual Worship was due from Man as his Creature, inasmuch as God is a Spirit; but the outward Means of that Worship, what would be acceptable unto God, was not known by the Light of Nature. This was only known by positive Institution, and depended not on the Law of Creation. *Adam* in Innocency knew that God was to be worshipped, yet by Nature he did not know by what outward Acts he was to pay this to his Creator: This depended on the Direction of God, as the Sovereign Lawgiver should prescribe. And therefore we find the positive Institution of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, &c. The Pillars upon which the Worship of God stands, cannot be known but by Revelation.

2. We say, that as God alone knows how, and by what means himself will be worshipped; so it is not in the Power of Men or Angels to prescribe Worship to his Creature; and that it is an intrenchment upon his Sovereignty for any so to do: Man being to observe whatsoever he, and he only, hath commanded.

3. It is evident that in all the instituted Worship that God hath prescribed, it is with all Plainness both in Matter and Manner. And that God hath always done, even in the first Institution God gave to *Adam*, not to eat of the forbidden Fruit: It was with that plainness and clearness, that no Objection could be made by him in his disobeying the Command of God. Also in all the Tabernacle and Temple-Worship, every particular direction thereunto, to the very Pin in the Tabernacle, was given to them, that they might not vary from, without Sin. And therefore the least Addition or Detraction from it, was severely punished by God. And now it is much more plain under the Gospel-Administration, tho more Spiritual. And the Worshippers that are admitted to perform or celebrate it in his Church, are required even in the outward part, both as to their Qualifications and Exercise, to be more Spiritual than under the Law.

4. Therefore tho the Obligation to worship is natural, and that it is to be performed with the highest Reverence and Affection concreated with Man: yet the whole of external Worship is positive, and depends upon Institution. Nature is silent therein, otherwise than as it regulates, with respect to Conveniency and Decency, in common with other actions, in matters of less moment than Worship, to wit, Marriage and Meats. Man was created with an Instinct for Nutrition and Procreation, but was directed unto the means and manner of both by Institution. So in the present Case, that God is to be honoured and praised, is an innate Principle; but the means how, or which way, or by whom it is to be manag'd in his Church, depends only on his Sovereign Will and Pleasure declared in his Word:

Which that he will be thus worshipped by a mix'd Multitude lifting up their Voices together in Musical Singing, he hath no where declared in his New Testament: and therefore, the pretence of proving it from its being a natural Worship, falls to the ground, having not the least weight in it to justify such a Practice.

Obj. It is further argued by them, That *Moses* and the Children of *Israel*, that were a mix'd Multitude, sung by a composed Form, therefore we ought to do so now.

Ans. 1. We desire it may be seriously considered that this alleged of the Song of *Moses*, belongs to the Old-Testament-Dispensation; unto which we now in Gospel-times are not to have recourse to direct us in the positive Part of Worship; we must therein hearken to the Son, and not the Servant. We may as well argue (as many do) from the Children of *Israel's*, with their Offspring, being, as the Apostle saith, all baptized unto *Moses* in the Cloud and in the Sea, for the Baptism of Infants now; and so in like manner from Circumcision: as to conclude from their manner of Singing to such a manner now.

2. It is plain that it was an extraordinary Song on an extraordinary Occasion, that we do not find was enjoined to be sung afterwards in their Tabernacle or Temple-Worship: Nor do we find that ever the whole Congregation were afterwards to sing in Consort, or with all their Voices together; which they cannot deny. Therefore if it were not admitted for a constant Practice then, nor any such thing commanded by our Lord Jesus since to his Gospel-Churches, we may wonder with what shadow of pretence they should alleg it to justify such a kind of Singing now. They have only this poor sorry Evasion concerning their not Singing afterwards so in consort together, That the *Levites*, the Singers, sung together; and therefore all may now sing together: which is a strange way of fallacious Arguing, easily to be seen and exploded by all. But confider, those *Levites*, or Singers, had a positive Direction from the Lord so to do. Let them produce such a Command from the Lord Jesus, our Lord and Law-giver, for his Churches now, and the Controversy will be ended.

3. If the manner of singing the Song of *Moses* be a Pattern for us now, then must the Women sing by themselves with Musick and Dancing, as they did then, *Exod.* 15.20. There cannot be the least reason given, but if one be admitted, so much the other, if it be a directing Example for us in Gospel-times.

4. Though it be said *Moses* sung, and the Children of *Israel*, yet it doth not necessarily follow that they all lifted up their Voices together: It is very improbable, if not impossible, for 600000 to sing together; nor could Copies of it be suddenly dispersed among them all to learn it: but rather that there was some other way where through the direction of the Lord, the Song was manag'd, wherein they might all join, though not all lift up their Voices at one time. But however, supposing they did so, yet it signifies nothing in the least to prove it a New-Testament-Institution. And it is an Argument so manifestly weak and impertinent, that we may wonder it should be mention'd as a Proof to warrant their Practice: but any Pretence shall serve the turn when Person are resolv'd for a human Tradition.

Thirdly; The next and last Branch of this general Enquiry to be considered, is, Whether it be enjoined by our Lord Jesus as a Gospel-Ordinance, for all the Members of a Church, both Men and Women, to sing a composed Form read to them, by lifting up their Voices together?

Ans. 1. To this we say, That having already manifested that a composed Form of praying to, or praising of God, doth not comport with that Assistance of the Holy Spirit promised not only to assist us in our Preparation for such solemn Exercises, but also to help us both as to Matter and Manner in the very time of that sacred Work; and therefore, to be rely'd upon and expected by all that desire spiritually to worship him, according to the New-Testament-Direction and Dispensation;

and therefore not suitable, but contrary to the Design of our Lord in his Ascension, spoken of *Eph.* 4.8. Therefore we shall say no more to it now, but refer the Reader to what was before declared; neither can there be any true solid Reason given, why if the Members of a Church of Christ may have a composed Form of Praises written and read to them to sing, why may they not have a composed Form of Prayer read to them also, for them to audibly repeat over, as the manner of some is?

