

IN TRANSLATIÖNE

Part II: John Brown of Wamphray Singing of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs in the Public Worship of God

FROM DE CAUSA DEI CONTRA ANTISABBATARIOS

(9) The Apoſtſe preſcribes for us the matter of the ſongs in Ephesians 5:19 [and] Colossians 3:16. For *Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual songs* are the very titles of the Psalms of David and the other psalmiſts; for thoſe, as it is proven from the titles of a great many, are called מְזוֹמְרִים (Psalms), תְּהִלִּים (hymns), and שִׁירִים (songs). Indeed, that volume of Psalms and Songs is called תְּהִלִּים, that is, *praises, hymns*, and ſpecifically in the New Teſtament, *The Psalms* (Luke 20:42; Acts 1:20; Luke 24:44). It does not move us that they are not explicitly called the Psalms of David by the Apoſtſe; for neither are they explicitly called Psalms invented and composed by a private ſpirit, and ſometimes that book is cited without the name of David annexed, as in Luke 24:44 [and] Acts 13:33, as ſufficiently well-known from the title itſelf. When, therefore, the Apoſtſe names *Psalms, hymns, etc.*, it is ſufficiently evident that he underſtands thoſe Psalms and hymns that were marked with theſe titles, and were known by all theſe names.

[EXCEPTION ONE.] In vain do they take exception, 1. by ſaying, *It is not neceſſary to ſing thoſe Psalms “to the end that we might be filled with the Spirit;” which nevertheless the Apoſtſe urges in Ephesians 5:18, nor to the end that “the word of Chriſt might dwell in us abundantly,” which is required in Colossians 3:16.*

RESPONSE. It is required to the end that we might be filled with the Spirit, and ſo that the word of Chriſt might dwell in

us abundantly, ſo that we might rightly ſpeak to one another, in Psalms, etc., and ſing and psalm them to the Lord in our hearts, and ſo that we might teach and admoniſh others, by ſinging Psalms and hymns, etc.; and ſo that anyone might be able to ſelect a Psalm adapted to the preſent condition of the Church, ſo that, moreover, anyone might ſing with the Spirit and in the Spirit, although ſinging, melody, pitch, or tune charm all carnal men, and are able to diſtract even the ſpiritual men, except they attend cauſtiously. It is not, therefore, ſo eaſy, as many conclude, to ſing even one of the Psalms of David to God, with the ſpirit lifted up to glorify God, and with an aroſed ſpiritual ſenſe of the bleſſings of God.

EXCEPTION TWO. *Thoſe Psalms of which the Apoſtſe ſpeaks, are the word of Chriſt, not the words of David, Aſaph, etc., that is, they have regard unto the Goſpel, not the law.*

RESPONSE. Inſpired by the Spirit of Chriſt, thoſe men of God composed theſe Psalms; and they are much more to be called the word of Chriſt, than Psalms composed now by any private perſon whatſoever, for that Spirit was infallible, who was urging the former; but fallible, who teaches and leads the latter. In addition, the Spirit, who was urging David and the other psalmiſts, was the Evangelical Spirit, for the Goſpel was proclaimed under the Old Teſtament (John 5:46; Heb. 4:2).

REJOINDER. *Although thoſe Psalms and hymns were the word of Chriſt, as they were composed and arranged by David and the other psalmiſts, who were urged by the Spirit of Chriſt; yet they were not the word of Chriſt, as they are recited or ſung by us.*

RESPONSE. They are in the ſame way the word of Chriſt when they are recited by us, as they were the word of Chriſt when they were ſung by the maſter of the muſicians and other members of the Old Church; or as the Goſpel of Chriſt is Chriſt’s Goſpel when it is read by us. Indeed, it is required (which was alſo required formerly) that we ſing them with the ſpirit of Chriſt; but this defect in us, when the ſituation is otherwiſe, does not change the matter of the Psalms, neither does it render them ſome private word, and not the word of Chriſt.

EXCEPTION THREE. *The Apoſtſe calls the entire word of Chriſt dwelling in us, Psalms, hymns, and ſpiritual ſongs, and not the words of David, etc., only.*

RESPONSE. We nowhere read that all the words of the Prophets and Apoſtſes are called Psalms or hymns; but we know that a certain, particular part of the Word of God is marked by this title. Indeed, the Apoſtſe deſires that the word of Chriſt dwell in us abundantly, ſo that we might be made better prepared and fit to edify others by ſinging Psalms, etc. In any event, it is conceded that we are able to ſing thoſe Psalms of David; for alſo theſe Psalms are hymns and ſpiritual ſongs.

