

A

DISCOURSE

Harley ON *Thomas*

PSALMODY:

IN WHICH IT IS CLEARLY SHEWN,

THAT IT IS THE

DUTY OF CHRISTIANS

TO TAKE THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS AND OCCASIONS OF THEIR

Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs

FROM THE

GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

BY JAMES LATTA, A.M.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT CHESNUT-LEVEL.

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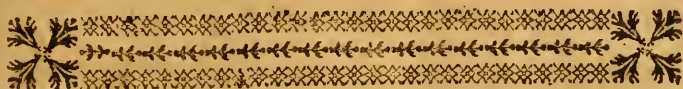
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T H E

P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following pages has had it in view, for several years past, to communicate to the public the thoughts and reasonings contained in them. Various considerations have retarded the execution of his design. He hoped, that some person of superior abilities and opportunities, for elucidating and investigating the subject, would have undertaken it. He was desirous, as far as might be, of furnishing himself with those materials, that most fully testify, what was the practice of the church of Christ in her earliest and purest ages, when we may be assured, that she most clearly understood, and most exactly obeyed the commands and directions of our Lord and his Apostles. The delay gave him also an opportunity of considering whatever occurred in his reading the sacred scriptures, or other writings, that might be of advantage for casting light upon his subject; as also of attending to whatever has been advanced by those, who have opposed the doctrine, which he has endeavored to establish.

After all, if the author could have been induced to believe, that the church of Christ, was still under obligation to offer up to God a worship, which was originally appointed to be offered up through priests and sacrifices; and that the Apostle's commanding us, *to do*

whatever we do in word or deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus, left us at entire liberty to neglect all explicit and direct mention of the name and intercession of the Lord Jesus, in all our songs of praise and thanksgiving to God—If he could have been persuaded, that God had commanded us to conduct this part of our worship, just as if the glorious work of redemption was yet to be accomplished, and to treat the actions and sufferings of the Saviour, in it, as if they had been only foretold or prefigured, but never, to this day, performed or endured—If he could have believed, that He, who has commanded, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father, had forbidden the minister of Christ, when he goes about to teach and admonish in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, to say any thing in these that is revealed in the Gospel, concerning him—Had forbidden him to say any thing of the account the Evangelists give us of the transcendent dignity of his person, of the spotless holiness of his life, of the lustre of his miracles, of his heavenly doctrines and discourses, of his agonies in the garden, and his sufferings on the cross—Had forbidden him to speak in Psalms or Hymns of those circumstances of glory and honour, that attended his resurrection from the dead and ascension into Heaven—and had restrained him from paying to the Saviour any of those praises and adorations, which the glorified Saints and Angels in Heaven are directed to pay him, in consequence of an accomplished redemption—If he could have believed, that God had displayed his glory in Christ, in a manner more illustrious, than in any former instances, and that he had predestinated a people unto the adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ, that they might be to the praise of his glory; and yet had forbidden this people to compose or sing a Song of Praise or Thanksgiving to him, for this predestination, adoption,

or for the wonderful means, by which they had been raised to this high dignity—I say if the author could have believed these things, with many more of the like nature, he never would have subjected himself to the labor of writing the following sheets; much less would he have done any thing that tended to lessen his estimation and influence, however small they may be, with some whose friendship he highly values, and whose early prejudices in favor of the Old Testament Psalmody, are perhaps, too deeply fixed to be removed by any thing he has advanced. He hopes, however, they will see some reason for his differing from them in sentiment, and impute this difference, not to any affectation of singularity but to what is, in his apprehension, a well-grounded persuasion of the truth. And if he has discovered any eagerness of spirit, in blaming, or censuring those, who are of opposite sentiments, he hopes they will have the candor and justice, to ascribe it to his zeal for the honor, and interest of the Gospel, and its Divine Author and to his earnest desire, that a due regard should be had to them, in every part of our devotion.

The Author also entertained an high degree of hope, that, if the people would be brought seriously to consider the subject, in the light of reason and Scripture, they would be of the same sentiments with himself, and no longer dishonor that Gospel, in which they profess to glory, by leaving it entirely out, in any part of their devotions; especially in their Songs of Praise, where gratitude for it should always constitute a principal part. He was earnestly desirous too, that that worship, and those honors should be restored to the Son of God, which the primitive Church paid him, which the Saints and Angels in Heaven continue to pay him,

which God the Father so peremptorily requires, and the Apostle, with express regard to our Psalmody, enjoins, when he says, *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Impressed, as the Author was, with these hopes and desires, if he had concealed or disguised his sentiments he would not have been faithful to his fellow Christians, discharged a good conscience, or been faithful to him, who has called him to the profession and hopes of the Gospel, and who has given him, though less than the least of his servants, this grace, that he should preach among the Gentiles the unfearchable riches of Christ.

If after having been laid under such special and distinguishing obligations by his God and Redeemer, and in the certain prospect of appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, he could have so far undervalued the approbation of God, as to have put it to the hazard, by conforming to the opinions or doctrines of men; he could not have been a servant of Christ.—He hopes, therefore, that even they, who differ from him in sentiment, will approve his integrity. If the Author has erred, he has erred with the whole primitive Church, which for upwards of three hundred years offered up her devotions to God in a Psalmody, the subjects and occasions of which, were taken from the Gospel of Christ. He has erred with many Divines and others, eminent for piety and usefulness in the Churches, both in the past and present age; insomuch that there have been few Ministers or private Christians endowed with a capacity and genius for poetry, and animated with a spirit of a sincere and lively devotion, who have not employed their talents in this way. Among these we may mention a Flavel, an Erskine, a

Willifon, a Doddridge, a Newton, a Cowper, and a Watts. And no doubt many more might be added of eminent piety and ability, whose names and writings have not come to the Author's knowledge.

Some Authors in this country have asserted, and endeavored to prove, that the Old Testament Psalmody is a system, to which the Church of Christ is to be confined to the end of time. But however eminent they may be for theological learning, for strength of reasoning, or accuracy and skill in criticism, such is the Author's ignorance, slowness of apprehension, or incapacity to perceive the force of an argument, that all that they have offered has rather confirmed him in his present sentiments.

1. They should have shewn, in the first place, that the *Word of Christ*, of which the Apostle speaks to the Colossians, Chap. iii. 16. was so peculiarly restricted to the Psalms of David, that what Christ himself delivered by his own Ministry and that of his Apostles, was no part of that word; and that the Colossians could not fail to have understood the Apostle as meaning by the word of Christ, those Psalms.

2. They should have shewn that it was usual with our Apostle and the other sacred writers, in mentioning the Psalms of David, to call them *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*.

3. They should have proved that it was the duty of Christians, not to draw the instructions and admonitions, which they communicated to one another, in these Psalms and Hymns, from the doctrines and discourses of our Saviour and his Apostles, but from the words of David and Asaph.

4. They should have shewn, that the whole worship of the Old Testament was conducted in the *name of the Lord Jesus*, and that the Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving, especially under that dispensation, were expressly offered up to the Father, through Christ. These things can never be proved—and the very reverse of them all appears to be the truth.

It is manifest from the Scriptures, that the Old Testament Church had no access to God, but through priests and sacrifices, and it is presumed to be out of the power of these writers to produce a single instance, in which the congregation of Israel approached God, in any public act of devotion, otherwise than through these. Nay in the celebrated instance, which our Authors quote, 2 Chron. xxix. 30. in which they pretend there is a standing rule for Christian Psalmody binding to the end of time; we find, that consecrated Levites were the singers, nor did they proceed to *sing praise to the Lord in the words of David and Asaph*, until a burnt-offering had been offered upon the altar. Now if the Church at Colosse had been Jews, and they and the Apostle had been living in the days of Hezekiah, seven hundred years before Christ, he would no doubt have commanded them to approach God, in the same manner, through priests and sacrifices. But *the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.* (Heb. vii. 12.) The Apostle, therefore, enjoins it upon Christians to offer up their Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs to God, in the name, and through the intercession of our Lord Jesus.—And can it be supposed, that we are still under obligation to offer up to God a form of worship, in which there is no direct and express regard to our great High-Priest, and which, by leaving him out, would imply, that the law, requiring our approach

to God, through priests and sacrifices, is still in force? The Apostle commands us *in every thing to give thanks*; (1 Theff. v. 18.) and gratitude requires, and God by every extraordinary interposition in our favor justly demands a Song of gratitude and praise. The piety and gratitude of the Saints in all ages have led them to this. Now to say nothing in all our songs of praise of the incarnation of the blessed Jesus, and of the glorious and eternal redemption he has obtained for us, one would think, must either imply great ingratitude for these inestimable favors, or amount to a declaration, that these events have never been accomplished;—and to sing of them only in the language of prophecy, or of the typical observances that prefigured them, amounts to the same thing. And to confine ourselves to the Songs of the Jewish people must imply, as far as this part of our worship goes, that no considerable facts or events, reflecting glory upon God, or meriting praise or gratitude from us, have come to our knowledge, for upwards of two thousand years.

If our Heavenly Father has given us any advantages above the Old Testament Saints, it is but reasonable and just, that these advantages should be acknowledged. And there is no part of our worship, in which we can, with greater propriety, make this acknowledgement, than in our songs of praise. The force of truth has obliged a late author upon this subject to whom a reference is made in some following pages*, to grant that we have three advantages above the Old Testament Church. A very scanty enumeration indeed! Witsius has represented them, as amounting to more than double the number. But let us hear what they are. “The first is,

* The Rev. John Anderson, Author of Two Discourses on Psalmody.

“ that Christ is actually come. The second, that we
 “ have the New Testament Scriptures. The third,
 “ that we have a more abundant supply of the Spirit of
 “ Christ. Thus, what was prophecy to them is fulfilled
 “ to us; what was practised by them as a type, more
 “ obscurely setting forth him that was to come, is now
 “ to be contemplated by us, as a metaphor or allegory,
 “ clearly setting forth him who is already come (a).”

Now I would ask our author what reason can be assigned for glorifying God in the prophecy, which is not stronger for thanking him for its accomplishment? Of what advantage the New Testament Scriptures can be to us in our Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, if it is unlawful for us to teach or admonish from them? Of what use can a light be in a place, where we dare not introduce it? How can the typical observances and figures in the Book of Psalms be accompanied with the light of the New Testament revelation, when every departure from the matter or form, in which these Psalms were written, implies, in his judgment, a reflection on the Spirit, and is a corruption of the worship of God?

But we will suppose that light introduced, if it be possible, without changing any thing of the typical or figurative language, and then, says our Author, “ these
 “ typical observances and figures are undoubtedly attended with the advantage of giving us a much clearer and more striking view of the principal object, than
 “ if it were expressed in simple terms and divested of its
 “ accessory idea.” Now I presume that our author will grant, that the principal object to which these typical observances referred was Christ.

Let him produce any type, figure, or typical observance, which he conceives will give us clearer and more striking views of this object than the simple terms of the Gospel, divested of all figure; and we will venture to say with the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 10. that however glorious it may be, it hath no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. Every type, every figure must be eclipsed before the Sun of Righteousness. “As the sun swalloweth up the light of the moon and stars, in like manner is the lustre of former dispensations swallowed up in that of the Gospel (a).”

Observe how consistent what our Author here says, “of the clear and striking views the types give us,” is with what he says in another place. Speaking of the Old Testament he says. “The Lord was pleased to lead Church members under it by the hand to the understanding and application of the things contained in the word in a manner adapted to their childish condition, by the institution of *types* and *figures*. These types were no otherwise veils to the spiritual things signified by them, than a child’s spelling and dividing the words is veil to the sense of what he reads, which truly leads to that sense, though in a way adapted to the capacity of a child.—Under the New Testament the same things that had been set forth in the word, are set forth in it still, but more *clearly* and *fully*.—The Church has now no more occasion for the way of learning suited to a state of childhood, by types and figures, as one that has learned to read, has no more occasion, in order to come at the sense of what he reads, to spell and divide the words into syllables (b). Surely this gentleman will never send back the New Testament Church to a way of learning, by types and

(a) Doddridge in loc.

(b) Vindic. page 39.

figures, suited to a state of childhood, and which she has no occasion for." He acknowledges, that she has learned to read, and surely he cannot intend to confine her to "spell, and divide the words into syllables in "order to come at the sense of what she reads."

It can never be his mind, that in teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, we should draw our instructions and admonitions from that part of the word where "the same things" are more darkly and sparingly set forth, rather than from that part of it where "they are set forth more "clearly and fully." Or does he believe in his conscience, that our Heavenly Father, after having taught us to read by the personal ministry of his own Son, has remanded us back to the lordly discipline, and sparing instructions (*a*), of these *tutors and governors*, from whom this Divine person came, at the expence of such low abasement, and extreme suffering, to set us free?—

And what shall we say of the more abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ, which he acknowledges we have received, if, with all its fulness, we are in a worse condition, with respect to one important part of our worship than the Old Testament Church? The children of Israel, from the days of Moses until after their restoration from the Babylonish captivity, had persons among them who were enabled by the Spirit to compose Psalms and Hymns, suitable to their situation and circumstances. And now when a more abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ is acknowledged, and Christians are commanded to be *filled with it*, they are, it seems, wholly incapacitated for *speaking to themselves in Psalms, Hymns and Spi-*

(*a*) Witfius.

ritual Songs ! When Christians are commanded to give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and when this command is given with express regard to our Psalmody, it must be surprising, that not so much as a single Psalm or Hymn should be composed or sung by Christians in conformity to this direction. It seems still more surprising to hear, a Minister of the New Testament, professing a regard to the authority of the Apostle, and acknowledging a more abundant supply of the Spirit of Christ under the Gospel, and yet asserting that it is unlawful, and unwarrantable, and a corruption of the worship of God, to compose or sing such a Hymn. How far differing from this is the declaration of the modest and judicious Doctor Ridgley in his Lectures upon our larger Catechism, Vol. 2. Page 359. Speaking of Hymns of human compofure he says, “ If we have ground to conclude the compofure, as to the matter thereof, and mode of expression, unexceptionable, and adapted to raise the affections, as well as excite suitable acts of faith in extolling the praises of God, it gives me no more disgust, though it be not in Scripture-words, than praying or preaching do, when the matter is agreeable thereunto.”

The pious and eloquent Bishop Horne, has advanced many things very plausibly in order to recommend the Psalms of David as a standing system.—But he has taken no notice of the Apostle’s direction, respecting Psalmody, nor shewn how it is possible for us to conform to it in adhering to David’s Psalms. In order to sing them in such a manner, as to accommodate them to the Gospel he recommends it “ to substitute the Messiah for David, “ the Gospel for the Law,” &c, (a). But he should

(a) Preface pag. 26, 27. Eng. Edit.

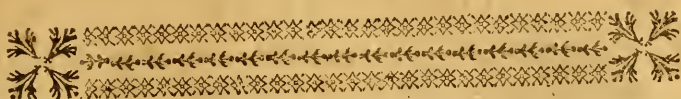
have rather said : Let us substitute David for the Messiah, the Law for the Gospel; which in fact is the case, when we sing of the actions, sufferings, victories or exaltations of David instead of those of our great High-Priest and Captain of our Salvation. With respect to the Jews the substitution might have been proper. But what can warrant our making such a substitution? Shall any man prevail upon us to return to the shades of good things to come, when we have the things themselves? Shall we light a lamp when the sun shineth in his strength? Having attained to the knowledge and full understanding of manhood, shall we return to learn after the elements and rudiments of Children.—*When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of Sons.* And shall they, who have been thus set free, return again to a servile bondage under the elements of the world? Gal. 4. 3. 4.

Whatever deference should be paid to the piety, eloquence and ingenuity of the Author, last mentioned, we must beg leave to observe, that so various are the meanings, which he has put upon the Psalms, that an individual must often be at a loss to fix upon any determinate sense in which he ought to sing them; while a congregation singing the same words may affix ideas to them, as different as can well be conceived.

To conclude : It is no wonder that that part of our devotion, which should be the most lively of all, is found to be destitute of proper spirit and fervor, when we do not offer it up to God *through that new and living way which he himself hath consecrated for us.*—When we pay no proper regard to the great High-Priest over the house

of God, through whom alone we can draw near with full assurance of faith, and have boldness to enter into the holiest of all.

Then shall our songs of praise and gratitude to God rise to some good degree of ardor—then shall our faith, and love and hope in him, be lively, when we celebrate him as our Father in Christ, and sing of his electing, justifying, and adopting grace, and contemplate that glorious and eternal inheritance, which he has sent his Son to purchase for us, for which his Spirit is preparing us, and to which he is ready to receive us.—Then shall we be sensible of the powerful and constraining force of the love of Christ when we sing of him, not only as humbled, laboring, and dying, but living and reigning for us.—Then shall our love to the Spirit, and our joy in him be abundant, when we learn to celebrate him as the Author of all our graces, as the spring of all our consolations, as the pledge and earnest of our future felicity and glory. These, my dear fellow Christians, will undoubtedly be some of those delightful themes of our songs in Heaven; let us, therefore be learning them on earth, and anticipate in some degree, in our assemblies here, the affectionate and lively devotion of those ascriptions of praise to our God and Redeemer, in which we will harmoniously join, when we shall come to the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven. Amen.



A
DISCOURSE
ON
PSALMODY.

Col. iii. 16, 17.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs; singing with grace in your hearts, to the Lord.—And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father, by him.

THE nature of man has been enriched by its great and bountiful Creator, with a great variety of noble capacities or powers.—He can form conceptions of the highest and noblest objects, and contemplate them with admiration and delight. He is capable of cloathing his sentiments with language, and takes pleasure in expressing, in some suitable manner, the grandeur and excellence of any object, that fills the heart with wonder, gratitude, or love. The great original of these

powers shews, to what purpose they should be principally employed. Nothing can be more evident, than that they should be chiefly exerted in contemplating, and celebrating the perfections and glories of the ever blessed God. He is the only object adequate to our most enlarged conceptions, deserving our highest esteem, and most ardent love, and is alone capable of making us happy. Wherever the pious heart has been transported with a sense of the greatness and excellence of this object, which was at the same time its glory and joy, it has endeavored to express itself in a manner adequate to the greatness of its conceptions. Common and ordinary language has appeared too low and mean. It has risen to the sublime and grand, in order to attain, as far as possible, to the grandeur and beauty of the object, that captivated and charmed it. It has labored to find out the noblest thoughts, and expressions, and brought together the liveliest and boldest figures. Nature has been exhausted to represent, and give an idea, of its sentiments. Nor has the devout, and pious worshipper rested here. Where he was capable of it, by the advantages of nature or inspiration, he has added the harmony of numbers, and the melody of the voice, to the ornaments and graces of language.

It is manifest, that in the earliest ages, while poetry was pure and unadulterated, it was consecrated to the purposes of religion, and to the praises of God. This appears from the Song of Moses, upon the deliverance of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, and their passage through the Red Sea. The like may be observed of the Song of Deborah, of those of Isaiah, and of the Psalms of David. Here it was set apart for religious purposes, and employed in singing the praises of the Creator, in extolling his perfections, and cele-

brating his benefits. Others of the sacred writers were led, by the Spirit, to give the graces of harmony, and numbers to compositions of another kind. Almost the whole book of Job is written in verse. Jeremiah deplores, in song, the miseries and calamities of his country. And Solomon communicates the rules of prudence and holy living in the Book of Proverbs, in the same agreeable manner.

Christianity opens a new field for sacred poetry. Its Divine Author has brought life and immortality to light. He has exhibited to the world matters of admiration and gratitude, surpassing every thing that has before appeared. The light he has cast upon the perfections of the blessed God, the universality of his Providence, his unparalleled love and good will to the children of men, manifested in the gift of his Son, the mission of the Holy Spirit, and in the felicity and glory he has provided for all true believers, must affect every sensible heart with gratitude, and call forth the most devout returns of gratitude and praise. And, indeed, can the true Christian think of the low abasement and extreme sufferings, to which his Divine master submitted for his sake, and, at the same time, reflect upon the dignity of his person, the lustre of his miracles, and the holiness and usefulness of his life, without pleasing admiration, and grateful astonishment?—Can he think of his own former deplorable condition, and consider himself now, as in a state of favor with God, adopted into his family, and constituted an *heir according to the hope of eternal life*, and not *shew forth the praises of him, who hath called him out of darkness into his marvelous light*?

It is to such devout and lively exercises of praise and gratitude, that the Apostle calls Christians in the words of our text.—*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord, &c.*

That praise and thanksgiving are duties that we ought to perform to God, none, who consider the perfections of his nature, and the obligations we are under to him will deny. That the graces and beauties of poetry are to be employed for these purposes, and that these should, at all proper seasons, be accompanied with the melody, and harmony of the voice, both reason and nature, and the sacred Scriptures seem fully to evince,—

But what I would principally insist upon from the words, is to prove,

That the principal subjects of our Psalmody, are to be taken from the Gospel of Christ.

I say the principal subjects, because I do not think, that we ought to be restricted from borrowing light, and advantages from any part of scripture in our Psalmody, any more than in other parts of our public worship.

That the principal subjects of our Psalmody are to be taken from the Gospel, will, I presume, appear,

I. From the words of the text.—

II. From the examples of the Saints, and the predictions and injunctions of the prophets under the Old Testament.

III. From the practice of the primitive Church.

IV. From the Gospel itself.

1. Then, I say, it appears from the words of the text, that the principal subjects of our Psalmody are to be drawn from the Gospel.

This will appear if we consider what we are to understand by *the word of Christ*—and the duty of *teaching and admonishing*, which the Apostle here enjoins.—

That the Gospel should furnish the principal subjects of our Psalmody, will appear from the expression here used; the word of Christ.

That by the word of Christ, we are here to understand, the Gospel, is manifest from sundry other parts of this Apostle's writings.—In the first Chap. of this Epistle, at the 5th verse, he styles it *the word of the truth of the Gospel, which, says he, is come to you, as it is in all the world*.—And at the 21, 22 and 23 verses, he represents their happiness, *if they continued in the faith grounded, and settled, and were not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which, says he, ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature under Heaven*.—In the 2 chap. 10 verse, he represents them *as complete in Christ*, and cautions them against every thing, that would call off their attention from the Gospel, or tempt them to adulterate it with foreign mixtures, whether introduced from the philosophy of the heathen, or from the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses*.

* In Christ we have—1. Complete wisdom, John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. ii. 2.—2. Complete righteousness: Isa. liii. 11. Rom. iii. 22. and x. 4.—3. Sanctification by the spirit of Christ, Rom. i. 4. and viii. 9. Wherefore we have no need of additional patches either from Judaism or philosophy. *Quare non opus est offumentis Judaicis aut philosophicis. Davenant.*

If then *by the word of Christ* he would refer his converts at Colosse to the Old Testament, or to any part of it, how comes it to pass that he never mentions it? How is it that he never refers to it, but in order to shew that the necessity of its sacrifices was done away; and that they no longer stood in need of the circumcision enjoined in it, and were to pay no regard to the distinction of days, or of meats and drinks, which that legal dispensation required to be observed?—If they were to be restricted in their Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs to any part of the Old Testament, how comes he, in the beginning and progress of the Epistle to direct them to very different grounds of praise and thanksgiving to God? Ch. 1, 3, 4, 5, 12, &c.

But let any person, of common understanding consider what the Colossians would understand by the word of Christ. Can it be conceived, that the members of a church, the body of which were Gentiles, and wholly unacquainted with former revelations, would understand by *the word of Christ*, any of the books of the Old Testament? Does the Apostle give the smallest hint of this, as being his meaning, or does he not wholly refer them to that Gospel whereof he was made a Minister? Ch. 1. 23.

But in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Apostle writes immediately to the Jews themselves, he expressly distinguishes the word of Christ from all former revelations made by Moses and the prophets. Chap. 1. 1. *God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by his Son.*—And in Chap. ii. 2. He says, *If the word spoken by angels was stedfast—how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first*

began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them, that heard him? And Chap. xii. 25. He says, *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh*, viz. the Mediator of the new Covenant; *for if they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him, that speaketh from Heaven.* If then, writing to the Jews themselves, he distinguishes the Gospel, as being the word spoken by Christ, from all former revelations, how can we suppose that in writing to the Gentiles he should by the word of Christ intend any part of them? Could they have conceived, that he had no reference at all to the Gospel, which had been the subject of his own ministry, but was referring them to some part of a former revelation, with which the body of them were wholly unacquainted? I have been the more particular here, because some by the word of Christ, would have us to understand the Psalms of David, than which a greater force upon words can scarcely be conceived†.