2. All the Members may not lift up their Voices together, because the Women are expressly forbidden to teach, or so to speak in the Church: Singing being for Teaching, as hereafter will be declared. Neither doth the Holy Spirit except this exercise of Singing with their Voices, as if they were therein allowed: Had this Liberty been granted, or this as a Duty enjoined them, there's no question but the Apostles, who faithfully deliver'd the whole Counsel of God, would have declared it; and for any to make Exceptions where the Lord hath made none, is to be adding to his Word, or to be partial in his Law.

Obj. But they alleg, to justify this Practice, that *Miriam* and *Deborah* sung in the Congregation.

Answ. 1. We desire it may be remark'd how they are still constrained to fly to Old-Testament instances, to justify their popular Way of Singing; they having not the least ground for it in the New Testament. But herein, how manifestly do they strengthen the Hands of them that are for Infants Baptism, who fetch their strongest Arguments from the Old-Testament-Instances and Practice to prove it. Which way of Arguing, if it be allowed of, how soon will the Worship of God, according to the Gospel, be perverted or changed from its Primitive Purity in all respects.

2. It is plain, as hath been declared, *Exod.* 15.20. that *Miriam* and the Women did not sing with the Men: they sung by themselves with Timbrels and Dancing. If that Example be authentick to justify Womens Singing now, then it must be by themselves with Musick and Dancing; which as yet they dare not plead for now to be practised. As for *Deborah*, her Song was by an extraordinary Inspiration; and it appears by the manner of her expressing it, that she spake it or sung it alone; though *Baruch* might join with her in Spirit: neither is there the least Intimation in the Scripture that she sang in the Congregation. But what a pitiful irrational Argument is this; because a Woman, extraordinarily call'd and inspir'd, uttered or sung a Song by that extraordinary Inspiration, on an extraordinary occasion; therefore all the Women in a Church may ordinarily, though under no such inspiration, sing a composed Song of another's making, though they have no direction for it in the Word of the Lord, but are rather commanded and enjoined to be silent there. Surely it is a bad Cause that cannot be supported or pleaded for, but by such incoherent groundless Inferences as these, which they might be ashamed to publish.

3. We find, according to the Direction and Commandment of our Lord and Lawgiver, a Psalm is to be manag'd after another manner in the church of Christ. For in *1 Cor.* 14. 26. where it is mentioned plainly, with reference to the publick Worship of God in the Church; it is most evident, by the Context from ver. 24, to 31. that there it is under the general Regulation of the Gift of Prophecy, and the Exercise thereof limited to one, as farther appears from the *16th* and *17th Verses*, without the least intimation of it being confined or restrained to any thing Musical or in Meeter, in the Delivery of it. Moreover, it may be certainly concluded, that if singing or uttering the Psalm was to be by lifting up of their Voices in Consort, when the Apostle had by the command of the Lord, limited them to one at a time in their Exercises in the Church, he would not have failed to have plainly told them, that the Psalm was otherwise to be manag'd.

Obj. But to this plain and undeniable Testimony they earnestly plead that the Apostle speaks there of Prophesying, not of Singing.

Answ. To which we answer; The Psalm is there plainly and evidently manifested, to belong to the Gift of Prophecy as much as the Doctrine or Interpretation, and is included in it. He prophesied that uttered a *Psalm*, as much as he that declared the Doctrine or the Exhortation: Therefore it appears that singing or uttering the Psalm, is plainly included in the Limitation of one at a time, as well as the rest of those solemn Exercises; which Psalm was from a special spiritual Gift, as much as any other there mentioned. For if the Psalm (aforesaid) might be one taken out of a Book, or out of the Old Testament; why so might the Doctrine or Exhortation be nothing else but a reading something out of a Book, or out of the Scripture, there being plainly as much ground for the one as for the other; which would be a groundless Imagination: Therefore Mr. *Burroughs* with others of the Godly Learned, do own that the Psalm there spoken of, was by special Gift; and therefore, for any to imagine it to be any of *David's* Psalms, is to give up themselves to any Fancy or Supposition, so they may contradict the Truth which is so apparently manifested in that Portion of the Scripture, because they are resolv'd not to entertain it.

Obj. But they again cavilingly object, Can this be proved by any other place of Scripture? if not, say they, it must be rejected.

Answ. To which we reply; That the Lord is here pleased to give a most plain Direction how a Psalm is to be brought forth or sung in a Gospel-Church, not by a composed Form, but by special Gift, and not by the whole Assembly lifting up their Voices in consort, but by one who hath received such a Gift. And this being so evidently declared, should we not rest satisfied with it? Shall we question the Truth of a Divine Oracle, because but once mentioned, though it be never so plainly delivered? Our Lord Jesus is but once called a Surety: Shall we therefore question or deny the Truth of it, as the *Socinians* do? *Heb. 7.22.* Surely on this Ground, the *Hebrews* might have rejected the Apostle's Proof of the Being and Excellency of the Priestly Office of our Lord and Saviour, that he was a High-Priest after the Order of *Melchizedeck*, because it was but once mentioned in the Old Testament, *Psal. 110.4.*

Thus having (we hope) evidently proved that the musical tunable Singing of a composed Form by a whole Assembly, with Voices in consort, is no Ordinance of our Lord Jesus; We shall now examine the Scriptures they earnestly urge to justify their Practice.

Q3. Whether those Scriptures, *Eph. 5 19. Col. 3. 16.* do command or justify that kind of singing in the Church of Christ which they plead for?