OBJECTION ONE. *The Apoſtſe commands the Ephesians to be intoxicated and filled with the ſpirit, ſo that they might be*

JOHN BROWN OF WAMPFRAY (c.1610–1679). The extract preſented here is translated from Joanne Broun, *De Causa Dei Contra Antiſabbatariorum Tractatus* (Rotterdam: Apud Henricum Goddaeum, Bibliopolam. Anno [1674; 1676]). The ſelection translated appears in volume 2, pages 954–966. TRANSLATED BY DR. STEVEN DILDAY. Dr. Dilday is an ordained miniſter ſerving Liberty and Grace Reformed Church, a Presbyterian congregation located in Northern Virginia. He holds a Ph.D. Degree in Puritan Hiſtory and Literature from Whitefield Theological Seminary. Dr. Dilday is currently translating Matthew Poole’s *Synopsis Criticorum*, available at <http://www.matthewpoole.net>. The firſt portion of this translation by a different translator appeared in *The Confessional Presbyterian* 3 (2007). The editor extends hiſ thanks to Dr. Dilday for taking up and completing the work.

able to frame and form new spiritual songs, like those who are intoxicated with wine contrive and sing carnal songs.

RESPONSE. [1.] The Apostle does indeed allude to those drunk with wine, and urges that the Ephesians show that they are filled with the Spirit by singing Psalms, hymns, etc., in their hearts to the Lord. But he says nothing of the invention and composition of new songs; and neither are those who are intoxicated with wine wont to devise and compose new songs, obscene and carnal; but to sing those committed to memory previously. 2. We do not deny that a private individual, filled with the Spirit, is able to compose new hymns, for his own edification and that of others; but it does not follow that a song of this sort ought to be sung in the public assemblies of the Church.

OBJECTION TWO. *The Davidic Psalms were limited to the Jewish form of worship, which was practiced in the Temple; for they were delivered to the proper officers, and they were to be sung with the musical instruments.*

RESPONSE. [1.] Although those Psalms were recited in the Temple, which is yet not evident concerning all, for a great many have no titles; they are able also to be sung under the Gospel, for it is not proven that they were limited to that form of worship. Indeed, the matter of certain songs in the Temple appears more properly to regard the time of the New Testament, for example, Psalm 44:11 compared with Romans 8:36. And nowhere do we read that the Jewish people were in such a condition as is mentioned in Psalm 44:17, etc. 2. Concerning the musical instruments, they were indeed peculiar to that economy; yet it does not follow upon this that the Psalms themselves were peculiar to that economy. Prayers were made in the temple with frankincense and incense, which manner was typical, and peculiar to that form of worship; yet it does not follow from this that the very prayers are now abolished.

OBJECTION THREE. *The Psalms of David were types of the spiritual songs of the New Testament.*

RESPONSE. [1.] This is said without justification, without the authority of Scripture. 2. The carnal types were both literal, and less spiritual than the antitypes; but the Psalms and scriptural hymns are much more spiritual than the ones we see composed now by anyone whatsoever.

OBJECTION FOUR. *The arguments by which we prove that it is unlawful to write in advance and employ forms of prayers, prove also that it is unlawful to make use of the Psalms written beforehand.*

RESPONSE. This is denied; for the arguments which prove that it is unlawful for men to write out beforehand forms for others, or to make use of forms written beforehand by men, do not likewise prove that it is unlawful for God to write out beforehand forms for us; or that it is unlawful for us to make use of forms written beforehand by God. Although the forms written out beforehand by men quench the Spirit and

the gifts of the Spirit; it does not follow that the forms and means prescribed by the Spirit of God do the same, since it was seen by God that by the means established by Himself He works spiritual effects in His own. Moreover, we pointed out above that the reason for Psalms and for forms of prayers is far different.¹

OBJECTION FIVE. *The edification of the Church under the New Testament ought to be advanced by the proper and personal gifts of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:7, 8, 11, 16; 1 Pet. 4:10, 11; Rom. 12:4, 6; 1 Cor. 12).*

RESPONSE. [1.] It is true that our gifts ought to be exercised for the edification of the Church. But Scripture does not say that the edification of the Church is not to be advanced otherwise than by the personal gifts of those who now live; indeed, it says the contrary, that the Church is to be edified now by the gifts of the Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, who died formerly in their own day. Why not also by the gifts of David, and of the other psalmists, who were endowed with a special gift for composing Psalms and hymns, and also with the infallible Spirit[?] 2. God gives various gifts to the members of the Church: yet not all those gifts are held to exercise in the public assemblies of the Church. Most gifts are to be exercised privately and for the edification of private individuals.