† It has been left to the learning and ingenuity of some modern writers, who cannot bear that the Gospel should have any share in our songs of praise to God, to invent such a sense of the words.—It never entered into the conception of former commentators. Pool in his Synopsis represents Grotius, Vatablus, Zanchius, and Davenant, as all agreeing that the word of Christ, is the doctrine of the Gospel. (*Doctrina evangelica*) Davenant says, that it is called the word of Christ, both because it was revealed, and preached by Christ, and speaks of Christ. Doddridge calls the word of Christ, the Gospel they had received.

The writers above referred to, saw, that if the plain and obvious sense of the words were admitted, the Apostle's injunction would amount to an express and positive precept, enforcing the use of an evangelical Psalmody. Rather than admit this, they have put such a construction upon the words of the Apostle as would make him exclude the very Gospel, whereof he himself was made a minister, which was preached to every creature under heaven, and which was come unto themselves, in order to introduce the Psalms of David, than which nothing could be further from the mind of the Apostle.

We are not to judge of the circumstances of these early converts to Christianity from our own. We have the whole canon of Scripture before us. The whole Bible, since the art of Printing has been found out, is an easy purchase, and several copies of it may be acquired by a single family.—It was far otherwise with them. Few or none of them can be supposed to have had even the writings of the New-Testament entire. It was well if all the members of any one Christian society united could have furnished the whole of the Gospels and Epistles†. Many of them, in all probability had no

† “As the sacred books were written at different times, and by different authors, for the use of particular churches, it was long before they came to be universally known, inasmuch that the canon of Scripture was not settled for several centuries. We may therefore reasonably suppose, that the whole of the inspired writings were not generally in the possession of particular Christians in the very early ages.” (Macknight’s Harmony Prelim. Obs. 6. page 50).—

If then the primitive Christians cannot be reasonably supposed to have had those Scriptures, in which they were most deeply and immediately interested, may it not be justly asked how should they, who were Gentiles, have had those of the Old Testament? The Bereans, who were famous for searching the Scriptures, (Acts xvii. 11.) were Jews. Timothy *who had known them from a child was the son of a Jewess.* (Acts xvi. 1.) The eunuch, *whom Philip found reading the Prophet Isaiah,* was a powerful and wealthy person, and a proselyte to the Jewish religion. (Acts viii. 27.)—

But where do we read of the Gentiles having in their possession the Jewish Scriptures? And how could the Apostle directly and expressly enjoin it upon them to draw the materials of their songs of praise to God from writings, with which they were wholly unacquainted, to the exclusion of *that Gospel which was come unto them?* Among the Corinthians *he determined not to know any thing save Jesus Christ,* and yet at Ephesus and Colosse we find him, according to some modern writers, introducing and establishing a Psalmody, in which his name is never mentioned? What consistency would there have been in such a conduct as this? At Antioch he *withstood Peter to the face for compelling the Gentiles to live as did the Jews,* and yet at Colosse, as these men would have it, he enjoins it upon the Gentiles to conduct a great and leading part of

other knowledge of the Gospel but what they had from their teachers.—What then were they to do?—Were they to be silent in the praises of their God, and their Redeemer?—No, says the Apostle, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.*—Let your acquaintance with it be such, that you may be able to furnish yourselves from it for all the purposes of private or social worship. Thence be able to bring forth matter of prayer, praise, thanksgiving and instruction, having a special regard to the great Author of your knowledge and blessings.—*Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him.*—

But the important truth, which I am endeavoring to establish, is further evident—

2. From what the Apostle proceeds to recommend and enjoin, teaching one another, in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs.—

In the preceding words he had exhorted them to labor after an extensive acquaintance with the Gospel.—*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.*—Here he directs them to the manifold purposes of usefulness, of comfort, and mutual edification to which they should apply it, *teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms, Hymns, &c.*

their worship *as did the Jews.* It appears, that wherever the great Apostle of the Gentiles preached, the Jews raised a storm of opposition against him, and in one instance *bound themselves by an oath to assassinate him.*

Would this have been the case, if they had found him spreading the triumphs of their own religion, and introducing and establishing among the Gentiles a worship wholly restricted to the words of David and Asaph?

And here let it be observed that the command and injunction is general.—Every member of the church is included.—No person of suitable talents and capacity, is prohibited to compose spiritual songs, for the use and edification of his brethren, but is rather commanded to do it.—Nor are they commanded to see to it, that they who composed them, were divinely inspired.—It was sufficient if the subjects and occasions of them were taken from the word of Christ.—The manifest design of the Apostle was, *That as every man had received the gift, even so they should minister the same one to another, as stewards of the manifold grace of God,* 1 Pet. iv. 10.

In the parallel passage, Eph. v. 18, 19. Christians are commanded *not to be filled with wine, wherein is excess, but to be filled with the spirit.* And how was this fulness of the spirit to be manifested and improved? *By their speaking to one another in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs.* And here, as in the words of our text, observe what a strict and inviolable regard to the Gospel is enjoined. *Giving thanks always for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

While they gave thanks for all things, would the Apostle have them to forget *their election before the foundation of the world, their predestination to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, and their redemption through his blood (a)?* Would he have them to forget, what he elsewhere calls upon them to remember, *that whereas they had been in time past Gentiles, and far off; they were now made nigh by the blood of Christ, and were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the Saints (b)?* And yet all these things, and many others of a similar nature, must have been passed over in silence,

(a) Eph. i. 4, 5, 7.

(b) Eph. ii. 11, 13, 19.

if they had been restricted to the Psalmody of the Old Testament.—Where do we, in any instance, much less in *all things*, according to that dispensation, *Give thanks unto God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?*—And how could they, who, in their own persons had received the accomplishment of such great and precious promises, give thanks to God for that accomplishment in the language of those, who only saw them afar off, and left the world many ages before the great Author of these blessings made his appearance in it; many ages before the Gentiles, to whom the Apostle writes, were called to the profession and hopes of the Gospel?

But to proceed: Is it not the duty of every Christian *to be filled with the Spirit?* Ought they not to labor after his fullest communications; and earnestly to pray and look for his aid in the discharge of every duty?—And every sincere Christian has the amplest encouragement to do this, both from the nature of the Gospel dispensation, which is *the ministration of the Spirit (a)*, and from the particular and express promises of our Saviour and his Apostles.

Prayer, and the other exercises of devotion, attending it, are some of the most solemn duties of the Christian. In these we immediately address ourselves to God. And why are we not here restricted to the words of Scripture, and to the excellent forms of prayer therein recorded? And yet no person is found so unreasonable as to suppose, that we should be thus restricted? We know not what we should pray for as we ought, and are in ourselves, as ill qualified for the discharge of this, as of any other religious duty. But we have the promise

(a) 2 Cor. iii. 8.

of the Spirit to help our infirmities(b).—And if every Christian may expect his aid in prayer, why may not a person, endowed by God with a capacity and genius for poetry, filled with the Spirit(c), and filled with love to God, with gratitude to Christ, and animated with an earnest desire to promote the edification, comfort and devotion of his fellow Christians, expect the Divine assistance, when he sets himself to compose a Psalm or Hymn for this purpose?—And what should disqualify persons, thus accomplished and disposed, for the highest and noblest exercises of devotion?—Are they not by their Divine Redeemer made Kings and Priests unto God? Rev. i. 6. Are not Christians styled by the Apostle, 1 Pet. ii. 9, *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that they should shew forth the praises of him who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light?*

Now let us suppose persons, thus chosen and distinguished, and deeply sensible of the amazing goodness, that had raised them to such dignity and privileges, performing the duty enjoined in the text, and *teaching and admonishing one another, in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs*—What, think ye, would be the principal subjects of their praise and thanksgiving to God? Whence would they draw the materials for *teaching and admonishing one another?* Would they pass over in silence the mystery, that had been hid from ages and generations? Col. i. 26. Would they not dwell, with wonder and admiration, upon the amazing love of God, who, when they were sinners, and enemies in their hearts by wicked work, had given up his only begotten,

(b) Rom. viii. 26.

(c) Eph. v. 18.

and best beloved Son for their redemption; *who had made them, who in time past were not a people, to be now the people of God*, 1 Pet. ii. 10. *who, when they were dead in sins, had quickened them together with Christ, and had raised them up together, and made them sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus?* Eph. ii. 5, 6. Would they not celebrate the unparalleled goodness of their heavenly Father who had caused *their eyes to see, and their ears to hear*, what his most highly favoured prophets and kings had panted after in vain? Luke x. 24. Who had not appointed their lot under the dawn of gospel light, but had caused their eyes to behold it, in all its meridian splendor? Would they not have expressed an holy wonder and surprize, that, when God sent a person, of such transcendent dignity, and irresistible power, into the world, it was not *to condemn and destroy it*, but, *that through him, it might be saved?* John iii. 17. Well might they celebrate the praises of him, who had *blotted out their transgressions*, Ps. li. 1. *who had purified their souls*, 1 Pet. i. 22. rescued them from the jaws of destruction, and had set open before them the gates of Heaven; but surely, they must have been overwhelmed with holy gratitude and wonder, when they came to contemplate the unspeakable gift, which lay at the foundation of all. *He that spared not his own Son,* &c. Rom. viii. 32.

But however these primitive Christians might celebrate, in their Hymns and Anthems of praise, *the love of the Father*, we cannot suppose, that they would forget, and pass over in silence, *the grace of the Son*. 2. Cor. xiii. 14. How would they express their admiration at the unparalleled love, which he *who was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his*

person, had manifested in purging our sins? Heb. i. 3. Of him, *who, though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God;* Phil. ii. 6. yet for our sakes, *deigned to take upon him the likeness of sinful flesh,* Rom. viii. 3. and to become in every respect, and in every stage of his continuance here, *a man of sorrows?* Isaiah liii. 3.—With what pleasure would they celebrate the manifestations of his glory, in every part of his holy, heavenly, and useful life; the admirable discourses, that flowed from his lips, and the wonders of mercy and goodness, that were wrought by his hands.—How would they extol his zeal for the glory of God, and his love to the souls of men, when they beheld him in the agonies of the garden, and *becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?* Phil. ii. 8.—How would they magnify his unconquerable goodness and love, which led him, in the midst of his agonies, to become an intercessor to his Father for his betrayers and murderers?—With what transports of holy joy would they celebrate the victories of the great *Captain of their Salvation*, while they beheld him, by his own power, bursting the *bands of death*, rising triumphant from the grave, and entering into, and taking possession of, *Heaven as their forerunner*, and becoming their advocate, and undertaking their cause in the Court of his Father?—

Need I mention the gratitude of these primitive believers to the Holy Spirit of God, and in what songs of praise, they would celebrate his renewing and sanctifying influences.—How would they admire his power and grace, manifested in “enlightening their minds, renewing their wills, and persuading, and enabling them to

embrace Jesus Christ, as offered in the Gospel"—His goodness and condescension in *helping their infirmities, comforting them in all their tribulations, perfecting strength in their weakness, purifying their souls, and making them meet for an inheritance with the Saints in light?*—

Such are the subjects and occasions for Hymns and Anthems of praise, that are suggested by almost every page of the Gospel of Christ. Influenced by these, how earnestly would these primitive Christians exhort and admonish one another, *to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, to be fruitful in every good work, and to increase in the knowledge of God?* (a) What an advantage had they for inculcating upon one another a supreme and ardent love to God, from his unmerited, disinterested, and distinguishing love to them?—And what an enlarged beneficence and charity, what condescending humility, what zeal, diligence, self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness, should they manifest, who had so bright and illustrious a display of these graces, in *the great Apostle, and High-Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus?* (b) How entirely should they be devoted to the service of God, *who had been redeemed from their vain conversation, received by tradition from their fathers, not by silver or gold or corruptible things, but by the precious blood of Christ?* (c) Should they account any thing too difficult to be done, or too grievous to be endured, for the sake of him, who for their sakes, *became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?* (d) Surely the love of Christ would constrain them, with an alluring and irresistible force, to do any thing, to adorn his doctrine or subserve his kingdom and interest,

(a) Col. i. 10. (b) Heb. iii. 1. (c) 1 Pet. i. 18. 19.

(d) Phil. ii. 8.

when they thus judged, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they, which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him, who died for them. (a) How earnestly would these early converts to the faith caution each other against bitterness and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, and all malice, lest they should thereby grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom they were sealed unto the day of redemption! (b) and exhort one another to the strictest purity and chastity, as being the temples of this Divine Agent. (c).

These were the great lessons of religion and virtue, which the Apostles were continually inculcating, as being founded upon the doctrines of the Gospel, which were the great subjects of their own preaching. And can any man be serious in asserting, that, when the Apostle mentions *the word of Christ*, and enjoins such devout and edifying exercises, as what should arise from a thorough knowledge of it, he intended, that in these no regard should be had to any thing, which our Lord had said or done, in his own person, or by the ministry of his Apostles?—Can any one believe, that he intended, they should wholly overlook and disregard, in their praises and thanksgiving to God, the great things, which he himself had been just laying before them at the entrance of this epistle?—Would he send them to praise God, for the deliverance of the Jewish people from their oppression in Egypt, and the wrath and tyranny of Pharaoh, who had themselves been but just delivered from the bondage of corruption, from the wrath of God, and from the snare of the Devil?—Would he send them to

(a) 2 Cor. v. 14, 15 (b) Eph. iv. 30, 31. (c) 1 Cor. vi. 19.

record the deliverance of Israel by the hand of Moses, when he had been just speaking of their redemption by *the blood of the cross*?—Would he lead them back to the types and shadows of the law, *when the day spring from on high had visited them*?—Being delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son, would he forbid them, in a Hymn of praise, to give thanks to the Father, who, from being children of wrath, and heirs of condemnation, *had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*? (a) Having sat at the feet of Jesus in the ministry of his Evangelists and Apostles, and learnt, as from his own mouth, the heavenly lessons of wisdom, which he came from the bosom of his Father to reveal, were they never to utter a Song of praise to their great Deliverer, as having already appeared, nor to speak of him in a Psalm or Hymn, but in the obscure and figurative language of those, who had lived a thousand years before he was born!—

As therefore there is no probability that the churches at Ephesus and Colosse, had the Psalms of David in their possession, as the Apostle does not mention them, nor refer them to them, but speaks of the devout exercises, which he enjoins in such a diversity of phrase, as shews that he had them not at all in his view.*—But above

(a) Col. i. 12. 13.

* The Psalms of David are never referred to in the New Testament, but in a manner so direct and express, that they cannot be mistaken. Thus, Luke 20, 42, *David himself saith in the Book of Psalms, &c.* And our Lord says, Luke 24, 44. *All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets, concerning me.* The like may be observed of all the other instances in which the Psalms of David are quoted; as, Acts i. 20—and xiii. 33, 35. If therefore, the Psalms of David had been introduced and established among the converts at Colosse and Ephesus, no reason can be assigned, why the

all when we find him directing them to subjects of praise and gratitude to God, wholly different from what are recorded in the Old Testament, to wonders that had not been accomplished in former days, but in which they themselves were personally and deeply interested ; and, moreover, find him, through the whole of the Epistle, fixing their attention to the Gospel, which they had heard ; we must conclude, that by the word of Christ he must mean and intend that word, *which God, in these last days, had spoken unto us by his Son (a)*, in his own ministry, and that of his Apostles. And, we must believe, from the whole strain of our Apostle's writings, that it was from this word, they were to draw the materials of those *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, by which they were to teach and admonish one another*.—But I proceed, in the

II. Place, to illustrate and prove the same truth from the examples of the Saints, and the predictions, and injunctions of the Prophets, under the Old Testament.

Apostle should have used such a diversity of phrase, and not have spoken of these Psalms in the usual manner, as being familiar and well known to them. But his directing the members of these churches to the *word of Christ*—his commanding them to *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*—his enjoining them to *give thanks unto God and the Father, by him*, manifestly shew, that the Apostle had not even the most distant reference to the Psalms of David. Our Apostle always distinguishes the word of Christ from what has been spoken by David and the Prophets. And if we were to adhere strictly to the Old Testament Psalmody, we cannot be said to do any thing in the name of the Lord Jesus, much less to give thanks unto God and the Father, by him. No mention is therein made of the Father as a distinct and special object of our devotion, nor of the Son, as being the appointed way of our access to him. These things are so peculiar to the Gospel, that it appears amazing that they should be understood as having a reference to any thing else. It must appear plain, I conceive, to every unprejudiced mind, that if any Songs were composed, entirely conforming to the Apostle's direction, the subjects and occasion of them, as well as the manner in which they were addressed, must be wholly new.

(a) Heb. i. 1.

We are exhorted by the great Apostle of the Gentiles *to be followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises (a).*—We cannot greatly err, if we walk in the paths in which they have gone before us, to glory. Now their altars, their monuments, their sacrifices, their festivals, testify their piety and gratitude to God. You might almost learn the history of the wonders God had wrought for them, from the Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving, in which they have celebrated the power and goodness of their great Deliverer. *Those elders, who obtained a good report, (b)* did not confine their praises to the mercies and blessings conferred upon their fathers, but took care to record the goodness of God upon every new deliverance. And are not Christians under the same, or even far superior obligations to God?—

As soon as Moses had brought the children of Israel through the Red-Sea, he composed a Psalm or Song to be sung by them, in all their generations and families, in memory of that deliverance. *(c)* This deliverance, great as it was, was but an obscure type and shadow of the great Salvation, wrought out for all true believers by the Son of God. The one bears no comparison with the other, either with respect to the enemies and evils from which it delivered the Jewish people, or the dignity and excellence of the person employed, to effect it.

This is so plain to all, who consider the kind and nature of the blessings of the Gospel, or believe the divinity of its great Author, that, I presume, it needs no proof or illustration. And shall all the warmth of gratitude, the force and beauties of poetry, the harmony

(a) Heb. vi. 12. *(b)* Heb. xi. 2. *(c)* Exod. xv. 1.

of numbers, and the melody of the voice be employed to celebrate the one, and shall it be accounted heresy, or superstition to sing a Song of Praise to God for the other?—Shall the ransomed of the Lord believe, that this amazing Salvation has been wrought for them, above seventeen hundred years since, and not dare to speak of it in their Hymns or Songs of Praise, as being already accomplished? If they should hold their peace, where such wonders of goodness claim their acknowledgments, *would not the stones*, as our Lord said on another occasion, *cry out?* (a)

David has praised God for *making known his ways unto Moses, and his acts unto the Children of Israel.* (b) Under how much greater obligations are Christians to celebrate the grace and condescension of their Heavenly Father, *who has, in these last days spoken to us*, not by a mortal man, nor by an Angel, but by the great Creator and Lord of Angels, *his own Son?* (c) In the Songs of that inspired writer, we can trace the dreadful acts of the Lord in the Land of Egypt, we can attend his people in their journeyings through the wilderness, we can see them fed with manna from Heaven, and drinking water from the cleft rock. We can see the heathen driven out before them, and themselves, after repeated victories, settled in the promised Land. And shall Christians, in all their Songs of Praise, be silent respecting all the beneficent acts of the blessed Jesus? Shall they say nothing of his *opening the eyes of the blind*, of his *unstopping the ears of the deaf*, of his *causing the lame to leap as the hart*, and the *tongue of the dumb to sing?* (d) Shall they say nothing of the divine power and goodness, manifested in healing the leprosy, the palsy and other obstinate diseases, by a touch or a word?

(a) Luke xix. 40. (b) Psal. ciii. 7. (c) Heb. i. 1.

(d) Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

Shall they see him walking on the water, commanding the winds and waves, raising the dead to life from the bed, the bier, and even from the grave? Shall they see him allaying the hunger of thousands with a few loaves and fishes, and regaling the guests at a marriage, to which he had been invited, by water converted into wine, and yet not utter a word, in all their Songs of Praise, concerning *the glorious honor of his Majesty, and his wondrous works?* (a) Shall we see the great captain of our Salvation, blotting out *the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, nailing it to his cross,* (b) bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, (c) and there spoiling principalities and powers and triumphing over them?—Shall we see him *swallowing up death in victory,* (d) ascending into Heaven as our fore-runner, and as the Apostle expresses it, *raising us up together, and making us sit together in Heavenly places* (e)—I say can we see and believe all this, and not shew forth *the exceeding riches of his grace?* If in such a circumstance we can be silent, shall not the piety and gratitude of the Psalmist, which animated him to elevated strains of devotion, upon occasions of a far inferior nature, rise up in judgment against us and condemn us?—

The Prophets, who foretold the coming of Christ, appear to have been transported with the obscure and distant prospect of his glory. The Psalmist calls upon all nature to exult in expectation of his appearance—*All ends of the earth have seen the Salvation of our God—Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth, make a loud noise, rejoice and sing praise—Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein; Let the floods clap their hands, let the hills be joyful together* (f). Isaiah represents *the desert, rejoicing and*

(a) Psal. cxlv. 6. (b) Col. ii. 14. 15. (c) 1 Pet. ii. 24.
(d) 1 Cor. xv. 54. (e) Eph. ii. 6. (f) Psal. xcvi. 2. 4. 7. 8.

blossoming as the rose—It shall blossom abundantly, says he, and rejoice, even with joy and singing (a). And in prospect of the glorious enlargement of Christ's kingdom by the accession of the Gentiles, he says, *Sing, O Heavens, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted (b).* And Jeremiah, in prospect of the deliverance of Israel, and the introduction of Gospel blessings, as may be seen from the sequel of the prophecy addressing the Church in the name of her Great Deliverer, says; *Sing with gladness for Jacob and shout among the chief of the nations (c).* And shall the Prophets speak thus in raptures of the dawn of the Sun of righteousness, and of the happiness and joy that would rise upon the world at his appearing; and shall he be eclipsed after his rising? And shall they, who have tasted his blessings, and *have drawn water out of the wells of his salvation (d)*, be so thoughtless and ungrateful, or so blinded with prejudice, as never to mention his name, in a Song of Praise, or to sing an Hymn to their Great Deliverer?—In such a circumstance, they would be led by a Spirit very different from that which the Prophet represents as possessing the converts to the faith of the Gospel. *In that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord for he hath done excellent things; this is known in all the earth (e).* Nay they will disobey the express command of this Prophet. For after having spoken of God, *as giving Christ for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, &c.* he says, *Sing unto the Lord a new Song, and his praise from the end of the earth (f).* These predictions and injunctions of the

(a) Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. (b) Isa. xlix. 19. (c) Jer. xxxi. 7.

(d) Isa. xii. 3. (e) Isa. xii. 4, 5. (f) Isa. xlii. 6, 7, 10.

Prophets were delivered, above three hundred years after the days of *David* and *Asaph*, and manifestly shew, that it never was the mind of the Holy Spirit to confine the Church to the words or wonders, which they have recorded. Nay the Prophet *Jeremiah*, referring to the days of the *Messiah*, and to the final conversion, and restoration of the Jews, declares, that this deliverance would be so great and signal, that the memory of their deliverance from their bondage in Egypt, would be in a manner lost and forgotten in it. *Jer. xxiii. 7.*

And it is manifest that many of the Psalms themselves were written long after the days of *David*, in the time of their captivity, and after their deliverance from it; so far were the Jewish people themselves from conceiving that they were to be restricted to the words of former Prophets. Indeed their grief and distress, under present calamities, or their joy and gratitude, for present deliverances, were too powerful to be suppressed. In what mournful strains do they lament the ravages of their city and nation, by *Antiochus* or *Nebuchadnezzar* in the lxxix Psalm, and how earnestly do they supplicate the Divine mercy? They deplore the taunts, and revilings of the enemy, who had led them captive, in the cxxxvii Psalm, and record the Divine goodness, manifested in their restoration, in the cxxvi and lxxxv Psalms. Several other instances, of the same nature, might be adduced.

But, if the examples of the Saints are to have any weight with us, these are sufficient to convince every reasonable and unprejudiced mind, of the propriety and duty of Christians, celebrating the goodness of God, for mercies and deliverances peculiar to themselves; especially for mercies and deliverances so far transcending all that the world ever before saw.