In answer to this Enquiry, it being that on which Mr. *Keach* and Mr. *Whinnel* do bottom their Assertion for the introducing the common and popular Way of Singing into the Baptized Churches; We shall first premise some Considerations, which we desire may be seriously pondered.

First; That those Scriptures (supposing they intend a Direction for publick Worship in the Church, which we do not grant, on the Reason hereafter to be mentioned) do plainly testify against the admitting of the Profane, the Ignorant, and the Unconverted to sing in the Solemn Assembly of the Church of Christ; forasmuch as they are to be sung for the Teaching and Admonition of others. Did the Lord Jesus ever appoint the Ignorant, Profane, or Unbelievers, to be Teachers in, or Admonishers of his Church, according to his New-Testament-Dispensation? Can there be the least shadow of Proof produced for it? Certainly, as it was then told them in that Epistle of Mr. *Steed's*, (which they pretend to answer) that he never appointed any to administer Teaching and Admonition to his Church, but such as are orderly added to it, and are qualified by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, being solemnly allowed or orderly called to such an holy Exercise: this being such a Truth which they could not, nor did they dare directly to gainsay. How grossly do they endeavour to evade it, by saying that they are allowed to worship God (which is as much as to say, to attend on the Worship of God) in the Church? Now we appeal to their own Consciences, whether there be not a great

difference between being at, or attending on it as them that do worship God, and administering Teaching and Admonition to the Church? Which if the singing of the Psalms and Hymns, &c. here mention'd are for that end and use, as it's evident from the Scriptures they are; then such Persons are plainly excluded from any such solemn Exercise in the Church, if the meaning of it be for a Direction for the publick Worship of God in the Church, as they would insinuate.

Moreover, that it plainly excludes such from that kind of Singing in the Church, is most evident; inasmuch as it is expressly declared, that the Singing there spoken of, is to be brought forth from the Word dwelling richly in them, *Col. 3. 16.* and from being fill'd with the Spirit, *Eph. 5. 19.* Now are Unbelievers, &c. capable of being so qualifi'd in any degree? Indeed in their Way of Singing by a compos'd Form, there needs no more than the reading or hearing a Psalm or Song read to them; and then they are sufficiently furnish'd for it, be they never so ignorant, profane or unbelieving. In answer to which, they say they detest such a Singing: But why then do they plead for the Singing of such, before mention'd, who can sing no otherwise, but in a carnal formal Manner? Can they in truth say, they detest that they allow and openly practice, and vehemently contend for?

Secondly; These Scriptures, if they be as they say, to direct the Church in its publick Worship, do also plainly exclude the Women from singing in the Church: They are expressly forbidden to teach or admonish in the Church, but are commanded to be in silence; without any exception that they may teach by Singing, but not by an ordinary Speaking, as we have before declared.

Thirdly; In like manner (if it be meant as aforesaid) those Psalms and Hymns, &c. there mention'd, are not intended to direct the Churches to sing *David's* Psalms, or any other Psalms recorded in the Scriptures; for then certainly our Lord Jesus would have caused them to have been translated into Greek Verse, or Meeter, for the use of the Churches in those times, and as a Pattern for time to come. But none ever did or can assert any such thing; neither is that Saying of theirs of any weight, whereby they would seem to prove that, because the word *Psalm*, &c. is there mention'd, that it must needs be meant of those called the Psalms of *David*, &c. because (say they) God hath given us a Psalm-Book but not a Prayer-Book (an Expression which they have borrowed from others) in the Scriptures: For in that sacred Book there be abundance of the Prayers of holy Men recorded, as well as their Songs; and especially, that our Lord Jesus hath left as a Platform in the manner of a Form of Prayer, usually called by the name of the Lord's Prayer: Therefore if we may take their Songs, and read and sing them in the Church, why may we not also take those Prayers, (at least such as we may think most suitable to our present occasion) and read them there for our Prayers in the Church? Let them shew, if they can, why there is not as much reason for the one as for the other. Moreover; The Book of *Psalms*, as they were sung in the Old-Testament-time, (for which season they were ordained) were a part of the Temple-Worship. Now if that be our Rule for Musical singing of them now, as it must be if they be those Psalms that be here commanded to be sung Musically, as a part of the New-Testament-Church's publick Worship, then it must be our Rule in all parts (which must be necessarily included in this Counsel, if the Meaning of it be as they affirm) and so there must be Instruments of Musick with Singers or Quirilters in the performance of it, except they can prove that one part is abolished, and the other remains: *For what God hath joined together, no Man may put asunder.*

Fourthly; If it be for the publick Worship of the Church that this Direction is given; then as it was asserted by Mr. *St.* in his Epistle, it must not be by lifting up of Voices in Consort, because those Psalms, &c. must be for teaching and admonition: therefore some are to teach, and some to be taught by them that sing those Psalms. But if all sing, they are all Teachers, and all Admonishers at one Time. Which is Confusion in the Judgment of our Lord, *1 Cor. 14. 33.* Now what do they answer to this, which is so plainly declared in that Direction given for the singing or uttering a Psalm in the Publick Worship of the Church, as well as the bringing forth of the Doctrine? Verily nothing, but either a plain Contradiction of the Judgment our Lord hath given us in this matter, saying, tho it

would be Confusion in Preaching or Praying, yet it is not so in Singing: which is still confidently to beg the Question, to dictate and not to prove, to set their Judgment, or the Opinion of Men, against the Judgment of the All-wise God: Or else they fly to that Instance of *Moses* his Song, *Exod.* 15.1. which how impertinently it is alleged, to guide us now in the Times of the Gospel, hath been already declared.