OBJECTION SIX. *There are those who are strong in the gift of spiritual poetry, and that gift ought to be exercised for the good of the Church, according to the commandment of the Apostle (1 Pet. 4:10).*

RESPONSE: [1.] Indeed, anyone who has received a gift ought to dispense that; but not all in the same way. For all gifts are not suitable for the public edification of the Church; neither are they to be administered in the public assemblies of the Church. 2. Under the Old Testament it is probable that there were others who had the gift of poetry; yet the hymns of all those were not sung publicly in the Temple. 3. Even if we grant this, nevertheless it would not follow from thence that therefore the Psalms and hymns were to be eliminated, having been dictated by the infallible Spirit.

OBJECTION SEVEN. *The Spirit is no less able today to make us fit for devising Psalms, than formerly David and Asaph and the other psalmists.*

RESPONSE. This is not denied. But what can be concluded from that? He is also able to make us fit for composing prophecies, and for writing scriptures infallibly; are the scriptures of the prophets and Apostles, therefore, to be rejected? God forbid.

OBJECTION EIGHT. *We have an example of this sort of exercise in the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. 14).*

RESPONSE. That gift was extraordinary, conjoined with the

1. Brown addressed forms of prayer in the section previous to this one on psalm singing, the end of which was in part one of the translation, which appeared in *The Confessional Presbyterian*, 3:276.

gift of tongues. Indeed, as it appears, as some spoke, prayed, etc., in an unknown tongue (vv 2, 14, 17), so others sung Psalms in an unknown tongue (v. 15).

OBJECTION NINE. *In the first three centuries, Christians made use of their own private hymns, not scriptural, as Pliny, writing to Trajan, testifies.*

RESPONSE. Pliny only says that Christians recited a song to Christ as if to their God;² but not that they composed those songs. And Tertullian, in his *Apology*, chapter 39, testifies that Christians sang from the *Sacred Scriptures*, and not only from their own talent.³

REJOINDER. *Nepos is praised because of his gift for composing Psalms; and after his death his Psalms were sung publicly.*⁴

RESPONSE. At that time Psalms were sung, not by individuals according to the gift conceded to them; but according to the forms written beforehand by men; but who will say that it is better to use the forms of men than the forms dictated and prescribed by the Holy Spirit?

OBJECTION TEN. *In many reformed Churches, besides scriptural Psalms and hymns, others are used. In the German Church, besides the Psalter, they make use of Psalms and many other hymns composed by Luther. The Bohemian and Moravian Churches have a hymnal, containing 743 Evangelical songs.*⁵ *The*

2. Pliny the Younger's *Letters* 10:96.

3. "After hand-washing, the lights are brought in, and a general invitation is given to sing to God as each one is able, either from the Holy Scriptures or from his own natural capability; it may be gathered from this how little one has drunk." T. Herbert Bindley, M.A., *The Apology Of Tertullian For The Christians, Translated with Introduction, Analysis, and Appendix containing the Letters of Pliny and Trajan respecting the Christians* (Oxford: Parker and Co., 1890).

4. Nepos (fl. 244 AD) was Bishop of Arsinoe, Egypt. He is remembered for his hymns and his chiliasm. See Eusebius' *Church History* 7:24.

5. "The first Bohemian Hymn-book appeared in 1504; the second, which was the masterpiece of the Brethren's hymnology, containing 743 hymns, in 1661. This latter passed through a number of editions." McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, vol. 6, 584.

6. A small Polish hymnal was published in 1547. In 1556, a Polish translation of a Bohemian hymnal was published, the first large books of songs to appear in Polish with printed music.

7. Jan Uttenhove (1516–1566) was a Flemish writer associated with the Dutch Church in London. He translated the Psalms and the New Testament into Dutch. His Dutch Psalter (*De Psalmen Davidis, in Nederlandischer Sangs-ryme*) was superseded by Petrus Dathenus' translation of Clement Marot's Genevan Psalter. Uttenhove wrote "Prayer-song before the Sermon" ("Bedeang voor die Predikatie"), first published in Emden in 1557.

8. See F.L. Rutgers, and Ph.J. Hoedemaker, eds. *Gisberti Voetii Tractatus selecti de politica ecclesiastica*, 2 vols. (Amstelodami: Kruyt, 1885, 1886) 2:38.

9. "Christe qui Lux Es et Dies" was composed by Erasmus Alberus (c. 1500–1553), a German Reformer and poet. The hymn was published in 1566, and was later used as an evening hymn.