The *sweet Psalmist of Israel* (a) himself is far from confining us in the praises of God, to his own compositions, however excellent and divine. *O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name ; make known his deeds among the people ; Sing ye unto him sing Psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.* (b) He is far from conceiving his own compositions so complete and comprehensive, as that it would be arrogance and presumption to attempt any thing farther, in the praises of God. He knew that the subject was so sublime and extensive, that his own eloquence, though it was elevated by inspiration, was unable to reach it. Psal. cvi. 2. *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord ? Who can shew forth all his praises ?* He is far from requiring or desiring that the work of praise should be confined to the Jewish people. Psal. lxxvi. 1. *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands—*And cxvii. 1. *O praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise him all ye people.* And could it be the intention of the Psalmist, that the people of other nations and languages should pass over the works of God's Providence towards themselves, and confine themselves wholly to his workings towards the children of Israel ?—Or is it possible, that he, who has set them so bright an example of observing, recording, and celebrating the acts of the Lord towards his own nation, would allow them to be so negligent and ungrateful, as to pass over in silence his acts of mercy, and kindness towards themselves ? He has declared what is their duty, and what ought to be their practice.—Psal. lxxxvi. 9. *All nations, whom thou hast made shall come, and worship thee ; they shall glorify thy name.*

No blessing proceeding from God, is small. The piety of David did not suffer him to neglect even the

(a) 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

(b) Psal. cv. 1, 2.

meanest and most common. He has taken care to record his formation in the womb (*a*), his preservation in defenceless infancy and childhood (*b*), and the care God had taken of him in the advance of life, *crowning him with loving kindness and tender mercies* (*c*). How is his heart enlarged, when he considers the earth as full of the riches of his benefactor, and sees him *giving to the young beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry* (*d*)? And can we have any regard to the example, or any share of the piety, devotion and gratitude of that holy man, while we neglect or refuse to celebrate the praises of God, for blessings of an infinitely superior nature?

If, then, whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, if the children and people of God have sung his praises upon every new deliverance; if the Prophets break out into unusual transports, whenever a glimpse of Gospel light dawns upon them; if they foretel and enjoin that the liveliest gratitude should be manifested, and that songs of praise and thanksgiving should be composed and sung by those who should share its blessings—What shall we say? Or is it possible to resist the force of such examples, or to gain-say and oppose exhortations and injunctions, so reasonable and just? Were these holy men guided by a lying spirit, and led to conceive of the blessings of the Gospel far above their value? Do we see no beauty or lustre in *the Sun of righteousness*, whose obscure and distant rays were so glorious in the eyes of the Prophets? Have they prophesied unto us *a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, the deceit of their own heart?* (*e*) Ye

(*a*) Psa. 139. 13, 14, 15. (*b*) Psa. 71. 5, 6. (*c*) Psa. 103. 4.

(*d*) Psa. 147. 9. (*e*) Jer. 14. 14.

men of God, is there nothing, in all the wonderful events of a Divine Providence, since your days, worthy of a song of praise, from the disciples of Christ? We will not believe it, unless we find our Lord and his Apostles confirming us in such a belief.

Let us then enquire of those who beheld his glory.— This brings me, in the

III. Place, to illustrate and prove from the New Testament, the truth I am endeavouring to establish. And from this part of the sacred writings, I presume it will appear manifest, beyond a doubt, that the principal subjects of our Psalmody, of our Praises and Thanksgivings to God, should be drawn from the Gospel.—There we find *Mary*, from the fulness of her spirit, magnifying the Lord, for the greatness of his condescension to herself, and for his faithful performance of his promises to the fathers of her nation (*a*). *Zecharias*, who officiated as a priest, and was possessed of all the privileges and advantages of his nation, *blesse*s the Lord God of Israel, who had visited and redeemed his people, and had given light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace (*b*). A choir of Angels announced the birth of Christ, in a Song of praise (*c*); and the wise men from the east bring gifts and offerings to the infant Saviour (*d*). The devout and aged Simeon breaks out into raptures of praise and thanksgiving upon finding him in the temple (*e*); and the Prophetess Anna gives thanks and speaks of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem (*f*).

Thus early was the attention of the Jewish people turned off from former mercies and deliverances, and

(*a*) Luke i. 46. (*b*) Luke i. 68, 79. (*c*) Luke ii. 13, 14.
(*d*) Matth. ii. 11. (*e*) Luke ii. 28, 32. (*f*) V. 38.

from the dismal prospect their present state afforded them, and awakened to attend to the great light, that was speedily to dawn upon them; *that light that was to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of God's people, Israel.* (a)

The evangelist declares, with respect to himself, and his brethren, that when *the word was made flesh and dwelt among them, they beheld his glory, the glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (b) And our Lord magnifies the advantages his disciples enjoyed above all those of former ages, and represents *many prophets, and kings, and righteous men*, as having earnestly desired to enjoy them, who yet came short of that happiness (c). *He* represents himself, as *a light come into the world* (d), and sets forth the greatness of God's love, in sending him into it, as far transcending all former instances, and manifestations of it (e). He breaks forth into a rapture, upon contemplating the riches and freeness of sovereign grace manifested in the choice of those objects who were called to share its blessings.—*Mat. 11. 25.—I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes.*

And were all those holy persons mistaken who beheld the early dawn of the sun of righteousness with such extacy of joy, and celebrated his appearance with songs of praise?—Were they the illusions of an heated fancy and imagination, that led them to conceive, that the former state of their nation was darkness, in comparison

(a) Luke ii. 32. (b) John i. 14. (c) Luke x. 24.
(d) John xii. 46. (e) John iii. 16.

of the brightness and comfort of the Gospel revelation? Were they, who beheld the Glory of our Lord, nay was our Lord himself mistaken, with respect to the importance of his own character and mission, and with respect to the excellence and value of the blessings, that were to arise to the world from his appearing in it, as its Teacher and Saviour? Or were these persons led thus to speak and exult by the Spirit of God? Was the judgment of our Lord according to truth? And were their Songs of Praise and Thanksgivings to God, in the days of David and Asaph, for the blessings then enjoyed, and are none to be sung for the grace that is come unto us by the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of David's Lord! If these events and the blessings flowing from them, be not worthy of our sublimest Songs of praise and gratitude, the Evangelists have written, the Apostles have preached in vain, and none of all the wonders, that God has wrought for the children of men, since the foundation of the world, deserves to be mentioned.

Our faith may be weak, our gratitude may be cold and languid; we may be contented to praise God in the language of those who had a very obscure and distant prospect of our Lord's coming. It was far otherwise with those, who had an immediate view and impression of his glory. Upon his entry into Jerusalem, the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God, for all the mighty works they had seen; saying, Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in Heaven and glory in the highest. Did our Lord rebuke them, at the request of the Pharisees? Did he send*

* Luke xix. 37, 38.

them back for subjects and occasions of praise and gratitude to David and the Prophets?—Did he tell them, that nothing he had done, or spoken, in his own person, was to be the subject of their praise, and thanksgiving to God?—So far is he from it, that he rebukes the Pharisees themselves. He strongly insinuates, that they themselves were guilty of unconquerable prejudice, unbelief, and hardness of heart. He tells them, that the wonders, that now engaged the admiration and gratitude of his disciples, were so great and affecting, that *if they should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out*. And are those mighty works become less interesting and affecting, because they were transacted above seventeen hundred years since?—And must the whole multitude of our Lord's present disciples, whenever they rejoice, and lift up their voice in a song of praise, say nothing of all the mighty acts, that at that time so strongly affected, and transported his disciples?—Can we, like the Pharisees, those inveterate enemies of our Lord, be silent and unaffected at wonders, sufficient in the estimation of our Saviour to affect the rocks, and make them, if possible, express in language, their admiration and their joy?—Such conduct in those, who beheld his miracles, and triumphs, with envy and rage, who looked upon his glory, as eclipsing and tarnishing their own, was naturally to be expected. But who could have conceived, that his professed disciples, even in the remotest ages, who acknowledge him, as the *Lord their Righteousness*, and hope to share in his triumphs, and glory, would be averse to celebrate them in their songs of praise, and would prefer singing of the deliverances of Israel, by the hand of Moses, and of the victories and triumphs of Joshua, before the achievements, and victories of the Son of God, and *Captain of*

their own Salvation?—Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this! (Jer. ii. 12.)

If we pass on to the writings of the Apostles, we find the passages, wherein they celebrate the transcendent love of God in the gift of his Son, and the Divine glories of the Redeemer, and the greatness of their obligations to him, almost innumerable. How often do they triumph in him, and *glory in his cross*? How often do they inculcate upon their Christian brethren a special regard to him in all their prayers, praises, and thanksgivings to God?—The great Apostle of the Gentiles represents, as we have done, the predictions and injunctions of the Prophets, as laying them under the strongest obligations *to glorify God for his mercy and sing unto his name.*—But for what mercy? (a) Look into the whole epistle and see.—For what else should they glorify God, but for the Gospel, *which was the power of God unto Salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile*? (b) Whose praises should they set forth but his, *who, when they were ungodly and sinners, had commended his love in giving his Son to die for them*? (c) *Who had not spared his own Son but had delivered him up for them all*? (d) Who had manifested himself as the God not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles; (e) *nay, who had taken occasion, from the fall of the Jews, to bring Salvation to them*? (f) That these were to be the great subjects of their praise and gratitude to God, is manifest from other parts of our Apostles writings. Remember, says he, writing to the Ephesians, *that ye being in time past Gentiles—that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel—having no*

(a) Rom. xv. 9, 10. (b) Rom. i. 16. (c) Rom. v. 6 8.
(d) Rom. viii. 32. (e) Rom. iii. 29. (f) Rom. xi. 30. 31.

hope and without God in the world, but now in Christ Jesus, ye, who were sometimes far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ—are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God. (g)

But why need we use arguments in so plain a case, when we have the example of the Apostle in the very entrance of the Epistle, last referred to?—He clearly points out to us, what he means by the word of Christ, in our text, and shews us whence the great subjects of our Psalms and Hymns are to be taken. He had saluted the converts to Christianity at Ephesus, with a most earnest and affectionate prayer, *that grace and peace should be communicated to them from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. (h)* Unable to restrain his gratitude for that rich and transcendent goodness that had put it into his power to make such a prayer, and had opened the way for communicating such a profusion of blessings as it comprehended, he breaks forth into a Song of praise and thanksgiving to God. *Blessed, says he, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all Spiritual Blessings in heavenly places, in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (i)* Is this the language of the Old Testament? Is it borrowed from the words of David

(g) Eph. ii. 11. &c.

(h) Eph. i. 2.

(i) Eph. i. 3. 7.

and *Afaph*? Is it not wholly taken from *the word of Christ*, which we say, is the Gospel? Where but in the Gospel, is the eternal election, adoption, sanctification of believers, and their redemption by the blood of Christ so clearly taught and so fully established? Where, but in the Gospel, *is every thing done in the name of Christ*? And how often does the Apostle mention it, in the compass of these few verses? And would it be heresy or superstition in us to imitate or adopt his words in an Hymn of praise to our God and Redeemer? If God has done such wonders *to the praise of the glory of his grace*, can it be iniquity to celebrate them? Shall God have done such wonders for us, *the children of wrath*, whose fathers were *sinners of the Gentiles*, and shall any one be so impious, as to forbid us to admire, adore and praise? No. Let this be the practice of the ungodly, *who regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands*(a). If the Psalmist preferred *Jerusalem, the city of his God*, and the place of his solemnities, before *his chief joy*; if he prayed, that *his right hand might forget her cunning and his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, if he did not remember her* (b), what stupidity and ingratitude has seized us, and what doom awaits us, if we forget, in all our Songs of Praise, the blessed Jesus?

The Apostle of the circumcision concurs with the Apostle of the Gentiles, in directing us to take the principal subjects of our praise and gratitude to God, from the Gospel of Christ. Writing to the Christians, dwelling in the provinces of Asia, who were most of them dispersed Jews, he says: *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that*

(a) Isaiah v. 12. (b) Ps. cxxxvii. 5. 6. (c) 1 Pet. ii. 9.

ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (a). And would these Christians have answered the end of their high calling, and the purpose God had in view, when he chose and distinguished them by such knowledge and privileges, if they, in their Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving, had neglected that very Gospel, by sharing in the knowledge and blessings of which, they were thus distinguished? But the Apostle has not only shewn them their duty, and obligations to perform it, but has, as it were, dictated to them a Song of Praise in which they should address the Great Author of their blessings.—*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead; to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation (b).*

And the beloved disciple, after pouring forth an affectionate prayer for the seven Churches of Asia, appears not to have it in his power to proceed to the particulars of that revelation, which God had given to him, before he had erected a monument of praise and gratitude to the Great Prince of the Kings of the Earth, by whom he, and his fellow Christians had been raised to the highest dignity and hopes. *Unto him, that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood; And hath made us kings, and priests unto God, and his Father; to him be glory, and dominion for ever an ever. Amen (c).* Not only so, but this disciple, so dearly beloved, and lo

(a) 1 Pet. ii. 9. (b) 1 Pet. i. 3, 5. (c) Rev. i. 5, 7.

highly honored by his Saviour, has given us, as it were, a copy of a Sacred Anthem, in which the ransomed of the Lord are represented, as expressing their gratitude, and celebrating his praises, even in Heaven itself.—*And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God, Kings and Priests(a).* And upon the representation he had of the sealing an hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of Israel, he says, *After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb (b).* Would you not believe, these were some of those devout men of every nation under Heaven, of whom we have an account in the Acts, who heard with such amazement, each of them, in their own language, the wonderful works of God, from the mouths of the Apostles, and who, in such numbers, and with such readiness, believed and embraced the Gospel upon the preaching of Peter; and that they were now repeating in Heaven those songs, which they had learned upon earth.—Nay, such is the joy and gratitude, that prevails in Heaven upon the redemption, and salvation of believers, that all the inhabitants of the celestial regions are represented, as joining in an anthem of praise to the great Redeemer.—*And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many Angels, round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, and the number of them was ten*

(a) Rev. v. 9, 10.

(b) Rev. vii. 9, 10.

thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing (a).

And have the holy Apostles of our Lord themselves made the Gospel, and the great blessings it contains, the principal subject of their praise and thanksgiving to God ;—have they constantly directed those, who, by their ministry, were converted to the faith, to do the same ; and have these, upon their rising to partake in the glory and happiness of Heaven, celebrated the grace and condescension of their great Redeemer, as having laid the foundation of their present unspeakable dignity and happiness,—And have the *Angels around the throne*, who were less immediately interested in these things, united *their Songs of Praise* to those of *the ransomed of the Lord*?—What shall we say? Can we, or shall we, resist the united force of such evidence, and such examples, both in earth and Heaven? Shall we, who are the ministers of religion, merely to soothe prejudices of our people, direct them to pass over in silence, in their Songs of Praise, to God, the principal subjects, that excited the admiration, the praise and gratitude of these primitive Saints and of the Angels of Heaven themselves? Shall the Gospel have no share in our Songs of Praise and Gratitude to God, because its light has so long shone upon us? Shall the wonderful acts of our glorious Deliverer be forgotten, because we are drawing so much nearer to his second and glorious appearing? Are we never to address a Song of Praise to him, who has made us *kings and priests unto God*, until we join the choir of *Angels and spirits of just men made perfect in Heaven*? Or can

it be unwarrantable or sinful to do that upon earth, which they are doing in the immediate presence of God? Are we not taught by our Lord to pray? *Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven?* (a) And if we know and believe, that the Saints and Angels above are employed in celebrating the praises of the Redeemer, how is our practice consistent with this prayer, if we are not doing the same upon earth?

I now proceed to confirm the truth I am endeavouring to establish,

IV. From the practice of the Primitive Church.

That evangelical Psalms and Hymns were in use in the days of the Apostles may be clearly inferred from that passage, where the Apostle gives directions to the Corinthians, with respect to the extraordinary gifts conferred on them. 1 Cor. xiv. 26. The learned Grotius was of the opinion, that the Psalms, of which the Apostle speaks, were extemporary Hymns, proceeding from inspiration; and that those things, which formerly had been the fruit of human genius and labor, were then suggested suddenly, and from God, that thereby the riches of the divine bounty might be more sensibly displayed, and understood.—If this was the case, as is highly probable, such a gift, next to that of speaking with tongues was a glorious confirmation of the truth of Christianity.—To hear and see men, all at once, celebrating the divine benefits in the sublime language of poetry, and with all the graces of harmony, and numbers, which are usually the effect of great labor and stu-

(a) Matth. vi. 10.

dy, must have greatly confirmed the faith of those upon whom such an extraordinary gift was conferred, and led others to believe, that the revelation, whose light and blessings they were celebrating, as well as the miraculous gift by which they were thus suddenly and immediately, enabled to do this, was derived from Heaven.—But whether these psalms were the effect of previous study and inspiration united, or of immediate suggestion, they were certainly not designed to attach the converts to the Gospel to the religion of the Jews, and to inspire them with veneration and respect for the Psalms of David.—And indeed what need could there be of any extraordinary gift to enable or direct them to a Psalm of David or Asaph? The design of conferring this gift must have been the same with that of the other extraordinary gifts conferred upon these primitive Christians.—This was to confirm the truth of the Gospel, to instruct them in its doctrines and blessings, and to inspire them with love, gratitude, and obedience to its great Author.—This was the end for which *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ gave them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him*, and enabled them to exert it in this extraordinary manner. And if it had been his design to confine them to the psalmody of the Old Testament would he have conferred upon them his spirit to enable them to compose psalms and hymns, entirely of another nature and tendency, calling their attention to the great Lord of David and the prophets, and enabling them, in some good measure, to conceive and describe *the hope of his calling and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints*: (a) And how absurd and inconsistent is it to suppose that the spirit of Christ,

(a) Eph. i. 17, 18.

conferred in order to display and make known *the mystery that had been hid from former ages and generations* (b) would confine them in doing this to the language of an obscure and typical dispensation?—This would have been to counteract his own gracious intention, and to veil in shades and darkness, *that marvellous light* (c) which he meant to reveal, and display.—And indeed, can it be supposed that the gratitude of these primitive Saints, enflamed by their lively sense of the love of God, and Christ, and heightened by the Holy Spirit, would have been confined to record the deliverances, peculiar to the Jewish people, while wonders of a far superior nature, in which they themselves were immediately concerned, engaged their attention, and required their acknowledgments?

But that we may proceed in considering the practice of the primitive Church.—

Here it is to be lamented, that we cannot be furnished with all the light and evidence we could wish. A great degree of obscurity hangs over the first ages. Perhaps this was designed to suppress a vain curiosity, to conceal from us the early corruptions introduced into Christianity from philosophy and Judaism and to lead us to copy more closely after its uncorrupted purity and simplicity as derived from our Lord, and his inspired disciples.—

However some light, with respect to the subject we are speaking of, breaks through the darkness of those

(b) Col. i. 26. (c) 1 Pet. ii. 9.

primitive ages.—We find by their practice, that they had not forgotten the instructions and directions given them by our Lord and his Apostles.—They had been taught, that *all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.* (a) And we find them giving him this honor, in their Hymns and Songs of praise, in the midst of Heathenish persecution, and even when heresy, rising into power among themselves, threatened them with poverty, banishment, or death.—

That they paid our Lord divine honor is manifest from the testimony of Pliny the younger.—This accurate and credible writer who flourished about the beginning of the second century, having examined the assemblies of the Christians, in order to give an account of them to the Emperor Trajan, informs him, that he could learn nothing of their sacraments, but that they assembled in the *morning before day to sing, an hymn to Christ, as God,* and that they bound themselves, *not to commit any wicked thing, but to forbear committing theft, robbery, or adultery, to be true to their word and strictly to perform their trust.* (b) This testimony of Pliny as

(a) John v. 23.

(b) This testimony a late writer has endeavoured to weaken and bring into disrepute, by alledging that Pliny gained his information from persons, who had renounced Christianity, and that they represented their quondam brethren, as worshipping Jesus Christ, in order to render their worship more odious.—But did these informers belie their brethren? No. For says this writer, “these apostates knew very well “that the Christians worshipped the Son, in their prayers “and praises, as well as the Father.”—And how can they be blamed as endeavouring to make the Christians odious, when they represent them, as binding themselves in a solemn manner, to refrain from all wickedness, and strictly to perform their duty? Would this make them odious to Pliny or Trajan?

worthy of the greatest credit, has been quoted by the learned Grotius, as a proof of the truth of Christianity (b), and by almost all who have written apologies or defences of our most holy faith.—The praises of our Saviour therefore, must have had a great and leading part in the psalmody of the first Christians, when Pliny was able thus to point them out, as having a share in it.—If he had not been very careful to inform himself, how would his account have been so particular and circumstantial?—And how could he have known in what estimation the Christians held our Lord, or that they paid him divine honor, but upon the best and most accurate intelligence?—It is plain therefore if this testimony of Pliny be true, that the Christians, of whom he writes, were not confined to the Psalms of David in their songs of praise, and that they were not doing an unwarrantable or sinful action, when they knew that *all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.*

Basnage a very reputable writer, of the Protestant Church in France, and an exile for his religion in Holland, in his very learned and elaborate history of the Christian Church, which he wrote principally with a view to expose the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome, has been led to give us a very full account of the devotions of the primitive Christians from Tertulian.—This celebrated Father of the Christian Church in

(b) *Epistola omnibus obvia, quæ libri decimi est 97. cujus et Tertullianus in apologetico meminit et Eusebius in Chronico.—Ubi vides Christianos carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere solitos obstrictosque inter se non in scelus aliquod, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent*

Grotius de veritate, lib. 2. sect 2. in notis.
Eusebius hist. eccles.—lib. 3 cap 30.

Africa flourished about one hundred and ninety-four years after Christ.—In his time the professors of Christianity, were so far from being confined to the Old Testament, that they conceived themselves as at full liberty in their devotions to God.

It appears, says Basnage, that *neither the prayers they made to God, nor the Hymns which they sung to his honor were reduced to rule ; every one drew them from the Holy Scripture or from his own treasure, according to his genius or disposition. They sung, for instance, Hymns in those feasts of charity and communion, which the Christians held together in the evening ; It was to God they addressed these songs, which every one composed to the best of his ability.—'Tis Tertullian who teaches us this, who could not fail to be well informed.—The design of these assemblies was to offer a kind of violence to God by the concurrence of so many prayers from the mouths and hearts of the faithful.—Pamelius, says Basnage, who has commented upon this passage of Tertullian, supposes, but without proof, that the Hymns, this Father speaks of, were given out by the Apostles, but if we were to form a conjecture of their real origin it would be more proper to say, that those Hymns were inspired by the gratitude which those first Christians felt for the divine benefits. (a)—Such was the liberty of the primitive Christians if we believe Tertullian.*

(a) On étoit libre sur le choix des prières qu'on faisoit à Dieu ; il paroît même que ni les oraisons, ni les Hymnes, qu'on chantoit à son honneur n'étoit point réglés ; chacun les tiroit de l'écriture sainte, ou de son propre fonds selon son génie et sa disposition. On chantoit, par exemple, des Hymnes à Dieu dans ces repas de charité et de communion, que les Chrétiens faisoient ensemble le soir ; mais c'étoit à Dieu qu'on adressoit ces chansons que chacun faisoit de mieux qu'il pouvoit.—C'est Tertullien qui nous l'apprend, et qui devoit en être bien instruit ; le but de ces assemblées étoit de faire une espèce de vi-

Origen who flourished nearly at the same time with Tertullian, uses the very expressions of the Apostle, in the words of our text, (a). *He exhorted the people, says Basnage, to strive by their Hymns, by their Psalms, by their Spiritual Songs, crying to God that they might obtain the victory through our Lord Jesus*—Has not this ancient Father, in these words, an immediate reference to the command of the Apostle, which enjoins upon Christians a strict and express regard to Christ in all their Songs of devotion? *Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*—Thus does the great Origen not only prove, but exemplify the doctrine I am advancing.—

Eusebius that Father of Church History, quotes a passage from an author, whom he very much commends, which fully manifests what was the practice of the Church in the first ages.—This author had undertaken to refute the heresy of Artemon, who asserted, that our Saviour was a mere man, and that this doctrine had been uniformly taught till the times of Zephyrinus, when the truth began to be adulterated.—In answer to this, he observes, that the Sacred Scriptures contradict such

olence a Dieu, par le concours de tant de prieres qui sortoient a meme tems, de la bouche et du cœur de tous le fideles--- Pamelius qui a commenté cet endroit de Tertullien pretend que les Hymnes, dont parle cet ancien, avoient, été institué par les apostres; s'il faut deviner pour connoître la veritable origine de ces prieres, vaudroit mieux dire, que ces Hymnes furent inspirez par la reconnoissance, que les premieres sentoient de bienfaits de Dieu.

Basnage Histoire de l'Eglise liv. 18.