Secondly; Having premised these Things: We answer positively (and we desire it may be seriously considered) that it appears plainly, that those Scriptures, *Eph.* 5.19. *Col.* 3. 16. tho they are written as a part of the Epistles that were directed to particular Churches, yet they do not seem in any respect to refer to their Publick Church-Worship, but to regulate their ordinary Christian Conversation, either solitary by themselves, or in private one with another, as is manifest by comparing or considering their several Contexts in those Chapters, whereof these Verses are a part, both as to what goes before and follows after. That in the Epistle to the *Ephesians* stands directly opposed to Corporal drunkenness.

We do not oppose, or deny, but that it may be lawful for a Christian, or for several Christians in their private or civil Society, if their Hearts be chearful, and that they have skill in Singing, and take pleasure therein, to solace themselves therewith; provided it be done decently, and that the Matter of their Song be such as tends to Edification, according to that of *James* 5. 13. So that from the whole it's most evident that those Scriptures, in what Sense soever they are taken, do not in the least justify that manner of Singing as a Gospel-Ordinance, to be used in the publick Worship of the Church, which they do so earnestly contend for. But it is most evident, that in *1 Cor.* 14 26. (before spoken to) doth clearly relate to the guiding of them in Publick Worship, in the solemn Assembly of the Church, which we shall not again insist on.

Obj. But if any shall be so weak as to object, and say, if any such kind of melodious Teaching or Admonishing may be lawfully used by Church-Members in their private Conversation, why may it not also be used in the publick Worship of the Church?

Answ. We answer Tho it be used in a civil or private Converse, yet it ought not to be admitted in the Worship of God in the Church, without a Command from the Lord Jesus enjoining it to be a standing Ordinance in his Church: For it is well known, that there be Ways of Teaching that are lawful, and ought to be practiced in private, which would be very disorderly & unlawful to be introduced into the publick Worship of God in the Church.

As for instance, *Priscilla* a Woman, may instruct *Apollo* a Preacher, more perfectly in the way of God privately, which she ought not attempt to do in the Church, *Act.* 18. 26. So the aged Women ought to instruct the younger Women, *Tit.* 2.4. but not in the Church. Moreover, Men and Women may and ought to exhort and teach, to admonish or comfort one another in private (as there is occasion and opportunity) by way of mutual Conference, discoursing or talking one with another. But this Way of Teaching (in the Judgment of all serious Persons) is not to be admitted in the Church of Christ; because it is no instituted Ordinance of our Lord Jesus for such an Assembly, we having no Direction or Command from him then to practice it; and therefore cannot expect a Blessing in so doing at such a time.

Even so in the case of Singing, whatever may be lawful or allowed of in private, to be practiced as aforesaid; yet if it be brought into the Church, without a Warrant from our Lord Jesus, to be used in such an Assembly in such a manner, it is unlawful, and not accepted by the Lord. Which Warrant is not contained in those Scriptures, nor in any other that they have alleged for the Justification of their common Way of Singing, as we have already declared, and shall further (God assisting) make manifest.

Thus having examined those Texts of Scripture, they chiefly plead as perceptive or commanding their manner of Singing; we shall now consider those Scriptures that are urged by them as Precedents to confirm it, which we shall propound in this following Enquiry.

*Quer.*4. Whether our Saviour Hymning with his Disciples, *Mat.* 26. 30, &c. or that, *Act.* 16.25. where it's said *Paul* and *Sylas*, at Midnight, prayed and sung Praises to God, &c. be Precedents or Examples to confirm that common way of Singing to be an Ordinance of our Lord Jesus, which they strive to set up in the Churches?

Answ. in answer to this Enquiry, we shall begin with that Hymning of the Lord Christ with his Disciples, *Mat.* 26. 30. upon which they lay great stress for their introducing of common set-form Singing into the Churches.

1. We say to it, as it hath been asserted, That the Hymn, before mentioned, in the Judgment of many learned Men did belong to the Passover, and not to the Lord's Supper; it being the manner of the Jews to conclude the Passover with a Psalm or Hymn. Now if they would know who those Learned Men are; we answer, all the Learned Rabbies of the Jews do assert it. See also *Ainsworth's* Notes, on *Exod.* 12. 11. The Dutch also in their Exposition, on *Mat.* 26.30. say the Hymn was at or did belong to the Passover: and that it was the 113th *Psalm*, and so forward: This may be seen in their Exposition of the Bible. But to put it out of doubt that there was Singing appointed and used at the Passover; it is recorded in the Scripture, by what is mentioned was practiced in *Hezekiah's* Time, *2 Chron.* 30. 21. It is also plain that the Lord Jesus and his Disciples hymned but once. Now if it was their Practice, by a Divine Appointment, to sing at the Passover, as by the Scripture before-mentioned is evident it was: And if it be also a Duty to sing at the Lord's Supper, then our Saviour would have sung twice, once at the Passover, and once at the Supper. But they hymning but once, (if it were by Musical Voices in Consort) seems plainly to belong to the Passover: And so it was done away with it. They with more shew of Reason might argue for washing the Saints Feet as a standing Duty, seeing it was practiced at that time, *Joh.* 13.5. with a more plain Injunction to it, which some of their Persuasion have practiced.

2. Supposing it did belong to the Supper; it is a question, whether they Hymned melodiously with a musical Voice or no: For it is manifest, that the Greek word there used, is not in its Signification restrained to sing with a melodious Voice, but may be rendered to praise indefinitely, whether with, or without, a tunable Voice; as it is to be seen in those Authors that interpret Greek words: but they boastingly say, they can bring threescore to three, that say it signifies to sing with a tunable Voice. To which we answer, that we believe they can scarce produce any authentick Authors that say it *only* signifies to Sing or Praise with external Melody. And so evident it was to Learned Mr. *Knowles*, (who we believe understood the Greek language as well as *Beza* and others) that he doth grant it to Mr *Marlow* in his printed Letter to him; yea, so manifest it was to those Learned Persons that formerly translated the Bible into the English Tongue, that they rendred it to be *giving Thanks*, or saying Grace; as it is extant in their Translations, which are to be seen in the Library in *Sion-College*; who, for ought Mr. *B.K.* or Mr. *Wh.* knows (tho they speak undervaluingly of them) were as wise and as faithful as our last Translators; tho they are pleased to revile their Translation with the Epithets of *Old* and *Corrupt*.