*Polish Church has some of this sort in their own book of songs.*⁶ *and in the Belgic Psalter is annexed a song of Jan Uttenhove, to be placed before sermons,*⁷ *which even today, as Voetius testifies (ubi supra, 528),*⁸ *is sung in many Churches, as for many years elsewhere had been sung a hymn, "O Christ, who art light and the day,"*⁹ *in the evening assemblies.*

RESPONSE. 1. This still does not support the opinion of my adversaries, who maintain that we always make use of Psalms, dictated and suggested afresh to us by the Holy Spirit, composed either by individuals, or by certain ones, furnished with that gift. 2. *In that very place*, the most illustrious Voetius testifies that by ecclesiastical statutes any other songs whatsoever were excluded, as Article 62, of the Ecclesiastical Synod of Gravenhage in the Year 1586, which is thus: *in the Churches the Psalms of David will be sung, with song set aside which are not found in Sacred Scripture.* And I indeed do not see by what right we might be able, in the public songs of the Church, to make use of Psalms or hymns dictated by a private spirit, while we have others dictated and prescribed by the infallible Spirit; while those fruits, which in the singing of the latter the pious secure and oftentimes partake of, in the former are not to be expected in faith. Neither do I see that it is more permissible to make use of the forms of human songs, than the forms of prayers prescribed by men.

OBJECTION ELEVEN. *In the Psalter, and the few other scriptural songs, are not had so many and such forms of prayers, hymns, supplications, confessions, etc., which would be able to be accommodated evidently enough to whatever state of the Churches under the New Testament and to the treatment of whatever matters for the meeting; unto these things, for the celebration of the Lord's supper, of public fasting, for the confirmation of Ministers, for Excommunication, for Reconciliation, etc.*

RESPONSE. [1.] Although the more remote material of the hymns or Psalms is sometimes prayer, supplication, confession, etc., yet the proximate matter is always hymn, and praise. And that more remote matter, when it is come unto a song, puts on the rationale of the hymn, and is specifically to be sung unto the praise of God. 2. If the scriptural hymns are not able to supply appropriate material, the hymns invented by men will accomplish less. 3. He who is trained in the scriptural Psalms is easily able to find a hymn for whatever state of the Churches under the New Testament, and for the treatment of whatever sound theological matters, and what things have regard unto edification, so that it might be evidently enough accommodated to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, of public fasting, etc.; that they appropriate the experience of all Churches, where all hymns, except the scriptural ones, are excluded, it is sufficiently evident, and it is easily able to be shown.

OBJECTION TWELVE. *Why would it be less acceptable to do*

this, than to sing to God the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and the Ten Commandments converted into meter?

RESPONSE. Not even this am I able to approve, since those were never dictated by the Holy Spirit for this purpose, while I leave unmentioned that that Apostolic symbol was merely written down by men, not dictated by the infallible Spirit. The Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments were given by the Spirit for a far different end, and from that proper end they ought not to be diverted by us. The Prayer is a divine exemplar, according to which we ought to form our prayers, but as matter of song it was never prescribed by God. And the Decalogue is the law received from God. In it, therefore, God addresses us, but in songs we address God. Therefore, the nature of the Decalogue is entirely subverted when it is made the matter of song.

CAVIL. *But to reduce those to rhythm and meter is not foreign to the use of scripture, where we see prayers, supplications, complaints, lamentations, historical relations of events, promises, exhortations, predictions, rebukes, threats, reproaches, indeed even the doctrines of the faith, in the Psalms as didactic sayings, reduced to the form of song.*

RESPONSE. I do not deny that the matter of the song is of a more remote kind; but the proximate matter of song, which is especially attended to in songs, is always praise, thanksgiving, and doxology. And that more remote matter was dressed in the nature of thanksgiving and doxology, before it was prescribed by the Holy Spirit to be sung in the Church; therefore, those Psalms were not prescribed to the Church inasmuch as they were petitions or supplications or entreaties, etc., but insofar as they were *Psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs*.

Again, there is another question here moved: Namely, whether those Psalms are to be sung in the Church by one only; with the others, when the song is finished, adding *Amen*? Or by the whole Church? There are those who assert the *former*, and deny the *latter*. But those Psalms of David and the other Psalmists were delivered to the master of musicians to be sung; not to him alone, but to him as the master of musicians, that is, so that they might be sung publicly by him and other members of the Church. The Disciples sang the hymn with Christ. Paul and Silas sang together; thus Moses and the sons of Israel (Exod. 15:1); it was commanded that Moses teach the people of Israel that song, which he sang in Deuteronomy 32. See Deuteronomy 31:19. Moreover, the commandment is given, not to one, but to many, indeed to all (Jam. 5:13; Pss. 96:1, 4; 68:32; 145:21; 150:2, etc.; 107:6–32). Likewise, when the Apostle commands that the Ephesians and Colossians sing Psalms, hymns, etc., he laid this duty not upon one only, but upon all, so that in this way, no doubt, they might teach and admonish one another. This also was the practice of the primitive Church, as Chrysostom testifies in Homily 36 on 1 Corinthians 14, saying, *when they were singing hymns, there was*