Chap. 2. Sect. 2. pag. 1009.

(a) Il exhorte le peuple a combattre par ses Hymnes, par ses pseumes, par ses cantiques spirituelles, criant, a Dieu afin qu'on puisse obtenir la victoire par notre Seigneur Jesus,—

Origen apud Basnage Hist. de l'Eglise

liv. 18. Chap. 11. Sect. 14. Pag. 1094.

assertions, and then proceeds to mention some of the most ancient Christian writers who had maintained the divinity of Christ.—And then he says, (a), “Who is he that is ignorant of the books of Irenæus, Melito, and the rest, which declare Christ to be God and Man? —The Psalms also and Hymns of the brethren, written at the beginning by the faithful, do set forth the praises of Christ the word of God and attribute divinity to him.”—Here we see that Psalms and Hymns, were written very early in honor of Christ.—And we may judge how great was their antiquity, and in what high and just esteem they were held, when they were brought to repel the inroads of heresy and false doctrine.

But what evinces beyond all possibility of dispute, that an evangelical Psalmody generally prevailed in the early ages of the Church, is what Eusebius has recorded, B. 7. Ch. 30. of his history. Paulus of Samosata, being raised to the bishopric of Antioch, revived the heresy of Artemon.—Being a man of great pride and haughtiness, he assumed to himself great power and authority.—In order to stop the progress of his heresy, two councils were called.—At the first, which was very numerous, he so far disguised or retracted his opinions, as to escape condemnation.—But the second, which consisted of seventy bishops, besides presbyters, deacons, &c. passed upon him a sentence of excommunication.—The council, in consequence, sent abroad an Epistle to all the churches, representing the character, and arbitrary pro-

(a) Irenæi ac Meletonis et reliquorum libros Christum et Deum et hominem confiteri que ignorat? Denique quot sunt psalmi et cantica ab initio a fidelibus fratribus scripta, quæ Christum Dei verbum tanquam Deum celebrant ac laudant?

guseb. lib. 5. Cap. 25.

ceedings of this Heretic.—Sundry large extracts from this epistle are exactly quoted by Eusebius—It is inscribed and directed to Dionysius and Maximus, and to all their fellow ministers over the whole world—to the whole Catholic Church under Heaven. It is subscribed by sixteen of the principal persons, who were present, in their own names, and in the names of all the bishops of the neighboring cities and provinces, who were with them, of the presbyters, deacons, and Churches of God. This council was held between the years 270 & 272. Among many other matters of accusation which they bring against this heretic, is his abolishing the Psalms which were usually sung in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ*.—Herein he acted agreeably to his principles.—He looked upon Christ as a mere creature and would not bear that any act of adoration should be paid him †. Here then we have the amplest testimony that can be given; a whole council unanimously agreeing that Psalms should be sung, and had been usually sung in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, and accusing him, who abolished them of malicious wickedness and as denying his God.—Not only so; but they write to the whole Catholic Church under Heaven, as expecting that they, in like manner, would join with them in acknowledging the justice of the sentence, whereby, as they express themselves, they had excommunicated this contumacious enemy of God,—How could they have made this a matter of such high accusation against him, if they had not been unanimous in the use of such a Psalmody as we

* *Psalmos qui in gloriam Christi canebantur—subtulit.*

† *Filium Dei e caelo descendisse una nobiscum confiteri detrectat—Christum Jesum e terra esse dicit—Itaque necessitate coacti adversarium Dei excommunicavimus.*

plead for? and if the whole Catholic Church had not been accustomed to such a Psalmody, how could they have expected, that they would have joined with them in condemning him.

Here then we see the first rise of that strenuous opposition that was made to the evangelical Psalms and Hymns that had from the beginning been sung in the Christian Church.—It arose from the enemies and opposers of our Lord's divinity.—They blasphemously asserted that the Lord Jesus was a mere man, and therefore could not bear that every thing should be done in his name, and that divine honor should be paid him.—Are they of the same sentiments, who now oppose themselves to the revival of evangelical Psalms and Hymns, and would exclude from this part of their worship *the grace and truth, which are come by Jesus Christ?*—If so, let them come forth, and declare themselves.—Say ye advocates of the Old Testament Psalmody, what is there in the name of Jesus, *a name at which every knee should bow*, that should make you shudder at its admission into a Psalm or Hymn? Which of all his good works has deserved such treatment;—Did the haughty and luxurious bishop of Antioch, just mentioned, deservedly degrade Christ from a place in the public Homage, and Hymns of the Church?—Or will you censure and condemn the numerous and venerable council, that excommunicated him for this, as a contumacious enemy of God?—If you condemn the heretic, let it appear not by your words, but by your actions too, and restore to him those divine honors in your Psalms and Hymns, which, from the beginning, were given him by the faithful.—

But let us proceed, and see whether we can adduce any farther evidence in favor of the doctrine we are advancing.—Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, flourished in the time that the council above mentioned was held.—He was the oracle of the age, in which he lived for wisdom and learning,—He wrote several books in opposition to some persons, who had embraced and propagated erroneous opinions, respecting Christ's reign upon earth, and who produced a book of Nepos, another bishop of Egypt, as favoring their sentiments. From these pieces of Dionysius, Eusebius has made sundry large extracts. Though this bishop found himself obliged to write against Nepos, yet, with a truly Christian candor, and goodness of heart, he says; “Indeed for several other things I commend and love Nepos, for his faith, his industry, and study in the Scriptures, and also for the many Psalms and Hymns he composed, with which many of the brethren are even at this time delighted”*. If the Psalmody of the Old Testament had been at this time introduced and established in the Christian Church, and if it had been accounted unwarrantable and sinful to deviate from it in our Songs of Praise to God, would this holy man have loved and commended a person from whom he otherwise differed, for such compositions?—Or would the brethren have been much delighted with that which they esteemed it criminal to write?—Nay the learned and judicious Valesius, who has commented largely upon Eusebius, says, that herein this bishop acted conformably to the custom of the Christians in those early times; and Basnage asserts, that bishops had sometimes the care of furnishing

* Euf. B. 7. Ch. 24.

their flock with Hymns, and adds, that presbyters had in this respect the same right with the bishops, and mentions an Hymn of Clemens Alexandrinus, who never rose higher than the office of a presbyter. Nay Basnage affirms, that lay-men sometimes composed Hymns.—(a) Such are the opinions and assertions of these great men, who with great diligence and accuracy, as well as with the best opportunities, have searched into the opinions and customs of the primitive church.—

But to return to the Church at Antioch. Neither the pride nor arbitrary proceedings of the bishop who had been deposed and excommunicated, nor the zeal of the Arian bishops who succeeded him were able to shake the fidelity of the orthodox Christians to their Saviour, nor to silence those Hymns of praise and adoration, which they resolutely continued to compose and sing in his honor.—Leontius was raised to the bishopric of that city in the year 348.—Though this bishop treated the orthodox with lenity, hoping thereby, no doubt, more effectually to serve the cause of Arianism, which he favoured, yet the division rose to such an height that they separated in singing their Psalms. (b)—The orthodox, as

(a) Les eveques avoient quelquefois le soin de donner des cantiques a leur troupeau. Les pretres avoient a cet egard le meme droit que les eveques et on voit un de ces Hymns composez par Clement Alexandrin, auquel Codrus a donné mal a propos le titre de Eveque, puisqu'il n'a jamais monté au dessus de la pretrise.—enfin les laïques meme le faisoient quelquefois, puisque Tertullien vient de nous l'apprendre—Basnage pag. 1009.—

(b) Quando quidem Arianis etiam ecclesias occupantibus, totus clerus ac populus Antiochenus non penitus obsequeretur sed incensus, pro more, dum Deum Hymnis collaudabant, distributi, sub finem Hymnorum singuli suam opinionem declararent, et alii non patrem modo, sed filium etiam utpote Patri honore æqualem gloria efferrent, alii Patrem in Filio esse dice-

Sozomen, informs us, singing Hymns agreeable to the Nicene faith, while the Arians sung such as were conformable to their own sentiments.—And when they sung the doxology, *Glory be to the Father*, and the orthodox added, *and to the Son and Spirit*, Leontius passed over these words, and pronounced only the following—*for ever and ever (a)*—This bishop, it is true, was mild towards those who held the Nicene faith, and did not proceed to extremities against them; but laying his hand upon his head, which was then white with age, he assured them, that when that snow should melt, they would see a great deal of dirt; meaning that when he would be dead they might not expect such mild treatment from his successor.—

We see from this that the Psalms and Hymns of the first Christians were so entirely evangelical, that no part of their worship more clearly discovered their sentiments than this.—And if any person cast an eye upon the creed drawn up and agreed upon by the council of

rent atque per hanc præpositionem, *li*, Filium patre inferiorem ostendere conarentur. Leontius scetee Arianæ deditus tamen non aggrederetur eos qui Hymnis concilii Nicæni consentientibus Deum laudarent, prohibere—tamen manu ad caput quod jam valde canescebat admota dixisse fertur; Hac nive liquefacta multum erit luti.—

Sozom. Histor. eccles. lib. 3. Cap. 19.

(a) Nam cum (Leontius) pars esset Arianæ blasphemix, summo studio illum morbum celare nitebatur, quod que cerneret bifariam divisos sacerdotes ac plebem unamque partem accommodare glorificatione Filii conjunctionem *et*, alteram, præpositionem *per*, filio, spiritui vero inapplicare, ipse quidem silentio glorificationem memorabat, et tantum clausulam, *in secula seculorum* sic proferebat ut ab astantibus exaudiri posset.

Theodoreti hist. eccles. lib. 2. Cap. 24.

Nice (*a*) he will quickly perceive how remote Psalms and Hymns, formed upon it, would be from the language and doctrine of the Old Testament. But why need we multiply remarks in so plain a case?

The council of Laodicea, held about the middle of the fourth century, furnishes us with a further proof, respecting the practice of the Primitive Church. The last canon but one of this council ordains, that no Psalms composed by private or ignorant persons* should be sung in the Churches.—This canon the learned Valesius in his notes upon Eusebius, B. 7. Ch. 24. understands of these Hymns which it was usual for the primitive Christians to compose and sing in honor of Christ.—And indeed, does not the prohibition of Hymns, composed by illiterate and ignorant persons imply a permission and allowance of such as were composed by persons of sufficient

(*a*) The Nicene Creed.

Credimus in unum Deum, &c.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only begotten, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, and Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten not made; of the same substance with the Father; by whom all things were made that are in Heaven and in earth; who for the sake of us men, and for our salvation descended and was incarnate, and was made man, and suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into the heavens; he shall come to judge the quick and the dead; We also believe in the Holy Ghost:—But the Holy-Catholic, and Apostolic Church doth anathematize those that aver, that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that he was not before he was begotten, and that he was made of nothing, or say that he was made of another substance or essence, or that he is either created, or convertible or mutable.

* *Ἰδιωτικοὶ ψαλμοὶ*, That this is the meaning of the expression is evident from Acts iv. 13. where Peter and John are called *ἄγραμματοι καὶ ἰδιῶται*, unlearned and ignorant men.

skill and qualifications?—The same council ordained that no books, but such as were canonical, should be read in the Churches.—Would any person understand this as a prohibition of such as were canonical?—I might here mention Ephraim Sirus, who flourished in this century, and whom the historians Theodoret and Sôzomen celebrate as the ornament of the Church for piety and learning. His talent for poetry was singular, and the number of Hymns he composed and sent abroad was almost incredible. Theod. lib. 4. cap. 29. Sôzom. lib. 3. cap. 15.

If we may believe what Basiage relates (*a*) of the fourth council of Toledo in Spain, we shall have an evidence, that evangelical Psalms and Hymns were in use much longer than the fourth century.—This council was held in the year 633.—Certain Presbyters of France and Spain were brought before it, for refusing to sing the Hymns of St. Hilary and St. Ambrose, which had been in use in the Church for near three hundred years.—These presbyters were of opinion that the prayers and consequently the Hymns in public use should be found in the scriptures, and dictated by the Apostles.—(*b*) This was acting consistently. Prayers and praises being immediately addressed to God, and duties equally solemn,

(*a*) Le quatrieme concile de Toledo represente des gens, qui refusoient de chanter les Hymnes qui portoient le nom de St. Hilaire et de St. Ambroise.—les peres vouloient que les prieres de l'eglise se trouvaissent dans l'ecriture, et qu'elles eussent ete dictees par les apostres.—La pierre d'achopement de ces Pretres etoit, qu'on introduisoit dans l'eglise des prieres qui ne se trovoient point dans livres sacrez, et qu'ils ne respectoient point une tradition de pres trois cents ans, car il y avoit environ ce tems la que St. Hilaire et St. Ambroise avoient composé des Hymnes.—Je ne fai si le concile ne pechoit point autant qu'eux, parla severite avec laquelle il excommunia les Pretres d'Espagne et des Gaules s'ils ne summettoient a chanter ces Hymnes.

(*b*) Hist. d'Eglise liv. 9. sect. ii. pag. 483

there is the same reason for our being restricted and confined to the scriptures in the one as in the other. We may observe too, that these presbyters paid an equal regard to every part of scripture, whereas the zealots for purity and orthodoxy, in our day are for rejecting from their Psalms and Hymns every part of the sacred canon, but the Psalms of David; and represent every attempt to introduce the gospel, into this part of our worship, as a dangerous innovation, and a corruption of the worship of God.—The council of Toledo however was otherwise minded.—They ex-communicated those Presbyters of France and Spain, unless they would submit to sing the above mentioned Hymns. Easnage is of opinion that these presbyters carried their scruples too far, and that the council was to blame for the severity, with which they excommunicated them, especially as the second council of Braga, held some years before had forbidden any poetry to be sung in the Churches, except such Psalms, as were drawn from the Old and New Testament.

The celebrated Mosheim, of whose industry, learning and accuracy, no person, acquainted with his character, as an historian, will dispute, writing of the fourth century, says; In this century the Psalms of David were introduced into the Christian Church. What truth would there be in this assertion, if they had been introduced before it, much less if they had been introduced and established by our Lord or his Apostles, whose authority should have the principal weight with us?—Could it be the meaning of Mosheim or of other writers who assert the same thing “that the exercise of “singing, had before been quite neglected,” as a late writer has alledged?—What? was the Christian Church

or any part of it, living for three hundred years in express violation of the command of the Apostle?—Did they who were by *Jesus Christ* to offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually*, all this while, never sing a song of praise, respecting the wonders God had wrought for them?—This implies such a charge of disobedience, insensibility and ingratitude against these primitive saints, as can never be admitted.—And for Mosheim, or other writers who had such full evidence, that Psalms and Hymns had from the beginning, been composed and sung by the faithful, to assert such a thing, would have been the most deliberate and palpable falsehood.—A falsehood of which no person, who is not grossly ignorant of the primitive practice of the Church, or willfully prepossessed against the truth, can be guilty.—No person who regards his character for candor and veracity would assert such a matter in opposition to the concurring testimony of all antiquity, reproachful to the zeal and devotion of the first Christians, and respecting which his ignorance or prevarication could be so easily detected. Could any person more effectually serve the cause of that sect, who have banished all singing, all melody and harmony of the voice from their public worship, than by asserting, that the exercise of singing had for the first three hundred years been quite neglected by the Church of Christ?—And what a want of candor and charity does a certain writer manifest, who chooses rather to brand the Church of Christ, with the charge of such a gross omission of duty and such a downright violation of an apostolic precept, than honestly acknowledge that she had been, as all antiquity testifies, in the practice

* Heb. xiii. 15.

of praising her God and Redeemer, in materials drawn from the word of Christ?

Thus have we proved, I conceive, with sufficient evidence, that an evangelical Psalmody prevailed for the three first centuries, and that it continued in use in some parts of the Church at least, till after the beginning of the seventh century.—It is observable too, that they who practised and defended it, were neither heretics nor schismatics, but men *who strove together for the faith of the gospel*.—And even they who were more scrupulous with respect to the materials, of which their Psalms and Hymns should be composed, had no notion of excluding the New Testament from having any share in their songs of Praise. Nor can they be charged with a design or desire of corrupting the worship of God, or of introducing superstition error or false objects of devotion.—So far were they from that, that they were for taking the materials of their sacred Songs from the holy scriptures. Nay the learned and laborious Basnage abundantly proves, in opposition to the corruptions and errors of the Church of Rome, that notwithstanding the liberty, which the primitive Christians enjoyed in their Psalms and Prayers, not so much as one of them was addressed to a Saint, or Angel, or to any other but God or Christ.

What evil consequence then arose from an evangelical Psalmody, when it continued in use for so many centuries, that some persons in our day are so much alarmed and afraid lest it be revived and introduced?—Can it be evil or dangerous to *shew forth the praise of the glory of his grace, who hath made us accepted in the beloved*, (a)

(a) Eph. i. 6.

or to sing of his unparalleled loving kindness, *who though he was rich yet became poor for our sakes?*—(b)

Nay the danger of the Church arose from the disuse of the Hymns we plead for. Arianism reigned in the fourth century.—It had such influence in the general councils and in the courts of Emperors, that it banished and deposed many of the orthodox, and possessed itself of their Churches. No wonder then, if its votaries, risen into power, and zealous for the propagation of their own opinions, bent their whole force to exclude a Psalmody, which, if it had prevailed, would have effectually prevented the reception and progress of their pernicious tenets.—And if they had influence sufficient to silence and banish the teachers and professors of orthodoxy, we need not be surprised to find, that they should have influence sufficient, gradually to silence and abolish those Hymns, in which divine honors were paid to Jesus Christ, which they looked upon as idolatrous and impious.—Yet we see, that with all the power and influence these heretics possessed these Hymns continued in use in some parts of the Church of Christ for whole centuries after their blasphemous opinions took their rise.—

If then the Psalms of David were constantly in use in the Christian Church from the days of the Apostles; how comes it to pass, that we hear nothing of them for the three first centuries?—If the Apostles had restricted their converts to the use of them, how comes Tertullian to represent Christians, in his day, as enjoying so full and entire a liberty?—How could Pliny affirm that Christians sung Hymns to Christ whom they worshipped as God? And another assert that Psalms and Hymns, setting forth the praises of Christ, and at-

(b) 2 Cor. viii. 9.

tributing divinity to him, had been written at the beginning by the faithful? How could a numerous and respectable council have asserted, that Hymns in honor of Christ had been in use, and condemned Paulus Samosatensis for abolishing them, if none such had been composed and sung?—If the Apostles had introduced and established the Psalms of David, why did not the Arians improve this as an argument for suppressing the Psalms and Hymns of their adversaries?—Why did they not represent their practice as an unwarrantable and unscriptural innovation?—Why did they not represent them as setting aside a whole book of canonical Scripture because they refused to confine themselves to it in the praises of God?—

There is not then, I will venture to assert, any practice of the Church of Christ, that appears more truly primitive and apostolical than that of singing Psalms and Hymns drawn from the Gospel.—Nothing to a candid and unprejudiced mind, sincerely disposed to know, embrace, and believe the truth, can be more full and express to this purpose, than the command and injunction of the Apostle, in the words of our text.—He begins and ends it with Christ.—He leads you to *the word of Christ*, as the sweet and copious fountain, from which the vein of your sacred poetry should be supplied.—He points you to *the name of the Lord Jesus*, as what would give a grace and beauty to every line, and make it delightful, as the harmony of Heaven, to every true believer's ear.—He points you to it, as the precious and fragrant incense, that can make your praises and thanksgiving an acceptable sacrifice to God.—The whole practice of the Apostles corresponds with, and exemplifies the precept.—All their praises and thanksgivings to

God and to Christ, whether in behalf of themselves or others, centre in the blessings and grace of the Gospel. And the practice of the first Christians clearly proves and manifests, in what sense they understood the precept of the Apostle, how fully they obeyed it, and the lively sense they had of the dignity, the glory, and the grace of their Redeemer.—

What then can be said in opposition to the precept and injunction of the Apostle, which is so direct and express, in referring us to the word of Christ, as the ground and foundation of our Psalmody, and in requiring us *to do every thing in word or deed in his Name*?—But, say our adversaries, by the word of Christ, the Apostle means the Psalms of David. We have already shewn, that this could not be his meaning. The very words shew that it was not. And where in the whole compass of the Book of Psalms, is any act of devotion done, or directed to be done, in the name of the Lord Jesus? But granting, that the Psalms of David are, in a remote sense the word of Christ, as being written under the impulse and direction of his Spirit.—Are the writings of the New Testament no part of the word of Christ, that you would banish them from having any part in your Songs of Praise to God? Are not the praises and thanksgivings of our Lord and his Apostles, as much the word of Christ, as the Psalms of David, or are they not his word in a much more proper and immediate sense?—Is that no part of the word of Christ, which God hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son?—We have already shewn, that the Jews were not confined to the Psalms of David, and where is the propriety of Christians being confined to them?—

But say you, such is the excellence and perfection of the Psalms of David, they are so well suited to the case of every Christian, and they give such clear discoveries of the Gospel, that it would be arrogance and presumption to deviate from them or to pretend to add any thing to the light and advantages that may be derived from them. If this be so, why did God raise up so many prophets after David, some of them far out-shining him for gospel-light and discoveries, and why did he after all *speaking to us by his own Son?*—Or was there no need that he should appear as our teacher?

If the writings of David were so excellent and complete, then the whole of the Old Testament, taken together, must be, if possible, still more so.—The evangelists then, having been Jews themselves, and writing under the direction and influences of the Spirit of God, must have been fully sensible of the united advantages, which they enjoyed under the teachings and discoveries of David and the prophets.—Let their judgment then in this matter be decisive.—Matthew iv. Ch. 16. speaking of the Jews themselves, upon the coming of Christ, says, *The people, which sat in darkness, saw a great light, and to them, which sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up.*—And Luke, Ch. 1. 78, 79. represents Zacharias, who was a priest, and therefore was fully sensible of all the former advantages his nation enjoyed, as saying, *The day spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.*—The Apostle Paul enjoyed all the privileges and advantages of the Jewish dispensation in a degree equal to any other, and yet all these he counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his

Lord (a). And the Apostle of the circumcision himself, writing to the Jews of the dispersion, who were converted to the faith of the Gospel, represents them as raised to their present dignity and privileges that *they might shew forth the praises of Him, who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light (b).* It could not surely be the design of the Apostle to confine them, in the praises of God, to the obscure, typical and figurative language of that dispensation, from which they had been so happily delivered. Or how could they praise God for events, which had been accomplished in their own persons, in the language of those who only saw these events afar off? Could it be the design of the Apostle, that in praising God for the light, into which they had been translated, they should have recourse to that darkness, from which they had been delivered?—We should take heed, lest being led by an intemperate zeal to serve our own schemes and purposes, we be found false witnesses for God, and lest, by magnifying the light and advantages of the Old Testament, we be induced ourselves, or betray others into the commission of an awful sin, by thinking or speaking too meanly of the transcendent *grace of God in speaking to us by his Son*; thinking and speaking as if all the discoveries he had made, were superseded or even excelled by the prophets and teachers of former ages. For why should the New Testament be wholly degraded from bearing any part in the most agreeable, the most devout, and elevated part of our public worship, if the words of David and Asaph are not preferred before it?—

But we are told, that the scripture Songs are the only forms of Psalmody, which ought to be used in the pub-

(a) Phil. iii. 8.

(b) 1 Pet ii. 9.

lic and solemn worship of the Church of Christ and that to the end of time.—

This is a very solemn assertion, but it is not to be admitted without proof.—We would suppose to warrant and establish such an assertion some plain and express prohibition of any other Psalmody would have been produced from the Prophets, the Apostles or our Lord. Nothing less than this can warrant our omission in our Songs of Praise, those wonders which the Gospel exhibits to our view. We have already seen that this is far from being the case.—But let us consider the arguments brought in proof of the above mentioned assertion.—

“ David sent his compositions, says our author, to the
“ chief musician, they were used in the public praises
“ of the temple, and we have the divinely recorded and
“ approved example of the Old Testament Church for
“ their use.”—And is nothing to be admitted into our

public worship but what we have the divinely recorded, and approved example of the Old Testament Church for?