3. Neither is it manifest, if the Hymn were sung with a musical Voice, whether it were in Consort, by lifting up their Voices together, or only by attention on their Lord ministering to them? As in *Acts* 4.24. where it's said, *They lifted up their Voice with one accord, and said*, &c. though none can or do suppose that they all spoke together, but one as the Mouth of the rest.

To which they say, that many may be said to pray together, when one is their Mouth; but not so in hymning or singing Praise to God: But what Reason do, or can they alleg for this their Assertion?

Why, nothing but a common or general Custom with many. Surely they do but beg the Question, while they only assert the contrary, and bring a Custom for their proof. It is well known, that it is the Custom of many Protestants, to pray by lifting up their Voices together: And they may with as good ground say, there is no Praying, by a Company together, without it; and bring their Custom as a Proof of their Assertion; and say, they do abominate any other way of Praying to God together as these say, they do abominate any other way of singing Praise to God, as aforesaid. What they further say about what some affirm, not without great probability, (as they are pleased to express it) That they then sung together the 2d *Psalm* is so senseless an Affirmation, not having the least shadow of Ground for it in that Scripture, nor in its Context, that it is but waste time to insist upon it: but any Pretense shall be taken up, tho never so weak, (because Proof is wanting) to justify human Invention.

Further; Whereas they usually make great use of that Expression, That he gave thanks, but they hymned, or (as our last Translators render it) sang an Hymn, to justify their Opinion, that it was done by lifting up their Voices together. To that Instance, it was answered, That it is most likely that our Lord Jesus at that time, did give Thanks, as speaking by himself, in the first Institution of that Ordinance; as he usually did before others, on several Occasions, *Matth.* 11.25. *Joh.* 11.41. *Joh.* 17. throughout. But at the Conclusion, the Praise or Thanks might be spoken or exprest in the plural Number, to testify the Refreshment his Disciples had with him at that spiritual Banquet, tho but one might be the Mouth of them all, to declare it.

Now that it was usual with our Lord Jesus so to do, they could not deny; but O how do they with Indignation cavil at it.

First, They say it doth intimate as if the Disciples did not, or were not admitted to join with our Lord in his giving of Thanks when he blessed the Bread: but what reason is there for that Inference, or affrighting Conclusion that doth attend it? Might not the Disciples join in their Hearts so, as to say as *Psal.* 20.4. which is a prophetick *Psalm* of the *Messiah*?

Secondly, They cavil, that from hence it may be a Question, Whether the Minister may be allowed to give Thanks over the Bread, &c. or whether the Members of the Church may join with him?

To which we answer, That from hence they may as well raise a cavilling Question, Whether, because our Lord Jesus exprest his Prayer in the singular Number, when with Company, and especially after his comforting Sermon to his Disciples in their Presence, *Joh.* 17. it be allowed to the Minister when with the Church to pray, or for the Members to reckon they are allowed to join with him? Which certainly, would be accounted a groundless fained Scruple, a meer contentious Cavil as theirs is.

Our blessed Saviour pray'd and gave Thanks as the great representing Person and Head of his Church, and so included all his Body in himself; being also the only prevailing Advocate with the Father. But we that are Members, are taught to pray otherwise, when together, in the plural Number; as especially appears by that holy Platform or Direction of Prayer he hath left with us.

Thirdly, They ask, what reason can be given why the Hymn might at the conclusion be exprest in the plural Number, and not so in the beginning at the Blessing of the Bread? &c.

We answer, The reason was plainly exprest, because it was the only Prerogative of our Lord to bless his own Institution, especially at the beginning and first appointing of it: But at the conclusion, his Disciples more fully understanding the Grace and Love, exhibited and confirmed to them by it, might be in a blessed Capacity to join in the Hymn, or giving of Thanks, as exprest in the plural Number. So that it still remains dubious, whether it were uttered with a musical Voice, or whether, if

so sung, it were by lifting up their Voices together; or whether by one, as the Voice of the rest; or whether it did belong to the Passover, or to the Lord's Supper. Therefore we cannot but reckon it a very rash Attempt to lay the Basis or Foundation of a new Institution, upon the Sands of such palpable or apparent Uncertainties. Had our Lord Jesus said, Do this in imitation of me; as he said, Do this in remembrance of me, in the Institution of the Lord's Supper, its being an Ordinance, would not be questioned: and then without doubt, it would have been attended with as plain Directions, both as to the matter and manner of its Exercise.

Obj. Lastly, Whereas they say that it is incongruous to say the Hymn may intend a general Rule for giving of Thanks, yet to question, whether the Hymn be binding to us.

Answ. To which we say, it can be no Incongruity to affirm, that if by the Hymn be meant a composed Song, read and sung by all the Company, it is not binding to us; it then plainly appears, to our Apprehension, on the Grounds formerly mention'd, to belong to the Passover, and not to the Supper: But if it mean only a giving of Thanks, wherein one is the Mouth of the rest, it may be only a general Rule for a Direction for the Churches to follow in all such Cases.

Finally, It appears to be a conclusive Argument to us, that the Hymn did not appertain to, or that it was no Adjunct to the Lord's Supper; because that the Apostle *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23, to the 26th, then he there declares, that what he received of the Lord, touching that Administration, he delivered to them, but makes no mention of the Hymn.