*a sound, as if offered from one mouth.*¹⁰ The first Christians were reciting alternately to each other, as Pliny testifies, to Christ as to God. To this question, "Who then is able to sing in Church?" thus responds the Reverend Doctor Voetius, in *Politica Ecclesiastica*, 538, 539:¹¹

We say that this was forbidden to no one, that no one was to be excluded, but rather all are to be summoned, to be trained, unto this divine office: for all with a distinct voice are able at the same time, not to pray, not to speak, but to sing, as it is taught by common sense, and common experience in joint exercises of piety, in families, on ships, in military watches, and in any other assembly whatever—testimonies from Scripture contribute to the joint singing of the people in the Church. And concerning the singing of the Ancients, Section 1 above was adduced. Where it is especially to be noted of the zeal of Socrates and Augustine, Chrysostom and Ambrose, in calling forth their people to the sacred songs; which, just how much it agrees with today's papacy, binding the divine praises to the choirs of Canons and Monks, they themselves saw. Cornelius à Lapide, in his Commentary on Sirach 50:12 [sic],¹² is compelled to approve joint singing, which sort is received in our Churches, since he relates, out of 2 Corinthians 14:10 [sic],¹³ and Jerome (Book 2 on the Epistle to Galatians),¹⁴ and Ausonius¹⁵ (in *Ephemeris*), that all Christian people formerly had sung with the Priests.

10. See Saint Chrysostom, "Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, vol. 12 (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1898) 221.

11. See Gisberti Voetii *Tractatus selecti de politica ecclesiastica*, 2.46, 47.

12. This reference is incorrect and should be to à Lapide's comments on Ecclesiasticus 50:19: "Then all the people together made haste, and fell down to the earth upon their faces, to adore the Lord their God, and to pray to the Almighty God the most High." See Cornelius Cornelii à Lapide, *Commentarii in Scripturam Sacram*, vol. 5 (J. B. Pelagaud, 1875) 1074. "Simili modo totus populus Christianus olim succinebat sacerdotibus, respondendo: Amen, teste S. Paulo 1. Cor. 14. v. 10. Unde S. Heiron. praesat. in epiſt. ad Galat. lib. 2: Ad similitudinem, inquit, caeleſtis tonitruſ Amen reboat. Et Ausonius in Ephemeride: Consona quem celebrant modulati carmina David, Et responsuris serit aera vocibus Amen."

13. This reference is in error. It should be 1 Corinthians 14:10.

14. Jerome, *Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Galatas Libri Tres*, in Migne, *Patrologiae Latinae*, 26.355B.

15. Ausonius (c. 310–395) was a Latin poet and rhetorician. *Ephemeris id est Totius Diei Negotium*, The Daily Round or The Doings of the Whole Day: "79 These prayers of a soul devout, albeit trembling with dark sense of guilt, claim for thine own before the eternal Father, thou Son of God who mayest be entreated, Saviour, God and Lord, Mind, Glory, Word and Son, Very God of Very God, Light of Light, who remainest with the eternal Father, reigning throughout

[OBJECTION ONE.] Nevertheless, some object, 1. *That in the Corinthian Church one had a Psalm (1 Corinthians 14:26), who was commanded by the Apostle to Psalm with understanding (vv. 15, 16).*

RESPONSE. By a peculiar and extraordinary gift some were psalming, even in an unknown tongue; but Paul wished that rather those would psalm with understanding, who had been furnished with this gift. But that extraordinary gift is now ceased, and the scriptural Psalms, dictated by the Holy Spirit, are to be sung by all.

OBJECTION TWO. *To psalm is to prophesy; but those prophesying ought not to speak at the same time, but two or three, so that the others might judge, and if anything be revealed to another sitting by, the first ought to be silent (1 Cor. 14:29–31).*

RESPONSE. Although to prophesy, with the word taken broadly, is any declaration whatever of spiritual men, let it be made in whatever manner, whether by praying, as in Genesis 20:7, or by singing (1 Chron. 25:1), nevertheless the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 14 takes it in the stricter sense, as it is distinguished from prayers and from Psalms (1 Cor. 11:4, 5 and 14:1).

OBJECTION THREE. *Would it not beget confusion, if all should psalm together?*

RESPONSE. Indeed, they are not able to psalm together many diverse songs without confusion: yet many are able to sing together the same Psalm or song without any confusion, as it is evident from daily experience, and proven out of 2 Chronicles 5:13.

OBJECTION FOUR. If all members of the Church ought to sing, they will be teachers; for the Apostle commands that we teach and admonish one another with Psalms, etc. (Col. 3:16).