—If so, then we shall violate the express command of the Apostle, enjoining *us to give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Eph. v. 20. Here, you see, *we are to give thanks always*, and therefore more especially *in our Psalms and Hymns*, which are chiefly to be employed in praise and thanksgiving.—We are to give thanks *for all things*, and therefore more especially for the *grace and truth, that come to us by Jesus Christ*—*We are to give thanks unto God and the Father*, as a distinct person of the glorious and blessed Trinity, *and we are to offer up by Jesus Christ the sacrifice of praise continually*. Heb. xiii. 15.—With this precept of the Apostle, in our Songs of Praise in all its parts, it is impossible for us to com-

ply, while we are restricted to the Psalmody of the Old Testament.—It was an equally approved and edifying practice of the Jews *to read Moses and the Prophets in the temple and synagogues.*—(Acts. xiii. 27. xv. 21.)—Will it follow from thence, that no other scriptures are to be publicly read in the Churches of Christ?—Or was not the Apostle Paul guilty of great presumption, when he says, (Col. iv. 16.) *When this epistle is read amongst you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.*—If we are to read or sing nothing but what is authorized by the example of the Old Testament Church we shall, to use the phrase of our author, Judaize indeed.—

We have the example and authority of the Old Testament Church for the use of organs, timbrels, harps and other musical instruments in the public service of God.—David in particular, carried the improvement of vocal and instrumental music to an height before or since unknown.—We have reason to believe, that he was led to this by a sincere and unaffected piety to God, and by the influence he experienced it to have in raising and animating his devotion.—He found it to be a proper mean of fixing his attention, and warming his affections; and esteemed it a just testimony of his unspeakable regard and veneration for the great object of his worship, and of his joy and delight in his service.—Here then is a practice, authorized by the example of the Old Testament Church, and often inculcated by its divinely inspired penman.—Why then, are they, who are such zealous advocates for the practices and usages of the Church of the Old Testament, opposed to the harmony of the voice in singing, and utterly averse to the introduction

of instrumental music into public worship?—Why are they so much attached to the Psalms of David, and yet so wholly opposed to the means, which that holy man used to manifest and encrease his devotion?—Will true piety satisfy itself with serving God in a careless manner, not regarding, if the work be done, in what a slovenly and ungraceful manner it be performed?—

But any arguments will suffice to set aside a practice against which we are prejudiced, or makes not for our purpose. “Instrumental music, says our author, was
“used in the service of the temple, it signified the joy
“and triumph that arise to believers from the sacrifice
“of the Lord Jesus Christ, in a word the practice of instrumental music declared, that Christ was not yet
“come, and therefore must now be utterly unwarrantable.” Besides the judgment of Plato is against it, for he says “that it is an unmeaning thing.”—But were not the Psalms of David used in the service of the temple? Do they not in many places signify the joy that arises to believers from the sacrifice of Christ? Did they not declare that Christ was not yet come? By the same mode of reasoning then, is not the practice of singing them wholly unwarrantable?—Strange! David’s Psalms being used “in the public praises of the temple,” is an argument for their continuing in use to the end of time. And instrumental music being “used in the service of the temple?” is an argument for its being wholly abolished.—But instrumental music was in use long before the tabernacle or temple were erected.—It had no special reference to either. It had no typical signification that I can conceive. It arose from the natural love, which mankind have for harmony, and their disposition to employ it in raising or soothing their affections.—Da-

vid, cultivated it, as well when he was a shepherd, as when he was raised to the throne of Israel.—The argument therefore, for its being abolished, drawn from its being of typical signification or ceremonial institution is without all ground.—

David no where restricts us to his words, but often enjoins, and exhorts us to the use of his instruments of music.—He no doubt expected, and desired that the ardour of our devotion. and our regard to God and our joy and delight in his service would lead us to testify them, as far as we had an opportunity, in the same manner he himself did. (a)——I mention not these things,

(a) Dr. Horne, an author, for whom the seceding brethren have such an high esteem, that they have promoted an American edition of his commentary on the Book of Psalms, writing on Psalm cl. 3, 4, 5. says; “It is impossible for us to distinguish and describe the several sorts of musical instruments here mentioned, as the Hebrews themselves acknowledge their ignorance in this particular.—Thus much is clear, that the people of God are enjoined to use all the various kinds of them, in the performance of their divine services.—And why should they not be so used, under the Gospel? We read of sacred music before the law, in the instance of “Miriam the prophetess the sister of Aaron,” who to celebrate the deliverance from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, “took a tymbrel in her hand, and the women went out after her, with timbrels and dances.” Exod. xv. 20. The custom, therefore, was not introduced by the law, nor abolished with it.—Well regulated music, if ever it had the power of calming the passions, if ever it enlivened and exalted the affections of men in the worship of God, (purposes for which it was formerly employed) doubtless has still the same power, and can still afford the same aids to devotion.—When the beloved disciple was, in spirit admitted into the celestial choir, he not only heard them “singing” hymns of praise, but he heard likewise “the voice of harpers harping upon their harps.” And why that, which saints are represented as doing in Heaven, should not be done, according to their skill and ability, by saints upon earth; or why instrumental music should be abolished as a legal ceremony, and vocal music, which was as much so, should

from any eagerness to introduce instrumental music into the public worship of the Christian Church ; but to shew into what inconsistencies men are hurried by prejudice and attachment to the interest of a party.—When David's example and authority are to our purpose, the whole Gospel revelation must give way to his compositions.—But when they correspond not with the sentiments of the party, whose prejudices we espouse and vindicate, then the authority of Plato, an heathen philosopher, is sufficient to render his use of instrumental music ridiculous, and set it aside as unmeaning and insignificant. If any of our author's opposers had treated the character and practice of David nay, I may say, the institution of God himself with such indecent freedom, he would not have scrupled to charge him with profaneness, or deism.—

But let us proceed to consider some other assertions of our author.—In order to shew that we suffer nothing

be retained, no good reason can be assigned.—Sacred music, under proper regulations, removes the hindrances of our devotion, cures the distractions of our thoughts, and banishes weariness from our minds. It adds solemnity to the public service, raises all the devout passions in the soul, and causes our duty to become our delight.—‘Of the pleasures of Heaven,’ says the eloquent and elegant bishop Atterbury, ‘nothing further is revealed to us, than that they consist in the practice of holy music and holy love ; the joint enjoyment of which we are told, is to be the happy lot of pious souls, to endless ages.’ It may be added, that there is no better way of combating the mischievous effects flowing from the abuse of music, than by applying it to its true and proper use. If the worshippers of Baal join in a chorus to celebrate the praises of their idol, the servants of Jehovah should drown it, by one that is stronger and more powerful, in praise of him who made Heaven and Earth.—If the men of the world rejoice in the object of their adoration, *let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King.*”

by leaving out the Gospel in our Psalmody, he says (page. 47.) " Though the Old Testament scriptures " taken by themselves, may well be said to be far more " obscure than those of the new; yet through the abundant light reflected upon the Old Testament " from the New, we may now discern the Gospel of " Christ as clearly and as plainly in the one as in the " other."—The fair conclusion from this proposition, supposing it true, will establish the very doctrine, which our author so strenuously opposes. It will prove, that if we would see the Gospel clearly and plainly in the Old Testament, we must apply to it, and join with it, the light of the New Testament. For, to use the illustration of our author, the discerning other objects by the light of the sun, is no argument for excluding that light, but a powerful reason for its being admitted.—The moon, taken by herself, is far more obscure than the sun, yet by the abundant light, reflected upon her by the sun, we may see her full as clearly as the sun itself.—Would our author, therefore, defer the prosecution of his studies, or a journey in the day time, in order to enjoy the mild reflected light of that Heavenly luminary?—The moon, indeed, is beautiful and resplendent, even with her borrowed light, and to our view, hides or obscures many of the remoter stars, but fades and loses her lustre, when the sun is above our horizon.—Who sees not in this a just illustration of the comparative excellence of the Old and New Testament.—The great Apostle of the Gentiles, who lived under both dispensations, had juster views of their comparative clearness than we can pretend to. And he, speaking expressly to this point, says, (2 Cor. iii. 10)—*Even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.*—And when, even in the

judgment of an inspired Apostle, this was the case, would any reasonable and unprejudiced person choose rather to be guided, and animated; in his acts of devotion, by the former than the latter? Would he choose rather to walk in an obscure and imperfect light, reflected from *Moses and the prophets*, than in the bright and cheering rays of *the Sun of Righteousness*? The man would discover a strange and fanciful humor, who would make choice of the light of a candle or a taper in the prosecution of his labors or studies in preference to the brightness of perfect day.

But the proposition is not true. We do not see the Gospel as clearly and as plainly in the Old Testament as in the New, even with all the light, that is cast upon the one by the other. According to the Apostle's representation, just now mentioned, the glory of the one is lost, and swallowed up in the other. Was there ever a prophecy as full and as clear as its accomplishment? Can any light, cast upon a shadow, make it equal to the substance? Can darkness and obscurity be equally bright with the light that dispels them? But what is the Gospel? Do the sermons and parables of our Saviour constitute no part of it? And do you read *them* in the Old Testament? Some general out-lines of his character are drawn by the prophets. But does this give us as just an idea of him, as a clear and distinct exhibition of the facts, upon which this character is founded? They certainly *among whom he dwelt, who saw his glory*, and to whom it was manifested in all its lustre, could give us much more lively representations of it, than they who only saw it *afar off* in the light of prophecy. Take his single conference with Nicodemus, try whether any part of

the Old Testament reflects clearly and plainly the Gospel light and discoveries, that are made there in the compass of a few verses.

Our Author had considered the whole of the Old Testament as exhibiting the Gospel of Christ, by the aid of the New Testament, as clearly and plainly as the Gospel itself.—But this did not answer his purpose. He must be able to find this light reflected from the Book of the Psalms alone, otherwise he will be obliged, in order to complete his Psalmody, to call in the aid of the other prophets. He therefore changes his object. He fixes his eye upon the Psalms of David. He sees all the rays of the Gospel, centring there.—He sees, what no man ever before saw, a reflected light, brighter and more glorious than the luminous body itself. Let us hear his own words. (Page 47.) “We maintain that “the Psalms are calculated in the best manner, to express the praises of the glory of God as shining in “the face of Jesus Christ, even under the New Testament dispensation.”

Our Author has not told us, on what ground, he and his brethren, in whose name I suppose he writes, maintain this proposition. But I conceive it to be one, that no person, who believes the Gospel, ever maintained before them. Let us consider it particularly.—The Psalms “are calculated to express the praises of the “glory of God.” This part of the proposition is not denied. But that they are best calculated to express the praise of his glory may admit of a doubt. The Song of Moses, and many sublime passages in Isaiah and the other prophets, may, perhaps, be equal to any part of the Psalms of David. But our Author pre-

ceeds. "The Psalms of David are best calculated to express the praises of the glory of God, as shining in the face of Jesus Christ." If our Author had stopped here, we might again have called in question the truth of his proposition. For I think, he himself will confess, that Isaiah has given us much clearer and plainer discoveries of Christ, and consequently of the glory of God as shining in him, than even David himself has done. On this account, he has often been justly stiled, the evangelical prophet. But our Author's quarrel is not with the Old Testament. No part of it stands in competition with his favorite Psalm Book.—His design is against the Gospel itself.—The light of its glory is to be cast into shades, that the faint and obscure light, upon which he has fixed his regard and attention may appear; and therefore he has represented "the Psalms" as best calculated to express the praises of the glory of God, as shining in the face of Jesus Christ, even "under the New Testament dispensation."

Since our Author has given us no reasons in support of his proposition, I will endeavor to try the force of reason and Gospel light against it.—I shall endeavor to proceed upon the surest grounds, and by the easiest steps.—And,

1. Our Lord was the brightness of his Father's glory and the express image of his person. (Heb. i. 3.) He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. (Phil. ii. 6.) He was the image of the invisible God. (Col. i. 15.)

2. In consequence, therefore, of this intimate union, and participation of the same nature and perfections, when Christ manifests his own glory, he may be said also

to manifest the glory of the Father. Hence he appeals to his works, as giving the Jews sufficient ground to believe, that *the Father was in him, and he in the Father*. And when Philip said to him, John xiv. 8. *Shew us the Father*; He says to him, *Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?—He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father,*

3. They, who had the best opportunities of contemplating our Lord's character and actions, and whom he admitted to the most intimate and endearing fellowship with himself, had the best advantages for conceiving, and were most capable of declaring his glory, and, consequently, the glory of the Father, as shining in him.—Who in any former age enjoyed, in this respect, equal advantages with those, *who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word*; (a) Who could say, (John i. 14.) *The word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*. It was certainly our Lord's design in manifesting forth his glory to his disciples, that they should see it, and be able to declare it.—The opportunities, which the Baptist had of conversing with our Lord were small, compared with those of his disciples; and yet he represents him as superior to any prophet of former generations. He had a considerable insight into Gospel mysteries, gave an immediate and express testimony to the dignity and mission of the Messiah, and was remarkably successful in opening the dawn of *the Sun of Righteousness*. If then on these accounts our Lord declared him *to be a prophet, and more than a prophet*, Matthew xi. 9. what shall we think of those, who were so long the constant companions of his own la-

(a) Luke i. 2.

bors and ministry; who walked in the light of his bright and shining example, heard his lively instructive discourses; to whom he unboomed himself with all the intimacy of the most endearing and perfect friendship, whom he furnished and instructed to be lights of the world, and teachers of his Church for all succeeding ages, and chose to be, next to himself, the founders of his kingdom?— If they were not more capable of expressing the praises of the glory of God, as shining in the face of Jesus Christ, than all the *prophets and righteous men*, who lived before them, they beheld the lustre of his miracles and example to little purpose, nor could our Lord, with any propriety, have pronounced their eyes and ears blessed. Matth. xiii. 16.

These, I conceive, are strong and just conclusions founded in scripture and reason. But let us attend to the true and infallible testimony of our Lord himself. We shall find him magnifying the meanest minister of his Gospel, not only above David and the prophets, but even above the Baptist himself, his own immediate forerunner. Matt. xi. 11. *Verily, I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of Heaven, is greater than he.* That is, says Dr. Doddridge, “My ministers and people in general, shall receive superior supplies of the Spirit, and know many important truths relating to my Gospel, which have not been revealed to John himself.” The pious, learned, and justly celebrated Witsius cannot be reasonably suspected of derogating too much from the light and advantages of the Old Testament dispensation. In several instances, I conceive, he allows them to have been greater than they really were. Let us

then hear what he says upon this passage. After having disapproved and rejected a sense, in which some understand the words, he says, B. 4. Chap. 13. Sect. 26.

“ They come nearer our Lord’s meaning, who, by the
 “ least in the kingdom of Heaven, think is intended
 “ the least minister in the Christian Church, who is in-
 “ trusted to preach the Gospel in its perfect state.—He is
 “ compared to John, not in respect of knowledge, ho-
 “ linefs, and gifts of a like nature; but in respect of
 “ his ministry, as John himself was compared to his
 “ predecessors, the prophets.—For John was greater
 “ than all of them, because he was the immediate har-
 “ binger and brideman of the Messiah; and pointed him
 “ out with the finger as present, or come.—“ Again
 “ any preacher of the Gospel is greater than John, in
 “ that respect, who declares Christ, not only born, but
 “ also dead and risen, and ascended to Heaven, and as
 “ sitting at the right hand of God, and as having hap-
 “ pily erected the kingdom of liberty. The compari-
 “ son therefore, is not so much of persons in their abso-
 “ lute qualities, as of their ministry.—The ministry of
 “ Moses, and the other prophets, may not improperly
 “ be compared to the night, distinguished by many pro-
 “ phecies concerning Christ, as to many interlucient con-
 “ stellations.—The ministry of John to the dawn, when,
 “ the sun not being yet risen, yet drawing near the ho-
 “ rizon, the heavens brighten with some light; but the
 “ Gospel to the perfect day, when the sun, being risen,
 “ fills all things with the brightest and purest light.”—

Such is the judgment of our Lord concerning the ministers of his Gospel.—He has exalted them above the Baptist, whom he represents as far excelling any prophet of former generations.—And such is the sense,

which the judicious and pious Witsius has put upon his words, in which the body of commentators agree with him.—And are the ministers of Christ after all to be degraded to a base inferiority?—Would you take them from the noon-day of the Gospel, from the feet of Christ and his Apostles and set them to learn how to express the praises of the glory of God, as shining in the face of Jesus Christ, not from the character, which the Evangelists and Apostles have drawn from him, nor from the bright original himself, but from those faint and transient beams of light, which like so many twinkling stars at midnight, appeared amidst surrounding darkness? Would you conceive, that persons who would write or speak thus had ever believed in Christ, or *that ever the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, had shined unto them?* Would you not believe that the veil of Jewish darkness and unbelief was still upon their hearts, and that *God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, had never shined in them, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, as shining in the face of Jesus Christ?* (a) *But we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord.* (b)—Sink the character and ministry of our Lord's servants of the present day as low as you will, even though you therein contradict the declaration of their divine master; and proceed even to the bold and daring attempt of degrading the holy Evangelists and Apostles, whom he honored and inspired to be his immediate successors, in founding and establishing his kingdom.—And say that they, *who saw the glory of God shining in him*, have failed in expressing it in a manner equal to the Psalms of David. But our indignation can-

(a) 2 Cor. iv. 4, 6.

(b) 2 Cor. iv. 5.

not fail to rise, when you would do any thing that would tarnish *the glory of the only begotten of the Father* ;

For,

4. The blessed Jesus is the author of the New Testament dispensation.—He was the bright and resplendent image of the invisible God. Col. i. 15.—He has revealed his nature, his works and his will in a clearer, fuller, and more authoritative manner, than it was possible for any of the human race to do.—To manifest the glory of his Father was the great end of his coming into the world, and, at the conclusion of his work, he could appeal to him, as having completely performed it. John xvii. 4. *Father, I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*—When therefore you say, That the Psalms are best calculated to express the praises of the glory of God as shining in the face of Jesus Christ, even under the New Testament dispensation, do you not see what an insufferable indignity you put upon the Son of God?—Do not his sublime and heavenly doctrines and discourses, his holy, heavenly and useful life, his illustrious and beneficent miracles display the glory of his Father, with incomparably greater clearness, than it is possible for language fully to express?—*The heavens declare the glory of God*, and the number, grandeur, and splendour of those worlds of light, with which they are adorned, display his power, his glory, and majesty beyond any thing we can conceive, much less describe. *For who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?*—If then the *heavens praise the wonders of the Lord* above the attainments of human eloquence ; how can it be said of any man, that he can equal or ever exceed the degree, in which he has exhibited the glory of the Father who was himself *the bright-*

ness of his glory, and the express image of his person? The evangelist who saw our Saviour's glory and knew how fully qualified he was to display that of his Father, asserts his vast superiority, in this respect, to all former teachers and prophets. John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* And our Lord himself says, Matthew ii. 27. *No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son.* What then shall we think of the man, who will assert, that the praises of the glory of God as shining in the face of Jesus Christ are better expressed by one, who had but obscure, transient, and distant glimpses of our Saviour's glory, than they are by the bright original himself.—That all that the Apostles and evangelists have written, all that our Lord himself hath taught, and done, and suffered to illustrate and set forth the glory of God, fall short of expressing it equally with the Psalms of David.—This assertion is so extravagant, so contrary to Scripture and reason, and so derogatory from the divine glory and majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ, and from the light of the glory of his Gospel, that I find myself at a loss to express my conceptions of it, and think it better to leave the Author to his own secret reflections, than to retaliate in the language of railing accusation.

After the assertion that I have now been considering, we have no reason to be surprized at any thing our Author may advance—He speaks (p. 16) “of the tendency
“of the Psalms to promote the spiritual edification of
“Church members, and to convey the knowledge of
“Gospel truths;” and alledges, “that in respect of
“this suitableness, it is not difficult to shew, that they

“are not less, but rather more suitable to the state of
 “the New Testament dispensation than they were to
 “the state of it under the Old.” That they were suitable to the Old Testament dispensation is certain. They were written in conformity to the degree of knowledge and privileges believers had then attained to, and to the rites and usages enjoyed by that institution.—But can it be more proper or more suitable for Christians to derive the knowledge of Gospel truths, and spiritual edification from the Psalms of David, than from the Gospel itself?—

The Jews were appointed to approach God by *sacrifices, by the blood of bulls and of goats, and by high-priests that had infirmity (a)*. This mode of access suited them, *the way into the holiest of all being not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.* (Heb. ix. 8.) But is such a worship more suitable to Christians, *who have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; (Heb. x. 9.) Who have an high-priest, who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and made higher than the Heavens; (Heb. vii. 26.) who is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which were only the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us? (Heb. ix. 24.)*

The worship of the Jews suited their state.—They were treated as children under age, *who differed nothing from servants, who were under tutors and governors, and were in bondage under the elements of the world.* Gal. 4. 1—8. But Christians are no more servants but sons, and if sons then heirs of God through Christ, v. 7. How

(a) Heb. vii. 28.

can they, then, *after having known God* under the endearing relation of a Father, after having received *the Spirit of his Son*, and after having, at the expence of his abasement and death, *been delivered from the bondage, under which they were held, return again to weak and beggarly elements, and desire again to be brought in bondage?*—This is the reasoning of the Apostle Paul in the passage here referred to.—I say then, is a worship, that was dictated *under a Spirit of bondage (a)*, used *while the first tabernacle was yet standing (b)*, and offered up in conjunction with sacrifices and other rites of the law of Moses more suitable to Christians, than to those who by divine appointment were obliged to pay it, under these circumstances?

The superior light of the New Testament dispensation can do every thing with our author but prevail to the admission of itself.—The Apostle Paul gives a noble idea of the tendency of Gospel light when he represents it as intended, (Eph. iii. 10.) *to make known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God.*—But our author, instead of making the law subservient to the Gospel, makes the Gospel subservient to the law.—“The superior light,” says he, “of the New Testament, instead of rendering the use of the Psalms in the public worship of the Church less suitable makes it more so; that light serving to disclose to our view the manifold wisdom of God contained in the words of the inspired songs.”

Now let us carefully attend to the design and tendency of this reasoning.—It is to exclude the use of all

(a) Rom. viii. 15.

(b) Heb. ix. 8.

other Songs but those of the Old Testament from public worship, and for this reason, that the superior light of the Gospel renders them more suitable to us than to the Jews.—But this light has the same effect upon every part of the Old Testament writings, and upon the whole of the ceremonial law, and consequently the whole is more suitable to us than to the Jews.—By the light of the Gospel we can see the design of the passover, sacrifices, high-priest tabernacle washings, &c. much better than they did, and consequently they are much more suitable to us than to them.—And consequently the Gospel was never intended to supersede the usages and ceremonies of the law but only to render them more edifying and suitable, and to establish them to greater advantage than ever.—And as to our Lord's coming into the world, it was never designed, that we should in our Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, *glorify God for this as his signal mercy, nor sing unto his name (a) nor praise him for any mighty works our Lord (b) has done, nor teach and admonish one another from any doctrines, precepts, promises, or threatenings which he has delivered; we are only to improve the Gospel in order that we may have clearer views of the manifold wisdom of God manifested in the few passages of the Psalms of David, that refer to Christ.*—In this manner of proceeding our Lord and his Apostles will be highly magnified indeed.—They will be only considered as expositors and commentators upon the law and the prophets.—

Let us then return wholly to the Scriptures and usages of the Old Testament. Then shall our prayers, preaching and songs of praise, be uniform and

(a) Rom. xv. 9.

(b) Luke. xix. 37.

consistent. We shall read, hear and sing nothing, that would lead us to believe that Christ is already come.—We will not then, as many of us do now, preach and pray like persons who are under all possible obligations of love, and duty and gratitude to a crucified, risen and exalted Saviour, and praise and give thanks in our songs, as if he had never come into the world. We would not then be preaching and praying, as if we were really members of the Church of Christ, and praising God, as if we were members of the Jewish synagogue, or worshipping at the tabernacle or temple, amidst priests, sacrifices, harps, organs, and all the ceremonies of that pompous and expensive ritual.—We shall not then celebrate the memorial of the sacrifice and death of our Lord Jesus Christ in the same songs, in which the Jews celebrated their deliverance from Egypt, and sang at the sacrifice of their paschal lamb.—But the superior light of the Gospel makes all this more suitable.—He that will receive this doctrine as reasonable or scriptural, let him receive it.—But let me ask our author, if the night is more suitable for business, by the introduction of the day?—Is it more suitable to a proficient in learning, to return to the letters of his alphabet, and to the practice of spelling his words and dividing them into Syllables, because he sees much more clearly, than he did at the beginning, the intent and meaning of these early rudiments?—With much less propriety of reason, and at a desperate hazard, would a Christian go *after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*—Col. ii. 8, 20. Gal. iv. 9.