Obj. To this clear Instance, they have this Evasion, or rather utter this most false Assertion against the express Word of that Scripture; which is, that the Apostle leaves out another part of the Solemnity; he does not mention, (say they) that our Saviour, when he took the Cup, gave Thanks, as well as he doth not mention the Hymn.

Answ. To which we answer, That it is most evident and plain, that the Apostle doth mention that Solemnity about the Cup, as well as the other. It is a wonder to us, that they should be so bold as to say he did not: For these are the words of that Scripture, v. 24. *He took the Bread, and when he had given Thanks, he break it. V.25. After the same manner also he took the Cup.* Now is not this a plain mentioning of giving of Thanks at the taking of the Cup as well as of the Bread, in the understanding of the meanest or weakest amongst Men? How else could he say in truth, *After the same manner also he took the Cup?* That they should dare to assert the contrary, notwithstanding such clear Evidence, delivered with such Plainness, is a Matter of great lamentation.

Obj. And whereas it may be objected, That praising of God is not mention'd in that place no more than singing; therefore neither is praising of God there required at the Conclusion of that Ordinance.

Answ. We answer, That every Mercy received by us from God, implyeth a Thankfulness to him, as our Duty we owe to him from whom we have received it. Therefore the Apostle *Paul* tells us, 1 *Tim.* 4. 4. *That every Creature of God is good, if it be received with Thanksgiving.* And we are comanded in every thing to give Thanks: Therefore the greater the Mercy is there we receive from God the more enlarged ought our hearts to be in Praise and Thanksgiving to God from whom we do receive it. Neither doth this imply, as they cavil, that then it is left to our Wisdom to teach us in that matter, since we are directed by the Wisdom of God, what to do in all such cases; especially, when he is pleased to afford to us, or to priviledg us with such choice and singular Mercies.

Having thus (we hope plainly) made manifest how little that Hymning of our blessed Saviour with his Disciples, either affirms or confirms their popular way of Singing, we shall now (as the Lord shall enable us) examine that other Text of Scripture which is quoted as a Precedent for their Practice, which is *Acts.* 16. 25 The Text saith, *Paul and Silas at Midnight pray'd, and sung Praises*

to God; and the Prisoners heard them.

To which we say, 1. That we may take their Praying and Praising to be one intire solemn Act, though two parts of it be severally noted; neither is there any Inconvenience in so understanding it; which seems the more likely for the Reasons mention'd in the first Enquiry: Nor doth the Greek word translated (*sung Praises*) restrain us from such an Apprehension, but rather confirm it.

2. Suppose their singing of Praises were with a melodious Voice; how doth it appear, that they sung in Consort, lifting, up their Voices together? We may as well from the Text, suppose they pray'd in Consort with their Voices: For the Scripture implies that the Prisoners heard both their Prayers and Praises. What they answer to this, is, that it is the common Voice of Mankind, that many be said to pray together when one is their Mouth: but they cannot be said to sing Praises together, unless they lift up their Voices in Consort; which is still to beg the Question, and to bring nothing for proof but the common Vogue or Custom; which is most commonly greatly differing from the Language and Custom of the holy Spirit, declared in the New Testament.

3. But suppose they did then express the Joy of their Hearts, by a melodious singing in Consort together, what is that to the purpose to prove a stated Gospel-Ordinance, a standing Institution of solemn Worship in the New-Testament-Church? The use of civil or devout Singing is not denied, either single or in consort, to Persons in their private Conversation, as we said before, either to refresh the tired Spirits of those, who think themselves refresh'd thereby; or to express their inward Joy, who think it a proper Expedient: And the more religiously it is performed, the better it is. But if any Person shall from thence presume to bring it into the Church, without a Divine Warrant, they may be found intruding Transgressors in the Day of the Lord.

Thus having (we hope) evidently discovered the Weakness of the Foundation, upon which they build their Practice of common and popular Singing, and answered their chief Objections which they have made against what was presented in that Epistle, which they pretend soberly to answer, we shall only add some few Remarks upon some Passages in that Book of theirs.

Pag.42. They ask this Question, Why we do not answer what renowned Mr. *Cotton*, Dr. *Roberts* Mr. *Sydenham*, Mr. *Caryl*, Mr. *Wells*, Mr. *Teffe*, Mr. *Knowles*, Mr. *Keach*, Dr. *Wright*, Mr. *Whinnel*, and Mr. *Ford* have said on this Subject?

To which we answer; That we desire to satisfy our selves in the discharge of our Consciences in what we are convinced to be our Duty; and altho we own most of them in their Catalogue, to be Men of renown, both for Parts and Godliness, yet what they write upon that Subject, doth no more satisfy us, than what they write for the proof of Infant-Baptism, doth satisfy them that ask this Question of us? And what they have writ in answer to them, doth as little satisfy them, as if they had not writ at all.

Further, We do not question but in answering Mr. *Keach* in this Treatise, we have spoken to the chief of their Arguments on this Subject; he being very dexterous to take Gold or Dross out of other Mens Writings, and present them as his own: Neither have they any more specious Pillars to uphold this common way of Singing than those that are pleaded for in this Treatise of theirs, which we have now answered.

But Lastly, We do much wonder that Mr. *Keach* and Mr. *Whinnel*, should give themselves the Stile of being renowned; they being the Authors of that Book, in which they give this *Encomium* of their being *Men of Renown*: It is but their own Opinion of themselves, not (it may be) of others that know them. However Modesty would have caused them (if they had exercised any) to have forbore to have spread their own Praise. But surely Mr. *Whinnel* and Mr. *K.* forgot the Wise Man's Sayings,

Prov. 25. 27. *For Men to search their own Glory, is not Glory.* And Prov. 27. 2. *Let another Man praise thee, and not thine own Mouth.* And elsewhere that same Wise Man tells us, *Some men are wiser in their own conceit, than seven Men that can render a Reason.*

They again enquire, how we dare say that Singing of Psalms with Voices is not of Divine Institution?