RESPONSE. From that place it is proven that private individuals ought to teach and admonish one another from the word of Christ, and from the Psalms; and additionally to sing Psalms and hymns for mutual edification; however, he does not speak here of the public proclamation of the Word, but of the duty of private individuals.

OBJECTION FIVE. *Women are excluded from this exercise (1 Tim. 2:11, 12; 1 Cor. 14:34).*

RESPONSE. Indeed, it is not lawful for women to teach in the Church, for this would be to usurp authority (1 Tim. 2:11, 12). Neither is it lawful to set forward questions (1 Cor. 14:35); yet it is lawful to respond to things asked in the Church, as Sapphira did in Acts 5:8, and to sing together with others, as Miriam had done formerly under the law (Exod. 15:20, 21). And therefore the law did not demand such subjection; but concerning the subjection, which the law did require, the Apostle speaks (1 Cor. 14:34). Nothing appears in song, which is incompatible

all ages, whose praise the harmonious songs of tuneful David echo forth, until respondent voices rend the air with 'Amen.'" Hugh G. Evelyn White, M.A., *Ausonius with an English Translation* (London: William Heinemann, 1919) 25.

with the subjection required in the case of women, since it is a duty common to all to praise God.

OBJECTION SIX. *The multitude of the carnal and worldly and profane is excluded, with whom it is not lawful for the pious to sing.*

RESPONSE. [1.] To sing the praises of God is a moral duty, common to all, as it is to pray to God; and it is enjoined upon all (Psalm 96:1; 100:1, 2; 68:32; 107:6–32). 2. When the Psalms of David and the other psalmists had been delivered to the Master of musicians, the multitude of the congregation was admitted unto the singing of them.

REJOINDER. *Those are not able to sing with grace.*

RESPONSE. Neither are they able to pray out of faith.

REJOINDER TWO. *Many do not know what is sung.*

RESPONSE. Neither perhaps do they know what is sought in prayers. Ignorance does not exempt from duty.

OBJECTION SEVEN. *The matter of the Psalm to be sung is not accommodated to the condition of individuals.*

RESPONSE. The matter of the Psalm is always accommodated to the condition of all in such a way that it is able to be sung by all; for the benefits of God conveyed unto others ought to supply for us matter of praise and of thanksgiving. And every Psalm ought to supply to us matter of thanksgiving, and also of instruction and admonition. God is always to be praised, whatever He might do to us and others, whether good or ill.

In addition, it is doubted by some, *Whether it is now lawful publicly to psalm and to sing the Psalms of David and others, translated into rhythm and meter, by cadence and measure, with our musical notes.* The reasons of which are these.

[REASON] ONE. *Because those rhythms and tones are not from God. It was not formerly permitted to the Levites to form the notes of melody.*

RESPONSE. Those rhythms and notes are from God, not less than our vernacular translation of the Bible. If the Levites did not form them, the reason was that, together with the Psalms, to them were delivered the musical accents, and other notes necessary for singing. And since that method of singing used by the Jews is entirely unknown to us, why is it not permitted thus to translate those Psalms into rhythm and into poetical paraphrase, so that they might be sung by us? And why is it not permitted to make use of those musical notes, which are in use among us, and carry a sense of gravity, in the singing of them?

[REASON TWO] REPLY. *But such a gift is not spiritual, but merely poetic. But God has committed nothing in His worship to our corrupt nature to be formed.*

RESPONSE. It is no more a spiritual gift, to translate the Scriptures into the vernacular tongue, but it is grammatical gift. Yet all these are gifts of God, given to further the edification of the Church. And if it be not lawful to make use of

meters and notes, contrived by corrupt nature, in the worship of God, neither will it be lawful to make use of words, and phrases, or our vernacular prose, which also are contrived by corrupt men, in the worship of God.

[REASON THREE] REPLY. *But to sing according to musical rules is not any spiritual gift of Christ.*

RESPONSE. Neither is it any spiritual gift to read the Scriptures according to grammatical rules; yet it furthers edification. Therefore, since it is lawful to translate the Scriptures out of the original tongue into our own (indeed is necessary that they be thus translated, so that thus they might be able to be read by all and understood); why will it not also be lawful thus to translate spiritual songs into the meter used by us, so that they might be able to be sung by all with understanding and for edification? If those precepts that command that we read and understand the Scriptures consequently command, or suppose, that the Scriptures are to be translated into a tongue known to us; so also the precepts that command that we sing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs suppose that those Psalms are to be translated into the measure and tune of singing, so that they might be tastefully sung by us with gravity.