But our Author sees, that according to his mode of reasoning, the whole ceremonial law may be introduced. He therefore apologizes for himself in a note by saying,

that he is far from advancing our superior advantages for understanding the Psalms as an argument for our singing them, he is only answering an objection. But would it not have been better for him honestly to have confessed, that the objection was unanswerable, than to have produced that as an answer that would in its consequences undermine the whole Gospel, and, as he himself acknowledges, imply a total renunciation of the Christian Religion.—Page 18. Note.

The argument, therefore, for singing the Psalms of David, drawn from our superior advantages for understanding them, after all that has been said about it, is formally given up.—The only passage, that has any appearance of a scriptural authority for confining the Church in her Songs of Praise, to the words of David and Asaph, is 2 Chron. xxix. 30. *Moreover Hezekiah the King, commanded the Levites to sing the praise of the Lord in the words of David and Asaph, the Seer.* The celebrated Dr. Clark and our Author have, both of them, quoted this passage.—But if it be duly considered, it will be found not to answer their purpose.

1. It is defective in respect of the persons who gave the command. However, Hezekiah and the princes might give this command as being vested with civil authority, they were not prophets, and therefore had no authority, as such, to prescribe Laws, binding the Jewish Church, much less had they a right to give forth laws obliging the Christian Church to the end of time.

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

Jews, in their Songs of Praise, always confined themselves to the words of these prophets.—Nay, we have elsewhere shewn, from clear Scripture testimony, that they did not.

3. This command of Hezekiah and the princes was given to the Levites, who were a choir of singers, instructed and appointed for this express purpose. Is the authority and example of Hezekiah sufficient for introducing, and establishing such an order of men in the Christian Church?—I think, our Author and his brethren would not admit this.—

But,

4. If the authority of Hezekiah of itself, be of force to bind the Christian Church, it must of consequence be of much more force, when it corresponds with and enforces the commandment of God. Now, we are informed 2 Chron xxix. 25. *That Hezekiah set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the King's Seer, and Nathan the prophet; for so was the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.* Our Author says (page 15.) “It may be safely laid down as “a maxim, that whatever form of worship God hath “appointed, ought to be observed to the end of time; “unless he himself declares, that it is only of a temporary nature, or that he is pleased at a certain period “to abrogate it.”—It is far more certain then, that God once appointed his Church to sing his praises in conjunction with cymbals, with psalteries and harps, than it is that he appointed her to sing his praise in the words

of David and Asaph, and, to use the words of our Author, “where have we any intimation of his will, that “the Church should cease to do so, before the end of “the world?”—Our Author and his brethren have certainly a peculiar quickness of discernment, when they can see a divine institution of force to bind to the end of time, in the merely civil authority of Hezekiah, exercised occasionally, over a company of singers, in one case; and as strange a slowness of apprehension when they can discern no traces of divine appointment in the commandment *of the Lord by the prophets*, in the other—Do they err, not knowing the Scriptures, or are they so unfair as to quote only such fragments of them, as seem to answer their purpose, while they omit such parts of them as would discover and expose the weakness or fallacy of their reasonings?—Hezekiah’s example and authority, however, is far more conclusive for introducing and continuing the use of instrumental music, than for the establishment of the Old Testament Psalmody.

Our author has advanced sundry other positions, which will be found, upon examination, equally destitute of foundation, either in reason or Scripture.—He has asserted, “that no human composures are to be admitted in singing the praises of God.”

If by human composures he means such as were written under the direction and superintendency of the Spirit, then the whole Scripture was so written, and consequently there is not a single example in Scripture of praying or preaching, in social or public worship, in which inspired matter was not used. Our author’s reasoning, therefore, for inspired songs only being used, in public worship, drawn from there being no Scripture

examples of the use of any other, will be as strong for our being strictly confined to Scripture in our prayers and sermons : for to use our author's reasoning, (page 43), is not the Lord's having given us such a variety of prayers and sermons in his Word, as is sufficient to answer all the various occasions of preaching or praying in public worship, an intimation that no other should be used therein ? It will carry us still farther : We have no Scripture examples of any persons praying or preaching, but such as were inspired.

Besides, if the great variety of Scripture songs be sufficient to evince the reasonableness of our being confined to them in our public worship, the much greater number and variety of prayers and sermons, still more strongly proves the reasonableness of our being restricted to them. What a strange thing is it then, that, when the ministers of the Christian Church have not only an hundred and fifty, but several hundreds of prayers and sermons, not only of Moses and the Prophets, but also of our Saviour and his Apostles, from which to make their choice, they should, instead of close and literal translations of the prayers and sermons of Scripture, venture upon original compositions of their own, into which they will deign to introduce a detached expression or half sentence from Scripture, as it suits their own plan ? Does not this shew an arrogant preference of human compositions, and a strange disrelish, not merely of the discourses of Moses and the Prophets, but also of the sermons of our Lord and his Apostles, who spake under the immediate impulse and direction of his Spirit ? And how can they undertake to pray or preach, when we have not a single Scripture example to warrant any persons praying or preaching, but such as were inspired ?—Such are the consequences

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that would follow from our author's reasonings. It would admit of no persons preaching or praying, but such as are inspired. It would confine us, in our prayers and sermons, to the words of Scripture, no less than in our songs of praise. I presume, notwithstanding, that neither our author, nor his brethren, would undertake to defend these conclusions, though they justly follow from their mode of reasoning.

But if no human compositions are to be admitted into our public worship, but such as have been written under the immediate direction and superintendency of the Holy Spirit; then none but those which were written by the inspired authors themselves, in the original Greek or Hebrew can be admitted, or such versions of them as have been written under divine direction. Now will our Author say, that the version of the Psalms now in use was so written? Will he affirm, that the versifier has been led in every instance to express the mind of the Spirit? If he would affirm this, what proof could he advance in support of the assertion? Or what could be his design in advancing such a position, but to raise in the minds of the people a superstitious veneration for a composition merely human? If Mr. Rouse's version of the Psalms of David were more than human, and written under Divine direction, how came the Westminster General Assembly (of 1645), to correct and amend it? And if, after they had corrected it, they had such an high opinion of it, why were they so exceedingly modest in their recommendation of it to parliament? "The assembly, say they, has caused the Psalms, published by Mr. Rouse to be carefully perused, and as they are now altered and amended do approve them, and humbly conceive they may be useful and profita-

“ble to the Church, if they be permitted to be public-
“ly sung.”

If the Assembly were persuaded that Mr. Rouse's version of the Psalms, was written under supernatural influence; how came they to sue so humbly for the sanction of civil authority? Why did they not boldly tell the parliament, that they would be chargeable with profane boldness if they presumed to reject it? Did they represent the Church of Christ, as confined by Divine institution to the Psalms of David to the end of time, and forbid the use of all other Songs of Praise to God?

So far were the Ministers of Christ in that age from conceiving that the Church in the Praises of God should be confined to the words of David and Asaph, that the assembly of the Church of Scotland, so early as the year 1648 (*a*), took measures for enlarging the compass of their Psalmody. Stewart of Pardovan in his collections, (p. 85) informs us, “that an act was passed that year for examining the labors of Mr. Zachary Boyd, upon other Scripture Songs; that the like was done by the Assembly, with respect to the Scripture Songs of Mr. Patrick Simson in 1706, and that the like order was renewed and continued for the two succeeding years, and that the commission of the Assembly was instructed and appointed to consider the printed version of the Scripture Songs with the remarks of the Presbyteries thereupon, and after examination thereof, they are authorized and empowered to conclude and emit the same for the public use of the Church.” And it is well

(*a*). Only three years after the first introduction of Rouse's Version.

known, that that assembly have printed and recommended fundry Poems, partly collected from the pious and ingenious Dr. Watts, as they stile him, and other writers, and partly furnished by the ministers of their own Church. Why then does our Author and his brethren bear testimony against the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, as if they alone had entered into determinations that affect the purity of the worship of God, and that are contrary to his word? Has not the Church of Scotland, in her purest times, seen the propriety of enlarging her Psalmody, and been taking measures for that purpose? Has not the Baptist Church been in the constant and unanimous use of Dr. Watts's imitation almost ever since it was first published? And has not the Episcopal Church in England, and much more of late in America, declared by her practice, that she did not look upon her members as confined, by Divine institution, in their praises of God, to the words of David and Asaph? And are the ministers of Christ in all these Churches so ignorant of the word of God, as not to know what it forbids or requires? Or are they so unfaithful to God, that they would wilfully revolt from his authority, or corrupt his worship? Or are they so wicked and cruel towards the people of their charge, that they would lead them into practices unwarrantable and sinful? What can tempt them to do what would be so pernicious and dangerous to themselves? Could they not have suffered their people to go on calm and undisturbed in the use of a Psalmody, in favor of which they were so strongly prejudiced? What but a pure and disinterested zeal for the Gospel of Christ, and a desire that it might have the share, which it justly claims in our Songs of Praise to God could have moved them to alarm the jealousies and suspicions of their own people?

If, like the Apostle Paul before his conversion, or like the Arians in the primitive Church, they had verily *thought in themselves, that they should do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*, (a) they would no doubt have used their influence to have it excluded from a place in their songs of praise, and would have used any mean which they could devise or find most effectual for keeping the dignity of his person, and the greatness of his redemption, out of sight. But their sentiments were the very reverse of all this. They looked upon themselves as engaged by the strongest motives *to further the Gospel*. (b) They thought, that every part of their worship should testify their high esteem of it, and have a tendency to lead others greatly to value it, and eagerly embrace it. They thought, that all the former deliverances which God had wrought for his people, fell inconceivably short of the redemption of the world by his Son. They therefore conceived it to be a strange neglect of this wonderful redemption, so long since accomplished, that no mention should be made of it, nor any gratitude expressed for it, in that part of our worship, which is, or ought to be, principally devoted to praise and thanksgiving. They therefore thought it their duty to attempt a change in this part of the Christian worship. They made the attempt with a prudent, yet resolute zeal. They said little, they wrote less against those ministers or private Christians, who in this respect, worshipped *as did the Jews*. Perhaps it would have been their duty to have testified with more freedom and boldness against them. But they had had their own prejudices, arising from custom and early education, and were willing to make every favourable allowance for the prejudices of others. These prejudices,

(a) Acts xxvi. 9.

(b) Phil. i. 12.

with respect to many of their people, are already vanished. The voice of reason and gratitude has been heard. Many of their people have perceived the propriety of praising and blessing God for the benefits and privileges of the Gospel, and we humbly hope that the *light of its glory*, in process of time, will be cheerfully admitted by all into their Psalmody as well as into other parts of their worship.—If the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia have erred, they have erred from upright views and intentions, such as I presume will be approved of God, and ought to *commend them to every man's conscience*. With *them it ought to be a small thing to be judged of men's judgement*—They would be unworthy the office they bear if they should be deterred from the peaceable and resolute discharge of their duty by the censures or even the reproaches and revilings of men.

Our author farther says, that our songs should be as nearly as possible literal translations of Scripture, and has quoted what Mr. Canne has said of prose translations to justify what he says of poetry and versification. But here as almost in every other instance he has given us bold assertion without reason or Scripture. The Scriptures here, as in other instances, furnishes us with examples.—Compare Moses' song upon the deliverance of the Children of Israel Exod. xv. With the history of that deliverance Exod. xiv. And you will see how far the Jewish lawgiver has departed from a literal adherence to the language of his own history. Compare in like manner the song of Deborah and Barak upon the defeat of Jabin's army, Judg. v. with the history of that defeat recorded in the preceding chapter, and you will make the same remark.

And now I take my leave of this Author, and had it not been, that I was desirous as far as possible to remove

the prejudices and scruples of my fellow Christians, I should hardly have taken any notice of him or his performance. Indeed some of his assertions are so groundless and extravagant, and others so derogatory to the light and glory of the Gospel, that I hardly thought it consistent with fidelity and duty to let them pass without animadversion.

* We have already heard the Apostle Paul inculcating upon his converts, at Ephesus and Colosse, the constant

* It may be proper to lay before the reader some account of the time and circumstances, in which the Psalms of David, were first introduced into the Christian Church.—We have already said that they were not in use for the three first centuries, and the Author to whom we have so often referred, has been obliged, by the force of truth, and the concurring testimony of history to acknowledge this. (P. 83.)

It has been asserted that Pope Damascius, who was raised to the See of Rome, in the year 366, was the first who introduced the Psalms of David into the Christian Church. And it is said that he did it in order to allay the contests, that prevailed between the Orthodox and Arians, respecting their Hymns, this being a Psalmody, in which they who denied, and those who asserted the divinity of our Saviour, might both unite.—If this had been the case, the authority to protestants is not very respectable; nor do I think it was very honourable to the cause of Christ.—It deprived him of that divine honor, which from the beginning had been uniformly paid him by the Church. It deprived the asserters of his deity of all opportunity of bearing testimony to it in that part of their worship, which was more especially adapted to do him the highest honour.—It decided clearly in favour of that tenet of Arianism, that divine worship was to be paid only to the Father, and so had a direct tendency, as far as that part of worship went, to make heresy triumphant.

But the introduction of the Psalms of David, into the Christian Church had neither the sanction of a pope, nor of a general council. They were introduced at Antioch, in the time of Leontius, whom we have already had occasion to mention, as having been bishop of that city.—Flavian and Diodorus, two persons, who had not attained to any ecclesiastical dignity, but had great influence among the people on account of their reputation for sanctity, were the first who made this innovation.—They divided the choirs of singers at Antioch into two parts, and gave them the Psalms of David to sing alternately,

and familiar use of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, taking their rise from the word of Christ, and from the fulness of the Spirit, who was so liberally imparted to them. We have heard David and the Prophets, with one accord, foretelling the rapturous joy, that would arise upon the coming of Christ, and enjoining that Songs of the liveliest gratitude should be composed and sung for the greatness of his condescension and the rich blessings of his purchase. We have seen these predictions and commands in part fulfilled, and obeyed by our Lord's apostles, and disciples on earth, and by the saints and angels in Heaven. We have seen the Primitive Church follow the illustrious examples that had been set before her, and obey the just and reasonable commands given her, till error and heresy boldly attempted to veil the divine glories of her Redeemer, diminish her obligations to him, and obscure *the light of the glory of his Gospel*.—One would think that all this would constitute a sufficient foundation not only to warrant and authorize but to command and enjoin the introduction and establishment of evangelical psalmody.—Here then I might lay

or by turns.—This usage, first begun at Antioch, spread every where, says Theodoret, and came abroad into all parts of the world. And it is no wonder, that it spread speedily and extensively in the fourth century, an age devoted to Arianism. It must have been highly pleasing to those who had embraced or patronized that heresy, among whom was the emperor Constantius himself.—It had the most effectual and immediate tendency to silence those Psalms and Hymns, which were sung in honour of Jesus Christ, and which were the great objects which those heretics abhorred, and opposed to the utmost.

Thus we have seen, by what authority the Psalms of David have been introduced into the Christian Church, and we know by what authority, they have been continued in it, to the exclusion of an evangelical Psalmody. In both cases the authority has been entirely human.—Divine institution and appointment cannot be pleaded, with any plausibility, either from reason or Scripture.

aside my pen, and close the argument.—But my duty to God, whom I desire to serve in the Gospel of his Son, and my earnest wish and hope to reclaim those whom I esteem to be in error, forbid me to do it, so long as any thing can be advanced, that may tend to set them right, concerning this important branch of Christian duty.

And I promised, in the

IV. Place, to adduce some arguments drawn from the Gospel itself.—

Much of what might be said here, has been already anticipated in the former parts of this discourse.—But I presume something farther may yet be advanced.

And here let me remind you of the solemnities of your baptismal dedication.—You have been baptized, agreeably to the command of your Saviour, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.—This certainly implies that you owe to each of these Divine persons some acts of distinct homage and regard, and leads you to hope and expect to receive from each of them, some distinct and special blessings.—Now it is in the Gospel only, that the doctrine of the Trinity is clearly revealed, and in it alone those several characters and relations, which the Sacred Three sustain towards the people of God, are distinctly set forth, and enumerated.

There the Father is represented, as employing his unsearchable wisdom in contriving the plan of our redemption and salvation, and manifesting a love and goodness, far surpassing any thing that has appeared amongst men,

in giving up his only begotten Son to the lowest abasement, to the most extreme sufferings, and the most ignominious death for *enemies and sinners*.—It is he, who according to the Gospel pardons our sins, accept us in the beloved, and make us heirs and partakers of the glory and felicity of an eternal life.—And why has he done this for us?—Is it that we should be silent, and never speak of this wondrous grace?—that we should never thank and praise him for it, nor *sing forth the honor of his name*?—Nay, *it is to the praise of the glory of his grace, and that we ourselves should be to the praise of his glory*. Eph. i. 6. 12.—If you would be silent respecting all the wonders of grace, which the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has done for you*, would not your understanding by which he has made you capable of apprehending his goodness, your tongues which he has made eloquent, and your voices which he has formed to melody and songs, reproach and condemn you?—Believe not that God has restricted you to utter the emotions of your gratitude in the words of ancient song, when he is displaying before you wonders unknown in former days.—His works declare his will, as well as his word.—And whenever he manifests his glory, he thereby declares it to be his will, that men should acknowledge and adore. You would be heinously ungrateful if you would not glorify him as the God in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, but what can equal your hardness of heart if you praise him not for his *redeeming your soul from destruction* and raising you to the hopes of everlasting glory and happiness by the gift of his Son?—Every part of your worship should bear testimony to the exceeding riches of his grace, but especially that part of it which is more particularly designed to express your gratitude in which every heart should unite, and every

tongue should be eloquent in praise.—And the command and injunction of the Apostle respecting our Psalmody expressly requires, that in it a special and distinct regard should be had to the Father Eph. v. 20. giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.—With this injunction and command of the apostle, as I observed before, it is impossible for us to comply, in any instance, in our songs of thanks, so long as we adhere to the Psalmody of the Old Testament.—

The like observations may be made respecting the Son, —Your being baptized in his name certainly imports some distinct and special blessings to be derived from him, and some correspondent returns of duty and grateful acknowledgment.—If Jesus Christ has not purchased, and is not empowered to bestow upon you, any such benefits, and you stand in no special relation to him, then I can see no reason why there should be a distinct mention of him in your baptismal dedication.—But what he has done, and taught, and suffered, lays a foundation of obedience, duty, and gratitude, which no true Christian can deny or withhold.—And hence the apostle writing to the Philippians, clearly teaches, that in consequence of the sufferings and exaltation of Christ he is entitled to a worship and homage never before paid to him. Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11.—If you ask, why no such distinct worship was paid to him under the Old Testament? The answer is easy. It is because God is chiefly praised there for the works of creation and providence, in which the several Persons of the Trinity were jointly concerned, and no special and distinct manifestation being made of their glory, there was no necessity of any distinct mention of them.—And accordingly the worship of the Old Testa-

ment was constantly and uniformly addressed to the Father.—But that this worship was so addressed to the Father as to include also the Son, we are clearly taught by these passages, which the apostle quotes from the Old Testament, Heb. i. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.—The worship paid in these passages, though primarily addressed to the Father, the apostle represents as addressed to the Son.—From hence it clearly follows, that if worship and homage were paid to the Son, in conjunction with the Father in consequence of those works in which they were jointly employed; a distinct homage is to be paid to him in consequence of those works in which he is considered as personally and distinctly concerned. The like we have before observed respecting the Father. Dr. Sherlock, some time since bishop of London, in his excellent discourses upon the passage of the epistle to the Philippians just now quoted, has set this matter in a very just and proper light.—Speaking of the exaltation of Christ, he says, “ The apostle’s argument does not infer that the natural
“ powers and dignities of Christ were increased, or that
“ they were capable of being increased, but only, that
“ in consequence of the redemption, God put all things
“ immediately under him, making him head over all, and
“ consequently entitled to that worship, and those honors, which were not before paid to him.—When
“ Christ undertook and completed the redemption of
“ the world, then it was thought proper to make
“ known the glory, which he had before the worlds began; that we might know, that we were to expect
“ salvation from a hand that was able to save, and that
“ the honor and duty owing to him who made, and to
“ him who redeemed us might be consistent; For when
“ Christ purchased mankind at the price of his own
“ blood, they became his by the strictest bands of just-

“ tice and gratitude ; there arose a new relation between
 “ the Redeemer and the redeemed, and the duty and
 “ worship and honor, which flow from that relation are
 “ immediately owing to Christ Jesus.”

And a little after the same judicious and eloquent writer says ; “ In the revelation of St. John we have
 “ several Hymns recorded, which the Church of the
 “ first born sing to God and to his Christ, and we cannot form our devotions from a better copy, than that
 “ which they have set us.—In the fourth chapter *the four and twenty elders fall down before him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.*—(a) Here you see plainly that the adoration paid
 “ to God the Father is founded upon his being the Creator of all things.—Look a little farther into the next
 “ chapter, and you will find the same persons praising and adoring Christ Jesus, *saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and people and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on earth.*—(b) Here you as plainly see, the worship paid
 “ to Christ to be founded in this, *that he was slain and did by his blood redeem us.* Nay the very choir of
 “ angels sing praises to him in the same strain, saying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.* (c) “ From all which,” says he “ it is evi-

(a) Rev. iv. 10. 11.

(c) Rev. v. 12.

(b) Rev. v. 9, 10.

dent, that the worship paid to Christ is founded upon the redemption, and relates to that power and authority, which he received from God at his resurrection.”—And a little farther on he says.—“ If Christ be not risen from the dead, and exalted to glory, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.—But if he be risen from the dead, if he now reigns in power at the right hand of the Almighty, if he received this power, and if he uses it in order to our salvation; can any thing be more absurd than to deny him those honors which are due to him in consequence of his glory, and necessarily flow from the relation we stand in towards him.”—They, who would deny him such honors would act a part very unbecoming the ransom of the Lord.—They would not only be ungrateful to the Son but rebel against the authority of the Father.—he has commanded, *that all men shall honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.* John v. 23.—

If you ask, *how shall we honor the Son, even as we honor the Father?* The Psalmist will instruct you, Psal. cv. 1, 2. *O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people, sing unto him, sing Psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.* If you ask why distinct honor, and worship, and Songs of special praise and thanksgiving should be addressed to Christ? I answer for the same reason, for which the Apostle says, *we should live to him, viz. because he died for us.* 2 Cor. v. 15.

If before his incarnation, sufferings, and subsequent exaltation he was worshipped by the Saints under the Old Testament in conjunction with the Father in consequence of those works, in which He and his Father were jointly employed, and if it was the duty of God’s peo-

ple under that dispensation to sing Psalms to him, then I conclude it is our duty to pay him the same acts of honor and worship under the New Testament, as a just tribute for those works, which are in a particular manner, attributed to himself, personally considered. If you deny him this worship, it must be either because you do not esteem him to be a divine person, and so unworthy of that divine worship, which his Father has commanded you to pay him, or because his work of redemption, and the miracles he performed, fall so far short of the work of creation, and of the deliverances wrought for the children of Israel, as not to deserve to be mentioned in your songs of praise. But if you admit the divine glory of his person, and the transcendent greatness of his works, as your Redeemer and Saviour, you are under indispensable obligations to celebrate them in your songs of praise.

The same may be said of the Holy Spirit, in whose name also as Christians we are baptized. The pious and judicious Dr. Evans, (vol. 1. Sermon 16. page 339.) whose sermons on the Christian temper are so highly and justly esteemed, speaks so fully to my purpose upon this head, that I cannot forbear transcribing what he says upon this subject.—

“The Spirit,” says he, “should be directly eyed and employed by us, according to the province which he is revealed to sustain. Since his agency is so particularly revealed in the Gospel, he justly expects that Christians should more explicitly direct their eye to him, and acknowledge their need of him through the course of the Christian life, than the saints of former ages generally did. It is true, when we pray for any spiritual good, for any Christian virtue, it is in effect pray-

“ing for the Spirit, because God confers it on us
 “by his Spirit; and in former ages, when the eco-
 “nomy of the Sacred Three, in the work of our salva-
 “tion, was but darkly intimated, this might be suffi-
 “cient; as Old Testament saints did not directly
 “pray in the name of Christ, before his mediation
 “was clearly made known, though they were beholden
 “to that for acceptance.—But now we cannot hope for
 “the answer of our prayers, unless we offer them ex-
 “plicitly in the name of Christ and actually depend upon
 “his mediation, according to the express revelation of
 “it. So it will be justly displeasing to the Blessed Spirit
 “now, if an actual acknowledgment of him in his special
 “province be neglected, when that province of his is
 “so fully brought to light. As now we must live the life
 “we live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God, so
 “also by the faith of his Spirit. He expects that his grace
 “should actually be owned by Christians in all the good
 “they have received or done; and without it he is like
 “to be provoked to suspend it for the future, till they
 “are becomingly sensible to whom they are indebted;
 “and he will be actually depended on for the grace we
 “farther need. An habitual and lively sense of our own
 “insufficiency for that which is good, should be maintain-
 “ed a fixed persuasion of his ability and readiness to help
 “our infirmities; and accordingly we should often apply
 “to God not only for those Spiritual blessings, which
 “the Spirit confers, but for the Spirit to confer them.
 “This is the way to obtain his most enlarged supplies,
 “when he is expressly honored as the Spirit of all
 “grace.