In answer to which, we ask them again, How they dare to say, that Singing of Psalms in Meeter, with a tunable Voice, by the whole Church, and a mixt Multitude, is of Divine Institution, when not one Word of all they have written doth prove it? It hath been already granted, that Singing of Psalms in the Temple-Worship was of Divine Institution. And we acknowledg that all the Songs and Psalms in the Old Testament, are the undoubted unerring Word of God, and of excellent use to all the Servants of God, profitable for Doctrine and Consolation; wherein are contained many excellent Experiences of God's gracious dealing with his People, and many blessed Promises and Prophecies for the establishment of the Church and Servants of God. But we say the Singing of those Psalms, as they had respect to the Temple-Worship, with their Musical Singing and Instruments, with the Persons assigned for that kind of Exercise, are all at an end. You will find 55 of them directed to the Master of Musick, and 15 of them called each a Song of Degrees, and most of them directed to the Sons of Korah. And by the most Learned and Renowned Men of our Age, it is asserted that those Ordinances being ended by the Coming of Christ, who was to destroy the City and the Sanctuary, and to cause the Sacrifice and Oblation to cease: It remains now that the Word of Christ dwell richly in us, in all Wisdom; and that we be filled with the Spirit, speaking to ourselves, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns and Spiritual Songs, &c. And if that manner of Worship, under the Law, is ceased, as is affirmed by the Learned and Pious that it is, then can it not be in the manner of that Administration in any respect, unless you will say that the Type and the Anti-Type are all one. But if the Gospel be the Anti-Type of those Types, then we must conclude, that as they were outward in their Melody and Musick, so the Melody now under the Gospel must be inward or spiritual: That is, the joyful Voice, signifying the Melody and Joy of our Hearts to God, expressed in Praising and Thanksgiving to God, who hath revealed more of his Grace by Jesus Christ, *That he who is a Spirit, may be worshipp'd in Spirit and in Truth.* As Learned Dr. Owen saith, in his Exposition on *Heb. 2. 13.* before cited.

And whereas they say, that they utterly deny that Prayer is a lower sort of Worship than Singing. We answer, That if they mean Singing in their Sense, we agree with them; but if in the Sense of the Scripture, we do affirm, that Praises, which are the matter of a Song, is a Duty of a higher Nature than Prayer. For, (1.) The praising of God is that Duty which Saints and Angels will be employed in for ever; but Prayer ceaseth. On this account it is, that the Apostle tells us that Charity is the greatest, because it always abideth, *1 Cor. 13.* (2.) Praise is giving to God the Glory of his Mercy received; but Prayer is the begging from God the Mercies he hath promised, and which we stand in need of: But we shall not follow them in all their Mistakes and Impertinences.

They also tell us they are against the composing, using and imposing set-Forms of Prayer. But would they but make known the Reasons, why they are against set-Forms of Prayer, no doubt but they would have answered themselves, in all they would substantially alledg for their set-Form Singing, and have saved us the labour. But it is a Question whether it be so or no? For this we find, that those very Arguments, those very scornful Reflections that those that are for set-Form Prayer do use against them that are opposite to that formal Will-Worship, do these use to them that are against their set-Form Singing, or Praising of God. As for instance, Do the one call in Scorn, Praying by a Spiritual Gift, *ex tempore* Praying, in a confused Manner? so do these to the like purpose, speak of praising or singing Praise to God without a set-Form, *Pag. 39.* In the like manner, as the one say, If you pray by the Spirit, your Prayer would be of equal Authority to Canonical Scripture; so do these concerning singing Praise without a set-Form, *Pag. 36.* Do the one say in

derision, that those that are against set-Form Prayer, are Enthusiasts, or setters up of Enthusiasm; so do these in their pretended sober Reply say against those that deny their set-Form Singing, *Pag.57,&c.* We hear that one whose Heart and Mind (we believe) as well as Name, is to that Book of theirs, hath asserted, that Enthusiasm came in with the Doctrine of Believers Baptism, whereby he would make our Lord Jesus the Author and Promoter of it, that Doctrine of Baptism aforesaid being originally from his Command and Practice. It were easy to answer to all these Cavils and Scorns cast upon us; but we shall forbear at present, because we would first know from them (seeing they say they are resolved to answer, and so to hold on this Controversy) what they have to say to wipe off these Slurs cast upon their manner of Praying, and yet that they may be deservedly cast upon those that are for praising or singing Praise by the same Spirit, assisting in the same manner. as he doth in Prayer. But by these things, the Baptized Churches may behold what that Spirit is that would introduce this common Singing among them that hath been so long rejected by them; even the same that hath brought in, and maintain'd all that carnal Worship, which by the Anti-christian Apostasy, hath fill'd the World to this Day. And hereby they may see whereto it would lead them, even back to lick up the old Vomit; which will be the more pernicious to them than others, because they have been (through Grace) farther delivered from it than many others: and therefore their turning back, will be the more grievous and provoking to the Spirit of the Lord: though our gracious Lord is pleased to deal very gently with his People in all their Weaknesses or Mistakes, while a perverse Spirit is not found among them. Wherefore we declare, We have no disgust against, nor would we maintain any Distance or Difference with those Brethren, whose Apprehensions may not be the same with ours in this matter about Singing; who carry it not only piously, but peaceably in their Stations, and among the Churches. Some of whose Names are set to the Recommendation of this Book (which we in the Substance of it, have endeavoured to answer) tho without their Knowledg or Consent. For we believe they are so sober and righteous, that whatever their Opinion might be of the Argument, they would never have set their Names to such a universal Approbation, without a faithful Witness against those abominable and lamentable extravagant false Accusations, Reflections and Slanders, contain'd in it. As for Mr. Whinnel, whose misguided Zeal may have misled him with some Misinformings, to reflect upon us without cause, as he hath: He being a Person of a very courteous and obliging Conversation, we hope he will for time to come, if not better, consider his Arguments for that common set-form Singing, which he doth endeavour to promote; yet, at least, forbear such causeless Reflections against those that do in Judgment and Conscience dissent from him in that matter.