I do not deny that those Psalms were sung formerly, and that they had their own meters and rhythms, a great many assert, with Jerome in the *Prologue to the Chronicle of Eusebius*, and in the *preface to the book of Job*.¹⁶ Dr. Gomar is to be considered in the *Epistle Dedicatory* in his *Lyre of David*.¹⁷ That the Jews also had a method of psalming and singing, and of accentuation, by which they modulated the voice, it is manifest; and it is certain that that poetry, and the music is uncertain to us, and the greatest part is unknown, and among us not at all practiced. It is necessary, therefore, that we make use of the poetry and music, which obtains among us, or we will not be able to sing; for, as cadences and meters especially agree with a song, so also musical pitches; for it is one thing to read, another to sing. All things ought to be decided for edification, especially in the public worship of God; wherefore it is proper that the spiritual songs be reduced to the meters and modulations used by us, if only they be grave and simple, so that thus they are able to be sung by us easily and happily, for the common edification of the Church.

Nevertheless, concerning a metrical paraphrase, this is to be held, that in those rhythms and metrical paraphrases, which are employed in the public worship of God, whether in the Churches, or in families, attention is to be given, that it departs as little as possible from the pure text of Scripture, lest too large an opening be supplied to those who say that those are not the holy and divine songs, but rather his, who is the author of the paraphrases, especially if, with the text neglected, other things be mixed in, added, or certain things be removed, for the keeping of the cadence or meter and rhythm. For this reason our Scottish Church made the decision to change the

old Paraphrase,¹⁸ and to compose another, with the common and easiest meter kept, and that uniform throughout all the Psalms, which agrees most closely with the very text of Scripture, with the fewest words interjected or added for the observation of rhythm and meter, except what things the emphasis of the original text might be able to bear, or the nature of paraphrases might require for the comprehension even of coarser expressions. Neither was it put off from this so necessary work by that hindrance, which, as I hear, puts off other Churches from undertaking similar work; as, that the old paraphrase was already held in memory by a great many. For they were seeing with sufficient clarity that the common good is to be preferred to any convenience of a few. And so, that this inconvenience might also be lifted, as far as it concerns the public worship of God, or singing in an ecclesiastical assembly, it was established that each line to be sung was to be read beforehand distinctly and by a precentor, if there be one sufficiently able for that, or, even especially, by the Pastor himself.¹⁹ And thus all things had been established for the greatest furthering of the common edification of all.

And concerning melody, or the type of music here to be used, effeminate and theatrical music does not satisfy, which, as Dr. Voetius [writes] (*Politica Ecclesiastica*, 534),²⁰ is composed more for the stirring of carnal affections, than for furthering spiritual devotion; neither chromatic or figural music, which is adorned with semi-tones, prolonged and drawn out diminutions, fugues and jumps, and large intervals; for this is not sufficiently grave, nor is it able to be learned easily by all. But a simpler melody is more appropriate, of one tone; the

16. See Jerome, "The Principal Works of St. Jerome," in *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff. Second Series, Volume 6 (New York: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1892) 483, 491.

17. Franciscus Gomar, *Davidis lyra, seu Nova hebraea S. Scriptura ars poetica* ... (Lugduni Batavorum: ex officina Ioannis Maire, 1637).

18. Brown is referring to the 1650 Scottish Psalter, which began as a revision of Rouse's Psalter by the Westminster Assembly, as part of the uniformity of practice aimed for by the Solemn League and Covenant, which then was painstakingly honed and revised by the Church of Scotland.