If these reasonings and conclusions be just, they mani-
 festly shew, that an express and distinct regard is to be
 had to the Son and Spirit in every part of our worship as

Christians, and consequently in all our songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.—Nor can I conceive how we can expect, that our sacrifices of praise should be acceptable under the Gospel, unless they are offered up in exprefs dependence upon Christ for the desired acceptance, nor how our spiritual songs can be conformable to our knowledge and attainments, without a direct reference to that Spirit, whose fulness should inspire that gratitude and love, from which they should proceed, and on whose influence we ought to depend for composing or singing them, in a devout and acceptable manner.—For *through Christ we have access by the Spirit unto the Father.* (Eph. ii. 18.) And no reason can be assigned, why this way of access to the Father through the Son, and by the Spirit, should not be as expressly and as distinctly specified and regarded in our Psalms and Hymns, as in any other part of our worship.—Nay the Apostle, as if he had been aware that the Church in succeeding ages might deviate from the doctrine and practice, which the Gospel teaches and enjoins upon this head, has particularly guarded this part of our worship against such an unwarrantable neglect of the Son and Spirit. In Eph. v. 18, 19. he directs that *when we speak to one another in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs we should be filled with the Spirit*; and that *we should give thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and in our text, where he speaks expressly of Psalmody, he commands that *whatsoever we do in word or deed, we should do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him.*

When we consider these things, it may be just matter of admiration, that persons, professing an entire dependence, for acceptance with God, upon the mediation and intercession of his Son, should have been prevailed

upon for so long a time to conduct one great and leading part of their worship without expressing any regard to it so much as in one single instance.—And that in their very Psalms and Hymns, in which they are commanded to have such a direct and express regard to Christ and his Gospel, they should exclude both, and have recourse to a form that was used *while the first tabernacle was yet standing*; and Christ as *the way into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest*.——It is still more extraordinary, that the professed ambassadors of Christ, and the successors of our holy apostle should use their utmost efforts to mislead and deceive the people upon this important subject.—It was not so from the beginning.—It was not so when the proud and assuming bishop of Antioch was silenced and deposed as a contumacious enemy of God for abolishing the Hymns usually sung in honor of Jesus Christ.—It was not so, when they who believed the divinity of our Saviour and were becomingly sensible of the greatness of their obligations to him, persevered in singing psalms and hymns to his honor in the face of an opposition and persecution, which, for fierceness and cruelty has hardly been exceeded by the bitterest enemies to Christianity.—

But, you will say, how is it to be supposed that our fathers and the whole Church were in the dark for so many ages? Many of them, we hope have gone to Heaven, who yet sang no other psalms but those of David.—

In answer to this it may be observed, that if custom and antiquity may be justly pleaded in favor of erroneous doctrines or practices in the Church, there would never be any reformation.——And it would be easy to shew, that our first reformers, eminent as they were for piety or zeal, were in some points negligent or mis-

taken.—In the long catalogue of national sins, which they confess and lament, they take no notice of the horrible and unchristian practice of carrying off, into perpetual slavery, the peaceable and unoffending inhabitants of Africa.—A great body of them were of opinion, that error, and heresy, and schism were to be opposed, and if possible, extirpated by fines, imprisonment or death.—These things prove that they were not infallible.—But let us rather praise them for what they did, than blame them in instances where they have failed or been mistaken.—They had much work upon their hands, and if, in the multiplicity of important objects, that demanded their attention, some were overlooked, we must impute it to human frailty and the distractions of the times in which they lived.—However they saw the defects of the Old Testament psalmody, and made some efforts for enlarging it.—If they had carried their designs into effect, it is highly probable, that all ground of controversy on this subject would have been long since removed, and that the practice of the Church, and the example of our fathers, could have not been pleaded.—But surely, if the practice and example of the Church is to have any weight with us, it should be that, which she has set before us in the earlier and purer times, when it appears that she strictly conformed to the directions of the apostle, and drew the subjects of her songs of praise and thanksgiving from the Gospel of Christ—And we have already shewn that she did this for more than three hundred years.—

But setting aside all authority merely human let us attend to the voice of God in his word.—He has commanded you, Heb. xiii. 15. *to offer up by Christ the sacrifice of praise continually.*—And with express reference to

your Psalmody, Eph. v. 20. he has enjoined you, *to give thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*—He has appointed you *as an holy priest-hood to offer up to God spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ,* 1 Pet. ii. 5.—Now you know that the saints under the Old Testament offered up no prayers, praises nor thanksgivings in the name of Christ.—They had no instructions and commands on this head.—But it is not so with you.—Let me then ask you, seriously, and in the name of God, why God has so frequently and expressly appointed you to approach him in every part of your worship in the name, and through the intercession of Christ, if you are at liberty to neglect it—? You are commanded *to do whatsoever you do in word or deed in the name of the Lord Jesus.*—And can the example of your fathers, or of any man upon earth, warrant you in proceeding to violate so general and express an injunction, and authorize you, in direct opposition to the apostle's command to offer up all your Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs without any respect to your great Advocate?—Let me, if possible bring the matter home to every man's conscience.

When God said to Eliphaz Job, xlii. 7, 8. *My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends; therefore go to my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job will pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly*—If, after this warning and command, they had neglected, or refused to employ the intercession of Job, would it not have been an instance of heinous pride and rebellion; and would not God have justly resented it, and severely chastized it, as such?—After the Jewish priesthood was established, and restricted to the tribe of Levi, no sacrifices, nor offerings were to be presented to God but

through the hands of the priests.—It would have been daring presumption for any one to have attempted it in his own person, and a single instance of this in king Uzziah brought upon him severe chastizement, and a disease, that ever after banished him from the house of the Lord and from the society of men.—2 Chron. xxvi. 16, 21.

Now if God would not allow his ancient people to approach him, but through priests, who had infirmity; and severely punished the pride and arrogance of any who dared to approach him, otherwise than through their intercession, with what confidence of acceptance can we approach him if we neglect or despise the great *High Priest over the house of God, even Jesus his own Son?* Heb. x. 21. *

* Since writing the above, the Author, casting his eye up on some passages, occurring in the pious and justly celebrated Witlius, where he speaks of adoption, found some things, so immediately tending to illustrate and confirm what he had advanced, that he could not help transcribing them.—So highly does he esteem the Gospel, and so earnest is his desire to raise and increase that esteem in others, that he cheerfully embraces the opportunity of shewing how much this judicious and elegant writer magnifies it, and the privileges of believers under it, as far exceeding all that had been ever enjoyed before, even by the most distinguished of God's people.—

“Though the condition of believers, under the Old Testament was very illustrious, if compared with that of unbelievers, who continued the children of wrath, and heirs of the treasures of divine indignation; nevertheless that splendor was eclipsed to an almost incredible degree, before the August Majesty of believers under the New Testament, as the light of the stars before the sun.—Which will appear by comparing both together.—

“Believers under the Old Testament were indeed sons, but sons subjected by their Father to the lordly power, severity and discipline of tutors, *who bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne and laid them on their shoulders; of whom however their Father said; All whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do (a);* namely, as long as they com-

(a) Matth. 23. 3, 4.

Those of you who acknowledge the Providence of God in furnishing your tables, fail not to supplicate for a blessing upon your food, and to return thanks to God for it *in the name of Christ*; and how can you through the whole of your lives, both in public and private, sing Psalms, and offer up praises and thanksgivings to God

“manded nothing that was inconsistent with the will of the Father.—They were obliged to be subject to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, and like children to be engaged all the day in the minutest punctilios of the Mosaic discipline, which were in a manner the rattles and playthings of the Church.—They were enjoined like infants, without being left to their own choice, not knowing how to conduct themselves, or what was fit for them; *Touch not, taste not (a)*.

“Besides they were not admitted to that familiarity with their Father as to penetrate into his secret counsel.—*The mighty God did then hide himself (b)*, except that their tutors, at times, acquainted them with some things relating to God’s purpose of grace, but that rarely enough, and in many mysterious expressions, and under enigmatical or paradoxical representations. And though *many prophets and righteous men* desired to see and hear many things, yet they were not gratified (c).

“None of them was allowed to approach the Holy of Holies, which was, as it were the secret place of their Father; nay they had not access to the temple itself, which was the Father’s house, but by means of the altar, sacrifices, and priests; without which if they took upon them to approach to God, instead of a blessing, which they sought after, they should incur their Father’s displeasure.—Neither was it lawful for them to omit the constant morning and evening sacrifice (d).

“Instead of an inheritance, the land of Canaan was given, as a pledge, indeed, of the heavenly, but somewhat obscure, and such as they were commanded to be, in some measure, subjected to, and which the godly themselves were obliged to be destitute of, when forced into banishment.

“The case of believers, under the New Testament, is quite different. Our elder Brother—has brought us into liberty—freed us from the elements of the world—has broken and removed that troublesome yoke that was laid upon the

(a) Col. 2. 21. (b) Isaiah 45. 15. (c) Matth. 13. 17. (d) Exod. 29. 38.

without expressing any regard to the merits and intercession of Christ, or any dependence upon him for acceptance; *Is this offering by Christ the sacrifice of praise to God continually? Is this doing whatsoever you do in word or deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus?*

If you say, certainly the Jews had a regard to Christ in their worship, in as much as they offered it up through priests and sacrifices, which were types of him.—This will not justify or excuse you. The Jews lived before Christ: the perfection of his atonement was veiled un-

“jaws of the ancients.—He has introduced us into his Father’s secret counsels,—declared to us what he had seen in the bosom of the Father,—and even the Father himself (a). *He hath called us friends; for all things that he hath heard of his Father he hath made known unto us (b).*

“He has consecrated for us a new and living way, which we may tread in full assurance of faith (c). All believers are a royal priest-hood (d). None is excluded the Holy of Holies, —but invited to approach with boldness (e), without sacrifice, without priests, trusting only in the alone offering of Jesus our High-Priest, whereby he hath forever perfected them that are sanctified (f). And this is that better hope by the which we draw nigh unto God (g).

“He hath not burdened us with any subjection to a typical inheritance but appointed us a kingdom as his Father hath appointed unto him (h).” Witfius Book 3. Chap. 10. Sect. 17—25.

Such is the vast superiority of the state of believers under the New Testament, to that of the Saints under the Old Testament, as this pious author has represented it. They are no more children under tutors—no more servants, but sons—they are no more obliged to approach God through priests and sacrifices, but have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, (Heb. 10. 19.)—Their future dignity and happiness are no longer veiled under the promises of a temporal and typical inheritance—*The God of all grace hath called them unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.* (1 Pet. 5. 10.)

A late Author, notwithstanding, has asserted, “We have already seen, that the Church has no new matter to sing of

(a) John 1. 18.

(b) John 15. 15.

(c) Heb. 10. 20. 22.

(d) 1 Pet. 2. 9.

(e) Heb. 4. 16.

(f) Heb. 10. 14.

(g) Heb. 7. 19.

(h) Luk. 22. 29.

der sacrifices, that *did not make the comers thereunto perfect*, and the power and prevalence of his intercession was veiled under *high-priests that had infirmity*. By these faint shadows they were taught to hope for a person who *would finish transgression and bring in an everlasting righteousness*. But you profess to believe that this has been long since done. And would you substitute the shadow for the substance? Would you approach God through a mode of access which he has solemnly abolished? Would you draw near to God, through sacrifices, whose frequent repetition testified their imperfection in preference to him, *who by one offering bath forever perfected them who are sanctified*? Would you approach God *by priests, who could not continue by reason of death*, and neglect him *who ever liveth to make intercession*? In a word to worship as if *there were priests offering gifts on earth, according to the law*, what is it but a practical denial of the actual existence and perfection of our Lord's priesthood? For the shadow and the substance cannot, agreeably to divine appointment, exist together. If, therefore, you assert the being of the shadow, you de-

"in the New Testament, which she had not before in the Old.†" If this be so, then, the learned and pious Wirsius, as well as the holy Apostles of our Lord, whose footsteps he closely follows, have been greatly mistaken.—If the incarnation, life, death, ascension and glorification of our blessed Lord, together with the special and distinguishing privileges of believers under the Gospel, be not new matter, I hope our Author, eminent as he is for discernment, will point out those passages of the Old Testament, in which their accomplishment is recorded, and the particulars respecting them, are distinctly enumerated. Till he can do this, or prove that the accomplishment of these wonderful events, and the enjoyment of the special and glorious privileges of Christians, arising from a practical and saving faith in them, are wholly undeserving of a Song of Praise, *from those who, through the riches of Divine grace*, have been made partakers of them, he will excuse us if we think and believe the very reverse of what he has asserted.

† Vindiciæ, Cant. Dom. page 108.

ny the existence of the substance. If you worship as if there were priests officiating and *offering gifts in an earthly tabernacle* you in effect deny *that Christ hath entered into the holy places not made with hands, viz. Heaven itself.* If, therefore, you really believed, that Christ's priesthood was long since consummated, and that all other priests and sacrifices were abrogated and done away, wholly swallowed up and abolished in the perfection and glory of his priesthood, you would cease *to worship, as if the tabernacle or temple were yet standing*, and as if priests were yet officiating, and sacrifices were still offered in them, and consequently, you would give up that mode of worship, that was used under the Old Testament; for it manifestly proceeds upon these suppositions, and was offered to God, when these actually existed, by divine appointment?

But you will say you mean not *real* but *spiritual* sacrifices. You will give any meaning to David's words rather than give them up. The propensity of mankind to go after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ, is truly amazing. The attachment of the Jews to these rudiments in the first days of Christianity is not much to be wondered at. They had long been accustomed to them, and had observed them by divine appointment. But that they who are, if I may so speak, Christians by nature, and not descendants of the Jews, *should turn back to those weak and beggarly elements, and desire again to be brought into bondage*, almost exceeds belief. A prince who resides in a palace, may retain a strong affection for the obscure and homely cottage, in which he was born. A person, who has long lived under ground, and wrought in the mines, might, for a time, find some difficulty in reconciling himself to the brightness of perfect day. So the Jews, having been long accustomed to

a *lamp, that shone in a dark place*, (2 Pet. i. 19.) might find some difficulty in reconciling themselves *to the light of the glory of the Gospel of Christ*. But that the Gentiles, after *the Sun of Righteousness* has long shone upon them, and after they have been taught from their earliest days to rejoice in his cheering and salutary rays, should be still looking for him in those types and shadows that veiled and obscured him;—that they, after the liberty of a more joyful testament has been proclaimed, † should be for putting on the ancient fetters of the Israelites, is strange indeed.

The ark of the Lord, was to the Jews, the centre and compendium of all their ceremonies; yet of this it was prophesied, Jer. iii. 16, 17. *And it shall come to pass when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord; neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more.*

Here, † says Witfius, “the entire removal of the ark
 “not only out of the world, but also from the memory,
 “love and desire of believers is foretold; and that not
 “in the form of a threatening of misery, such as was
 “the loss of the ark, while the ceremonies were in
 “force; but as a promise of the most happy times, in
 “which the Church shall have that in reality, which
 “she had formerly typically in the ark; and while she
 “enjoys the substance, will bear the loss of the shadow,
 “not only with equanimity and composure of mind,
 “but also with gladness of heart.”—This prediction
 was remarkably verified in the Apostles of our Lord.—

† Witfius Vol. 3. 295.

‡ Ibid Vol. 3. 323 324.

Their remembrance of and regard to all former types and shadows was wholly lost and swallowed up in the joy and happiness they felt under that dispensations into which they found themselves translated.—They never mention them, but with a view to illustrate and set off the vast superiority of their present privileges and hopes, and to shew how completely they are all abrogated and done away by the appearance and sacrifice of Christ.—The Apostle Peter represents the Jews themselves as raised to their present dignity and privileges for this very purpose, *that they might shew forth the praises of him who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.*—And was every part of their temper and conduct to bear testimony to their gratitude to God for this signal mercy, while yet no mention was to be made of it in their Songs of Praise?—Let reason and common sense answer the question.—But it is an obstinate attachment to a typical and ceremonious worship that I admire, and blame after all the care the Apostle has taken to bring us off from it, and when our deliverance from it should be one great subject of our gratitude to God.

But what mean you by spiritual sacrifices? Do you mean that sacrifice, which the sacrifices of David typified and represented, that is the death and sufferings of Christ.—But he has long since *given himself an offering and a sacrifice to God.* Eph. v. 2.—*God hath made him to be sin, or a sin-offering for us.* 2 Cor. v. 21.—What propriety then can there be in your speaking of offering him up?—The Roman Catholics profess to do this in the sacrifice of the mass.—But this I persuade myself is far from your meaning.—You intend then, perhaps, the presenting *your bodies living sacrifices,* Rom. xii. 1. *Communicating and doing good.* Heb. xiii. 26. *Or the*

sacrifice of praise. Heb. xiii. 26.—These, and such as these, *are the spiritual sacrifices* under the Gospel, *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* (1. Pet. ii. 5.)—But the sacrifices under the law had a most immediate and direct reference, to the sacrifice and death of Christ.—The sacrifices of the Old Testament shewed that there was a hand-writing, bearing testimony concerning guilt not yet expiated.

But the spiritual sacrifices of Christians, being offered up through Christ, in the strongest manner imply, that the great atonement for sin is already made, and that their great high-priest *hath already appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* But I leave it to those who are such strenuous advocates for the worship of the Old Testament, to conceive, in what sense they speak of offering those sacrifices, which manifestly implied and declared, that the one *sacrifice, for ever perfecting them who are sanctified was not yet offered*; whereas the spiritual sacrifices of the Christian, being *offered up through Christ*, are so many memorials of it, and declarations of his faith, in it, as having been already offered.

But you will say; if new Psalms and Hymns are to be sung, who shall compose them?—Who shall be so arrogant and presumptuous as to attempt to supersede David and Asaph, and rise up to fill those offices in the Christian Church, which they discharged in that of the ancient Jews?

When our Lord left the earth, and ascended to glory, it might, with far greater propriety have been said, Who shall now *preach the Gospel of the kingdom*?—Who will now be so bold and presumptuous, as to undertake to

enlighten and convert the nations, when *He who came a light into the world* is withdrawn?

The Apostle, indeed, upon a contemplation of the awful and important consequences of the Gospel ministry, cries out, *Who is sufficient for these things?* 2. Cor. 2. 16. Yet, he says, 2 Cor. 4. 7. *We have this treasure* (of the Gospel ministry) *in earthen vessels*. And 2 Cor. 5, 20. he says, *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*. If, then, weak, frail and fallible men have been appointed to rise up in *the stead of Christ*, and in his name and authority to negotiate a reconciliation between an offended God and rebellious man; shall it be thought a strange thing, that the *children of the kingdom*, instructed in its mysteries, and charmed and transported by the enjoyment of its blessings, should attempt, in Songs of Praise, to celebrate the Divine benefits?—Should it not rather be accounted matter of wonder and surprize if they did not?—The Prophet, exulting in the distant prospect of an accomplished redemption, Isai. 44. 22. cries out, *Sing, O ye Heavens, for the Lord hath done it, shout ye lower parts of the earth, break forth into singing ye mountains, O forest and every tree therein, for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel*. And can it be supposed, that Heaven and earth, that mountains and forests should be called upon to unite in one harmonious choir of praise to the Father of mercies, for this transcendent and glorious salvation, while man, the great subject of it, should remain silent, amidst exulting nature? Or does not the Prophet rather call upon every surrounding object to bear testimony against the ungrateful race, if they neglected to celebrate the riches of Divine grace pouring forth, through Christ, such a profusion of blessings upon themselves?—Or can

we suppose that these inanimate and insensible creatures are called upon to break forth into singing, and that God would refuse the tribute of a Song of thanks from a soul that was filled and transported with a sense of his goodness?

But in direct answer to the question, let it be observed, that the Apostle, both in my text, and in the parallel passage, Eph. 5. 19. addresses the whole church. He directs them, *from the word of Christ, to teach, admonish or speak to one another, in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs.* To compose these in an acceptable and edifying manner, three things appear to be requisite. 1. A competent knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of Christianity. 2. The aids and influences of the Holy Spirit. 3. Some talent for poetry and versification.

As to the first of these, it is attainable by all Church members, who have sufficient capacity, opportunity and diligence to obtain information. As to the second it is a gift conferred upon all true believers—*If any man thirst, says Christ, let him come to me and drink.* John 6. 37. *This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* And accordingly the Gospel is called the *ministration of the Spirit.* 2 Cor. 3. 8. And Christians are said to be *led by the Spirit of God.* Rom. 8. 14. *To live in the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit.* Gal. 5. 25.

That they who are thus furnished should *edify one another* (1 Thes. 5. 11.) should *exhort one another*, Heb. 3. 13. *admonish one another* (Rom. 15. 4.) should *comfort and warn one another*, (1 Thes. 4. 18, and 5. 14.) is strictly enjoined. And if any of the members of the Churches of Ephesus or Colosse, had been further en-

riched by a talent for poetry, and had been capable of communicating knowledge or comfort or advice to their Christian brethren in its agreeable stile and harmonious numbers, would it not have been their duty?—Why had God bestowed upon them so rare and excellent an endowment if he had not permitted them to employ it? And to what nobler purposes could they employ it, than in furnishing themselves and others with matter of Praise and Thanksgiving to God, and of edification and comfort to their own souls? If instruction, admonition and mutual exhortation were their duty in their common conversation, do they become sin by being communicated in a Psalm or Hymn? So far from it, that the communicating these, in this way, is the very duty enjoined upon all, who were capable of it, in the words of my text.

The Apostle Paul, where he speaks of spiritual gifts, enjoins it upon Christians, 1 Cor. 14. 12. *That they seek that they may excel, or abound, to the edifying of the Church.* If the great Jewish preacher, raised to the throne of Israel, (a) *being wise sought out and set in order many proverbs; if he, in order to teach the people knowledge, in the most agreeable manner, sought out acceptable words, and set off his precepts with the ornaments and graces of poetry, is not the Christian under equal obligations?* Can it be unlawful for us to take the same methods of inculcating the great doctrines and duties of Christianity, which men, led by the Spirit of God, took to inculcate knowledge and precepts, that can by no means claim a superiority either of nature or original? Nay, an example, in this case, is equivalent to a command to all, who have capacity or opportunity of communicating instruction in this way.

(a) Eccl. 12. 9, 10.

But you will say ; “ David and Solomon were immediately guided and directed by the Holy Spirit and it would be presumption in us who can have no pretensions to immediate and extraordinary inspiration to follow them in celebrating the divine benefits, or in giving forth the precepts or motives of holy living.”