As for Mr. *Keach*, who bath been the chief Instrument to raise up this Controversy, which may occasion more Contention than Edification in the Baptized Churches, we heartily desire he may for time to come labour after the things which make for Peace. We know, and he himself also, how long he hath maintained a Wall of Partition between him and the rest of the Baptized Churches, allowing no Church-Communion but such as can agree with him in his Opinion and Practice of Laying on of Hands upon the Members of the Church, both Men and Women, which Practice we find no where commanded by our Lord Jesus, nor his Apostles; yet we have not made it a Bone of Contention between him and us, neither concerned our selves for many Years, to make any publick Contest about it; but to say no more of that matter, only what relates to the Book itself.

1. Whereas in the Title of it, it's recommended by divers Elders and Ministers of Baptized Churches, mentioning the Names of several; some of them affirm they never set their Hands to it, saying, they know not how their Hands came there; and that the Epistle it self, to which their Names are set, they never saw until they saw it printed. And whereas in the Title it's farther said, it is recommended by divers Elders and Ministers of the Baptized Churches, we know that some of them are not Minister, nor Elders, nor so much as Members in Communion with any Baptized Church as we know of.

2. He hath very unjustly charged the Churches which were first gathered, that they were of Opinion,

and did unanimously declare, that for a Gospel-Minister to have a Yearly Allowance, was an Human Invention, and Antichristian: whereas the contrary to which they have declared in their Confession of Faith, printed by them soon after they came together, as may more at large be seen in the former part of our Answer: and it may farther appear that their Practice was in these Times, by a late Printed Book, entituled, *The Life and Death, of Mr Hanserd Knowlles*, written in his Life-time with his own Hand: wherein he hath left this Testimony, *pag. 23,24.* that he was Pastor to a Church in the Year 1645, and he received from the Church always according to their Ability, most of the Members being poor. What Man fearing God, and desiring to preserve the Truth he himself professeth durst affirm so false a thing? And what use may be made of it, by such as are glad of any Opportunity to speak Evil of the Ways of God, we leave to the Consideration of all Men.

Finally; We earnestly intreat the Baptized Churches, their Elders, Ministers and Members, to consider what hath been said concerning this Question about Singing; and that they would not any of them rashly or hastily, upon any plausible Pretences, be perswaded to set up that Way of set-form Singing; which those Churches, in times past, did on mature Deliberation, from the Light afforded, reject together with set-form Prayer. But the Lord grant that we all may be pressing after more Purity both in the Form and Spirit of Holy-Worship; not declining to any thing that is not of Divine Institution. In the mean time, bearing one with another in Love, wherein we may be of differing Apprehensions in those or other Matters that are of lower Concernment, not being desirous of vain glory, provoking one another; studying and earnestly labouring every one of us, to maintain Peace and Holiness in our Souls, in our Families, and in the Churches of our Lord Jesus, that the God of Love and Peace may be with us. We shall conclude with that Word, *Heb. 1.20. Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.* We subscribe ourselves, Your Brethren in the Faith and Fellowship of the Gospel,

William Kiffin, George Barrett,
Robert Steed, Edward Man.

FINIS

Errata.Pag. 16.l.11. for *we* r. *some*. P. 23.l.16.r *in them* do *they*

ADVERTISEMENT.

There is now coming forth a Book, entituled, *Truth Soberly Defended*, in a Serious reply to Mr. B. Keach's Book, called, *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship, or Singing of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ*. And also a Vindication of a Book, entituled, *Prelimited Forms of Praising God, vocally sung by all the Church together, proved to be no Gospel Ordinance*. With a Postscript in Answer farther to a Book entituled, *Folly Detected*, Published by M. Joseph Wright. And a paper called an *Appendix*, or a brief Answer to by Mr. Marlow's *Notion of the Essence of Singing*, by TW. And to a paper called *An Answer to a brief Discourse concerning singing*, by HK. Whereunto is added a brief Narrative of the use, Occasion and Management of the present Controversy of singing, between I.M and Mr. B.K. With some Reflections on Book called *Truth Vindicated*, or *Mr Keach's Sober Appeal answered*. Wherein also his Abuses, &c. are detected, under the hands of several worthy Pastors of Churches. By Isaac Marlow. Price Bound together 1s.

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Footnote:

Some words used in the text may be unfamiliar to those of us that live in the 21st Century.

Below are a few definitions from the Oxford English Dictionary that may help in our understanding

Reflection:

- a. Something which brings discredit *on* (also *upon*) a person or thing.
- b. Criticism, blame; censure, reproof.
- c. A disparaging or insulting remark or statement, esp. one intended to bring discredit *on* (also *upon*) a person or a person's reputation.

Cavil

- a. To raise captious and frivolous objections; to object, dispute, or find fault unfairly or without good reason.
- b. To object to or find fault with captiously.

Calumny

- a. False and malicious misrepresentation of the words or actions of others, calculated to injure their reputation; libellous detraction, slander.
- b. A false charge or imputation, intended to damage another's reputation; a slanderous report.

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Transcription was by Mr Mark Smith, A Reformed Baptist's Disk (<http://www.rbdisk.vor.org>).
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