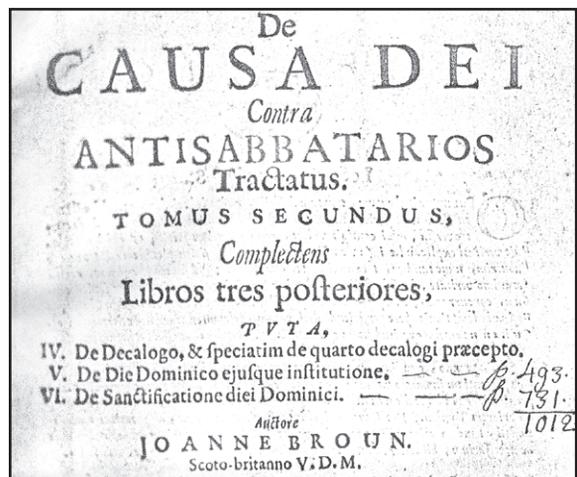
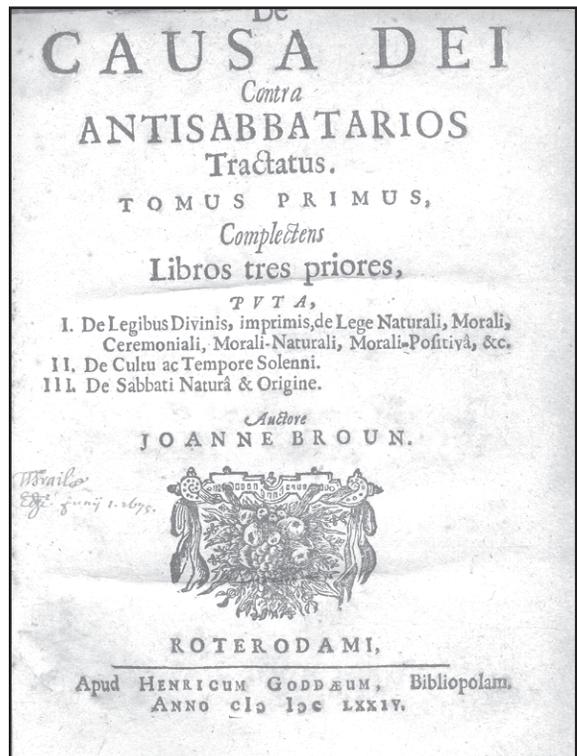
19. The Westminster *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, in the section on "Of Singing of Psalms," states, "That the whole congregation may join herein, every one that can read is to have a psalm book; and all others, not disabled by age or otherwise, are to be exhorted to learn to read. But for the present, where many in the congregation cannot read, it is convenient that the minister, or some other fit person appointed by him and the other ruling officers, do read the psalm, line by line, before the singing thereof." See "The Directory for the Publick Worship of God," in *The Confession of Faith; the Larger and Shorter Catechisms ... Directories for Publick and Family Worship ... of Publick Authority in the Church of Scotland* ... (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855; repr. Free Presbyterian Publications, 1990) 393.

20. See Gisberti Voetii *Tractatus selecti de politica ecclesiastica*, 2.43.

notes of which, according to the common musical scale, are written on five lines. Nevertheless, this melody is able to be varied in many ways, in such a way that each Psalm is able to be sung with a different and distinct melody, or voice, as they say. But, because at this point some musical knowledge would be required, and because it would be necessary that all, or at least a great many, would understand exactly all those distinct tones (otherwise confusion, or dissonance, would disturb the order and harmony), and because such knowledge of music is not everywhere, our Church also made the decision that all the Psalms be reduced to one modulation, or the same number of feet or syllables; so that thus by the common people, to whom were known those tunes, called common, with a skilled precentor going before in these (although otherwise quite ignorant in the matter of music), all might be able to be sung aptly enough and beautifully: with other paraphrases occasionally added; so that, to whom it is preferable to make use of another melody differing from the common, it is possible to exercise themselves in this. To this question, whether our Psalms (that is, the Belgic) are to be reduced to a few melodies or voices (as they say), thus responds Dr. Voetius, *Politica Ecclesiastica* 535,²¹ “Reason is not wanting, on account of which this is wished by some, indeed is called into subtle deliberation: that is, so that for this reason attention might be paid to the understanding and memory of the ruder sort, and the Psalms be sung ἐντάκτως, in a more orderly fashion.”

Concerning the method of singing by *antiphonal responses*, and concerning the use of organs in ecclesiastical singing, it is not that we would say anything, since enough concerning this matter has been said by David Calderwood in his *Altare Damascenum* (490, 491, etc.),²² and by Dr. Voetius, *Politica Ecclesiastica* (537, etc., and in 3:544),²³ where he made a full disputation concerning *instrumental singing in sacred things*, and by many things proves that to be unlawful, and confutes the contrary arguments. And thus enough is said concerning ecclesiastical singing.

STEVEN DILDAY ■



JOHN BROWN OF WAMPHRAY (c.1610–1679). Joanne Broun, *De Causa Dei Contra AntiSabbatarios Tractatus*, 2 volumes (Roterodami: Apud Henricum Goddaeum, Bibliopolam. Anno [1674; 1676]). Reproduction of the title page from the first volume and detail from the title page of the second volume. Reproduced with permission of the Reverend Sherman Isbell. Brown's work is very rare and has not been reproduced on microfilm in any collection as far as is known to the editor. We extend our thanks to Mr. Isbell for making scans of his copy available for this translation of Brown's thoughts on psalmody.

21. See *Gisberti Voetii Tractatus selecti de politica ecclesiastica*, 2.44. By Belgic Psalms, Voetius means the metrical Psalter of Petrus Dathenus, a Dutch translation of the Genevan Psalter.

22. David Calderwood, *Altare Damascenum ceu politia Ecclesiae Anglicanae obrusa Ecclesiae Scoticanæ* (1623).

23. See *Gisberti Voetii Tractatus selecti de politica ecclesiastica*, 2.44–45, 51.