Such reasoning as this may appear plausible ; it seems to carry in it great appearance of respect for the sacred writers, and for the Holy Spirit by whom they were guided.—But it is extremely fallacious, and, if generally applied, will be found to have a very unfriendly aspect upon religion and virtue, and to destroy the force of all example.—If we may not follow the example of men, who were under the divine impulse and direction, then much less may we follow the example of the Blessed God himself. And yet the apostle calls upon Christians *to be followers of God as dear children*, Eph. v. 1.—And the Apostle (1 Pet. i. 15, 16.) Says : *As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, for it is written ; Be ye holy, for I am holy.*—If the force of the reasoning above mentioned were allowed, who would preach after the apostle Paul, or who would teach after the son of God?—And yet Christians in the words of my text are commanded *to teach one another.*

But you will say if every one endowed with a talent for poetry be permitted or encouraged to compose Hymns and Spiritual Songs, the Church will be over-run with such compositions.—I would make the same answer to this that Moses did to Joshua, when he requested him to forbid Eldad and Medad to prophecy. Num. xi. 29. *Would God, that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the*

Lord would put his Spirit upon them.——No minister of Christ or lover of souls has any just reason to be alarmed at the prospect of numbers, rising up to celebrate the divine benefits, to magnify the blessings and grace of the Gospel, and to recommend the great truths and duties of religion in compositions of any kind.——And wherever God has given men a genius and capacity for doing these things, in the agreeable language and numbers of poetry, it should be studiously improved for such valuable purposes.——Men who are enriched with such rare and excellent endowments, should consider the great original from whence they have flowed, should employ them for his glory, and for the edification of his Church.——They should not suffer such a talent to lie dormant and useless, but improve it to promote the devotion and edification of their fellow Christians.——*They are stewards of the manifold grace of God,* (a) and it is to their Lord, and not to frail and fallible men, that they are to give an account.——God never does any thing in vain, and wherever he bestows such eminent gifts and excites men to devote them to the service of religion and virtue, some good will be done.——

In a word, if God has continued the gift of poetry in his Church, if he has thereby shewn that it is to be exercised and improved, if the great purposes, for which it is to be employed, be to promote the glory of its great original, and the devotion and edification of the Church; The great question is; Or rather can it be any question at all; whether it is to be principally employed in celebrating the deliverances of Israel, or redemption by the Son of God?—Whether it is to borrow its lights from prophecy, and a dispensation foreshadowing good things

(a) 1 Pet. iv. 10.

to come, or from *the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ?* (a) Whether it is to communicate instruction and admonition wholly from what *God spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets*, and leave out all that *he hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things?* (b)

Whether the writer, whatever his knowledge and attainments may be, under all the fulness of the Spirit, as soon as he sets himself to express his sentiments in verse, is immediately to conceive himself, and those, whom he is to teach and admonish in Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, not as living in this advanced state of the Church and the world, but as actually living and residing in Judea, three thousand years ago?—Whether, instead of *giving thanks unto God and the Father for all things*, (c) he is to give him thanks for nothing, that he has done for himself or his fellow Christians, for the Church or the world, in that long series of ages, and events which have passed since the days of David?—What shall we say to these things?—It can never be the mind of the Spirit, it can never be the will of God, that the Christian Poet should pass over in silence those glorious acts of wisdom and love in the prospect of which he has so often, by his prophets, commanded all nature to rejoice.—I am at a loss to express my astonishment at the thought, that I should be lead to plead the cause of the Gospel, or to evince the propriety and reasonableness of expressing our gratitude for it, our glorying in it, and endeavoring to promote its interest in any way of which the heart, the voice or eloquence of man is capable?—

What I shall farther advance upon this subject will refer chiefly to the Ministers of Christ.

(a) 2 Cor. iv. 4.

(b) Heb. i. 1.

(c) Eph. v. 20.

Our heavenly Father, in condescension to our weakness, as a trial of our subjection and obedience, and in order to illustrate the glory of his power in the conversion and salvation of men, has deposited the precious *treasure of the Gospel in earthen vessels (a)*.—But as men like ourselves, weak and unworthy as they are, have been appointed to the important office of gathering and edifying his Church, we must conceive them to be fully authorized and furnished for this purpose.—They are honored with every appellation, that may lead them to form just conceptions of the importance, and dignity of their office, and that may procure from the people a proper respect and esteem for their ministrations.—They are *servants of Christ (b)* appointed over the other members of *his household*.—They are *ambassadors for Christ (c)*, and delegated to address the people in the name, and *stead of Christ*.—They are *stewards of the mysteries of God (d)*, and are entrusted with the administration of the word, and of the solemn seals of the Covenant of Grace. They speak to the people in the name of God, and offer up to God, through Jesus Christ, the adorations and praises, the petitions and thanksgivings of the people.—To them *is committed the word of reconciliation (e)*.—To instruct and admonish is the great business of their office.—These two branches of duty, if they are discharged in their full extent, comprize, in a manner, the whole of their public business, as preachers of the Gospel.—To them, therefore, the command and injunction of *teaching and admonishing* the people, in *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, must be considered as more especially directed.—

(a) 2 Cor. 4. 7. (b) Matth. 24. 45. (c) 2 Cor. 5. 20.

(d) 1 Cor. 4. 1.

(e) 2 Cor. v. 19.

Nor will it avail to say, that they teach their hearers in catechising and preaching, and, that in these, they take every opportunity of reproof, rebuking and exhorting their hearers.—The command of the Apostle requires, that their instructions, exhortations and reproofs should be as well and as faithfully communicated in their *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, as in their Sermons; and consequently that the same lessons of knowledge to enlighten the understandings of their people, and of reproof and exhortation to direct and animate them in the way of their duty, should be found in the one as in the other.

Besides, they live under the *ministration of the Spirit* (a), and if they have reason to expect his aid in prayer, and in preaching the word, which they are often called to perform without previous study and meditation, they surely may expect his aid and direction in choosing or composing a Psalm or Hymn, designed to instruct and edify the people, or to celebrate the praises of their God and their Redeemer. They are *ministers of the New Testament* (b), persons whom their Lord has magnified above the *prophets* (c), and even above the *Baptist himself*, his own immediate forerunner.—Surely then, if the ministers of Christ, after having been so highly honored by their divine master, after having heard, as from his own mouth, those lessons of wisdom, which he came from Heaven to reveal;—if after he has treated them as *friends*, and *made known to them all things that he heard of his Father* (d), they should, in any part of their ministrations, conceal or disguise their superior honor and advantages, and teach,

(a) 2 Cor. iii. 8.

(c). Luke vii. 28.

(b) 2 Cor. iii. 6.

(d) John xv. 15.

not as the messengers and ambassadors of the Son of God, but as if they were the disciples of Moses and the prophets, they would be highly ungrateful to him, who had raised them to so high an honor, and blessed them with so clear a light, and be unfaithful to the people of their charge.

They have seen, and heard many things which many highly favored *kings and prophets* in vain desired to see and hear (a), and shall they not be allowed to declare them?—Nay, shall they take those very *prophets and kings* for the models of their teaching, neglecting the great *Apostle and High-Priest of their profession, Christ Jesus* (b)?

If we could exhibit the types both of persons and things, that, under the Old Testament, were appointed to fore-signify the coming of our Lord, his humiliation, his sufferings, his exaltation, and the blessings consequent upon them, in all the glory, of which they are capable, they would vanish upon the appearance of the *Sun of Righteousness* like the stars before the sun in his strength.

What was the deliverance of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, and from the wrath and tyranny of Pharaoh by the hand of Moses, compared with the deliverance of all true believers from the wrath of God, and the terrors of a violated law?—What are the victories and triumphs of Joshua, and the subsequent settlement of Israel in the promised land, where they were still surrounded with enemies and evils, liable to captivity and death, to the triumphs of the Son of God who

(a) Matth. xiii. 17.

(b) Heb. iii. 1.

delivers his people from the *bondage of corruption (a)*, frees them *from the snare of the devil (b)*, disarms death of its *sling, and the grave (c)* of its power, and will raise them to a place and state, *where God will appoint them salvation for walls and bulwarks (d)*?—What was the abasement of David, driven from the throne of Israel, and all the sorrows and distresses of that holy man, arising from the unnatural baseness and treachery of his son, and the ingratitude and cruelty of his subjects, and from the apprehensions of divine wrath incensed against him for his sins, compared to the abasement of the Son of God, who left the throne of Heaven, who, in *the likeness of sinful flesh (e)* conflicted with poverty and contempt, *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself (f)*, whose soul was overwhelmed with unspeakable anguish and horror, *when the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all (g)*, and who though he was perfectly holy, submitted to be treated as an impostor and malefactor, and to expire in the painful, ignominious, and cursed death of the cross?—David was restored from his abasement and banishment, he was established on the throne of Israel, raised to be *the head of the Heathen (h)* and some of the surrounding nations were made tributary to him. But what is all this to the circumstances of triumph and glory, in which our Redeemer came forth from the prison of the grave, to the extensive and everlasting dominion conferred upon him, and to the dignity to which *God has exalted him, having set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but that which is to come (i)*? And may I not be allowed to ask; *What*

(a) Rom. viii. 21. (b) 2 Tim. ii. 26. (c) 1 Cor. xv. 55.
 (d) Isai. xxvi. 1. (e) Rom. viii. 3. (f) Heb. xii. 3.
 (g) Isai. liii. 6. (h) Psal. xviii. 43. (i) Eph. i. 19, 20.

portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. His obedience and submission to the divine law, his sorrows and sufferings, his triumphs and exaltation however distinguished and illustrious, were personal, and had no influence, resembling that of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our gracious Redeemer appeared and acted in every thing as the head and *Saviour of his body the Church* (a). The Apostle expresses the intimacy of the union between Christ and believers in the strongest terms when he says, 1 Cor. vi. 15, 17. *Know ye not, that your bodies are members of Christ? and he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit.* Agreeably to this, if he suffered, we are said to *suffer with him*, (b) if he died, we are to reckon ourselves as *dead with him* (c), if he be crucified, *our old man is crucified with him* (d), if he is risen we also are *quickened together with him*, and *made to sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus* (e).—By his obedience we are made *righteous* (f) and by his stripes we are *healed* (g);—He is *entered into Heaven as our forerunner* (h), and from thence we look for him as our *Saviour* (i), to deliver us from every enemy, that remains yet to be subdued, and to receive us to those *mansions of bliss and glory, which he is gone before to prepare for us* (k), and in which he now lives and reigns on our behalf.—And are these glorious and edifying doctrines, so important to be known and believed, together with the exhortations to holiness, comfort, and heavenly-mindedness which our Lord and his Apostles have founded upon them, to be passed over in silence, by the ministers of Christ, whenever they go about to teach and admonish their people in *Psalms and*

(a) Eph. v. 23. (b) Rom. 8. 17. (c) Rom. 6. 7. (d) Rom. 6. 6.
 (e) Eph. 2. 5, 6. (f) Rom. 5. 19. (g) 1 Pet. 2. 24.
 (h) Heb. 6. 20. (i) Phil. 3. 20. (k) John. 14. 2.

Hymns?—And are the actions and sufferings of an obscure and distant type, even of the *patriarch David, who is both dead and buried (a)*, to be celebrated in our Songs of Praise, instead of the beneficial deeds of the great *Captain of our Salvation*, who suffered and died, and who now lives and reigns for our eternal interest and happiness?—Shall we thus derogate from the dignity, obscure the glory, and strike out from our Songs of Praise the very name of that divine Person, whom *his Father has so highly exalted*, and whom duty, gratitude, and interest constrain us to adore, to magnify and exalt in every way, in which we are capable of doing it?—

If then our interest in the blessed Jesus, our unspeakable obligations to him, and his transcendent and divine dignity, render it disparaging to him and ungrateful in us, to substitute the actions, the sufferings, or name of any other *person* in the place of his, what shall we say of those *things* that prefigured him?—When teaching our people shall we speak only of *high-priests who had infirmity, (b)* and of *sacrifices that could never take away sins, (c)* and say nothing of our *great High-Priest, who, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, in full manifestation of its prevalence and acceptance, for ever sat down at the right hand of God? (d)*—The transcendent love of God to a perishing world, and the full security that all true believers have; that they shall be made partakers of eternal life are subjects upon which we should dwell with peculiar delight.—And shall we draw our proofs and illustrations of these important and interesting truths from the slaying and offering the paschal lamb, from the shedding *the blood of bulls and of goats, (e)* and not from

(a) Acts 2. 29. (b) Heb. vii. 28. (c) x. 11. (d) i. 3. (e) x. 4.

his giving up his own Son? (a)—Shall we lead the people to the language and types of the Old Testament in order that they may be able to comprehend with all saints, *what is the breadth and length, the depth and height of the love of Christ, (b)* when we have before our eyes, in the bright original himself, a grace and condescension, which we are called, not only to admire, but to imitate? Let this mind be in you, says the Apostle, Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7. which was also in Christ Jesus; *Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

What shall I more say?—The Jews might be led to venerate David their prince, they might be led to celebrate the actions of his life daily in their public devotions as foreshadowing the actions of the Son of God; they might be led to submit cheerfully to the daily expence and drudgery of offering sacrifices for the same cause; but whether it be proper for Christians to do either the one or the other, to the exclusion of all mention of *the name of the Lord Jesus*, and of *that one sacrifice for sins*, which when he had offered, he for ever sat down at the right hand of God, (c) I leave to the reason and conscience of every Christian to judge. Why should we be of different sentiments on this subject?—*Is Christ divided?—Was David crucified for us? or were we baptized in the name of David: (d)*

Let me not be accounted assuming, if my zeal for the the Gospel and my earnest desire to have its glorious

(a) Rom. v. 8. & viii. 32.

(b) Eph. iii. 18, 19.

(c) Heb. x. 12. (d) 1 Cor. i. 13.

light introduced into every part of our public devotions, incite me still farther to speak to my fathers and brethren in the ministry.—

We have already heard the sacred writers, representing the state of the Jewish people, before the appearance of our Saviour, as a state of deplorable darkness. The brightest lights of the Church have subscribed to the same truth.—* “What can there be, at most,” says Witfius, “but twilight before the rising of the sun.—“the Lord therefore dispensed the light of his word to them, in such a manner, that they could only view it still at a distance and obscurely.” Peter has elegantly represented this, by comparing the prophetic language *unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place*, 2 Peter i. 19.—When he calls it a lamp he intimates the absence of the sun, and when he speaks of a dark place he represents the state of the ancients, which, amidst the darkness, had the glimmering small light of a burning taper, which is used only in the night time, not in the full day.”—He has copied the following expressions from Calvin.—† “What did the law and the prophets discover to those who lived in their days? Certainly nothing but a taste of that wisdom, which was afterwards to be clearly displayed, by foretelling it as shining at a distance.—Whenever Christ can be pointed out with a finger, the kingdom of God is disclosed.—“For in him, says Calvin, are laid open all those treasures of wisdom and understanding, by which we penetrate almost into the secret places of Heaven, quibus prope ad ipsa cæli adyta penetra-
tur.”—‡

* Witfius b. 4. ch. 13. sect. 5. † Calv. lib. 2. ch. 11. sect. 5.

‡ Calv. instit. lib. 2. Cap. 11. Sect. 5. ad finem.

And can we, as ministers of Christ, after this *Sun of Righteousness has risen*, and after the light of the glory of his Gospel has shone upon us, teach our people, as if we, and they, were still living in a dark place, and enlightened only by the glimmering small light of a burning taper?—It would surely be strange and unaccountable that light is come into the world, and, that the very ministers of that light should choose to communicate their instructions, and admonitions, as in a dark place, and by the light of a taper.

The Apostle after having represented the divine dignity of our Saviour, as infinitely transcending that of the angels, the prophets or any other messengers, whom God had formerly employed in instructing and reforming the world, says, Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord?*—And can we with this word of Christ in our hands, with *this Gospel of our Salvation (a)* in full possession, published and declared by the Son of God, acquit ourselves of treating it with neglect, if in any part of our ministrations we pass it over, as if our Lord had never spoken it?—Where is our gratitude to our heavenly Father for addressing us by this glorious and divine messenger, or to the amazing grace of him, who condescended to humble and abase himself to become our teacher, if wheresoever we go to teach and admonish our people in Psalms and Hymns, we prefer the teachings of the prophets to those of the Son of God.

Surely, if every other eye should be blind to the glories of our great Emanuel, if every other heart should

(a) Eph. i. 13.

be ungrateful for the bright and glorious light and tidings, he has brought into the world, it should never be the case with those, whose business and office it is to display and declare them.—The prophet Isaiah (Ch. 52: 7, 8.) has celebrated the approach of this heavenly messenger, and foretold the effect it should have upon the ministers of religion. *How beautiful says he, upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth Salvation, that saith unto Zion thy God reigneth.*—*Thy watchman shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.*—Now this divine messenger has appeared, we have *seen him eye to eye*, he has *dwelt among us*, we have *beheld his glory*, and we have heard, from his own mouth, the *good tidings of peace* and messages of Salvation.—And shall we, after all this, not do, what the prophet says we should have done, even upon his distant approach?—Was even *this* sufficient to have raised a joy of heart that would break forth into Songs of Praise and exultation; and shall not his appearing, *his proclaiming peace, and good will towards men*, his purchasing for us and securing to us the most valuable blessings, have, if possible, a still greater effect?—Shall we whose office it is *to preach Christ Jesus the Lord (a)*, by our silence of him in our Songs of Joy, manifest a want of that gratitude which the prophet expected and foretold? Shall we declare to the world, that his appearance, and blessings are not so desirable, as he apprehended them to be, or lead mankind to call in question the truth of his predictions?—Shall we never confess in Songs of Praise and gratitude

(a) 2 Cor 4. 5.

to God *what our eyes have seen, what our ears have heard, and our hands have handled of the word of life (a)*, nor shew forth the praises of him, who, at such an expence of abasement and suffering, *has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light (b)*.—No.—Let gratitude to Heaven, let our duty and obligations to a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour constrain us to declare what we *have seen and heard*, that others may be convinced of the high value we set upon *the great Salvation*, may learn to mingle their songs with ours, and seek after that *communion and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus (c)*, in which they hear us expressing our glory and our joy,

Let me farther observe, that in adhering to the Old Testament Psalmody, we speak of the tabernacle or temple as still standing ; we teach our people to sing as offering sacrifices or promising to offer them, at Jerusalem, though these things cannot be done, in their present circumstances, even by the Jews themselves. Thus do we teach our people to view Christ through the veil of those types and shadows, which fore-signified his coming, and to maintain a great veneration and respect for ordinances, that he has abolished at the expence of his sufferings and death, while we say nothing of baptism and the Lord's supper, which he has appointed as memorials of his having appeared, and which he has commanded us to observe, as public and solemn declarations of our faith in him, our dependence upon him, and gratitude to him, and as solemn seals of the new covenant.

To these ordinances, there is not, I conceive, the most distant reference in the whole Old Testament

(a) 1 John 1. 1. (b) 1 Pet. 2. 9. (c) 1 John 1. 3.

Psalmody. And do they, who are to administer them, need be told how necessary it is that the people should be carefully instructed in their nature, design, and in the importance of observing them?—And need we to remind them, how often the Apostles speak to Christians, *as having been baptized*, and press upon them a distinguishing degree of mortification and holiness, as what they are strongly obliged to by this solemn ordinance? *(a)* And when we come to devote the dear lambs of our flock to the *Father, Son and Spirit*, can we forbear a Song of Praise to that God, *who hath brought them nigh by the blood of his Son (b)*, to that gracious Redeemer, *who gathers them with his arm (c)* and who has appointed them to be *washed with pure water (d)*, in token of the greatest blessings; and to that divine Agent by whom we hope *they shall be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light? (e)*

The mournful season and affecting circumstances *(f)* in which our Lord instituted his supper, the special care he has taken in appointing the Evangelists to record the design and circumstances of its institution, and his communicating these by special revelation to the Apostle Paul *(g)* manifestly shew, how important it was in the estimation of our Saviour, that all his disciples should be early and diligently informed of it, and strictly enjoined to observe it. And, indeed, the manifestation of the Son of God, his low abasement, his incessant labours, his extreme sufferings for the salvation of men, are acts of Providence the most amazing, are events the most glorious, the most important, the most interesting to mankind, to Christians, that ever the world saw. On

(a) Rom. 6. 4. Gal. 3. 27. *(b)* Eph. 2. 13. *(c)* Isa. 40. 11. *(d)* Eph. 5. 26. *(e)* Col. 1. 12. *(f)* 1 Cor. 11. 23. *(g)* Ibid.

these all our hopes of pardon, peace, and eternal happiness are founded. Now it is that we may recollect with lively gratitude these wonderful things, that we may perpetuate the remembrance of them, and declare to the world our sense of their reality and importance, that our Lord has appointed us to celebrate the ordinance of which I am speaking. Surely, then, it may well appear strange, and unaccountable, that *in all the Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, accompanying our celebration of this ordinance, there should be no reference to the accomplishment of those events with which we profess ourselves so deeply affected, nor to the infinite love of God, manifested in it, nor to the infinite love to men, and that anxious concern for our edification and comfort, which our Lord displayed in instituting this ordinance at a time when all his thoughts might have been swallowed up in the affecting view he had of the horror and distress of his approaching sufferings. When we see our Redeemer evidently *set forth as crucified before us* (a) *washing us* and our people, *from our sins in his blood* (b) *seating us round his table*, and hear him *inviting us to sup with him*, and *condescending to sup with us* (c) shall we or can we suppress all mention, in our Songs of Praise, of that dear and excellent person, whose love we are assembled to record, who has engaged us by every tie to celebrate his glories, and *in whose name* we are expressly commanded to offer up to God all our petitions and thanksgivings?

When on this solemn and interesting occasion we set ourselves to teach our people in Psalms and Hymns, no subject can be more pertinent or proper for us to dwell upon, than the holy ordinance in which we are imme-

(a) Gal. 3. 1.

(b) Rev. 1. 5.

(c) Rev. 3. 20.

diately engaged, and the solemn exercises of entering into, and sealing an everlasting covenant with God, in which our hearts should then be employed, and the astonishing love of God and grace of Christ, which have opened a way for our admission to such an exalted an honor and privilege.—When we are called to view our Lord surrounded with his disciples in the chamber where he instituted this ordinance—to follow him to his agonies in the garden, where his enemies seized him, a disciple betrayed him, and the rest forsook him and fled—when our faith should behold the Captain of our Salvation, condemned as a malefactor, scourged, buffeted, his head crowned with thorns, his feet and hands pierced with nails, and himself raised on the cross, *bearing our sins in his own body* [a], and there giving us the last, the dearest and most expensive proof of his love. When Christ is thus evidently set forth as crucified before us, and when his express command (b), and the very nature and design of the ordinance, in which we are engaged unite in calling us to remember him, shall we who are his ministers, call off the attention of our people from the *great High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus* [c], to the obscure types and shadows of an antiquated dispensation?—Where shall we go to find such a bright and shining example of zeal for the glory of God, of calm and unrepining submission to his will, of invincible fortitude and patience of love to men, of a meek and forgiving spirit, as are manifested and displayed by the suffering, dying Saviour? Where shall we go to kindle the flame of our devotion to God, of our zeal in his service, of our love to our Lord, if the fire of that altar, on which he offered up himself, be insufficient for this purpose?

(a) 1 Pet. 2. 24.

(b) Luk. 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24, 26.

[c] Heb. 3. 1.

In a word, my dear brethren, Before the coming of our Lord, *Moses and the prophets wrote of him*; (a) the types and shadows of the law forefignified him. And we have been taught to believe, that the most important revolutions in empires and kingdoms were designed by Providence, to make way for his approach, and to facilitate the spreading of his Gospel.—And since his departure from the earth, the Apostles, whom he commissioned—the *pastors and teachers*, whom he has appointed to succeed them—the Church which he has established,—the days of our public worship, bearing his name (b), and observed in memory of his resurrection—the sacraments he has instituted—all bear testimony to his divine dignity, and to the certainty and reality of his having long since appeared.—Our faith represents him, as exalted to Heaven, and worshipped by its glorious inhabitants, and our hope teaches us *to look for him from thence* to complete our salvation in the *redemption of our bodies* from the grave, and in the establishment of our whole persons in everlasting felicity and glory.—And is this person, all-glorious and divine, never to be mentioned in our *Hymns and Songs of Praise*?—Are his incarnation, his miracles, his actions, his discourses, his virtues, his example to be passed over, as unworthy to be taught or celebrated?—Shall eloquent orations be composed and delivered, shall sublime and labored poems be written and sung, in honor of human benefactors and deliverers, and shall the name and actions of the Saviour be passed over in silence by those, who share his blessings, who hope to share his triumphs, and are appointed by their office to declare his glories?—No.—*Let us go forth to Jesus without the camp, bearing his reproach.* (c)—Let our upright and honest intentions be misrepresented.—

(a) John i. 45. (b) Rev. i. 10. (c) Heb. xiii. 13.

Let us, for our zeal, for the honor of Christ, and for promoting the knowledge and interests of his Gospel, be strangely branded with the reproachful names of *Arians*, *Socinians*, *blasphemers*, and *Deists*. Let us persevere with a prudent and resolute zeal to approve ourselves to our Divine Master, and to labor for the furtherance of his Gospel.—*If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.—If we deny him, he will also deny us.—(a)* And let us remember, *we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.—(b)*

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father;—to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.—Amen. (c)

(a) 2 Tim. ii. 12. (b) Heb. xiii. 10. (c) Rev. i. 5, 6.—

F I N I S.