

## IN TRANSLATIÖNE

### The Preface to the Constance Hymnbook by Joannem Zwick

#### INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

Dr. Hughes Oliphant Old inspired this translation of the *Constance Hymnbook* preface when he referred to the *Hymnbook* as one of the most important liturgical documents of the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> A cursory glance through various texts on music and theology confirmed Dr. Old's thought, and yet I could not discover any significant study of the work in English. Markus Jenny's comprehensive study in German remains the best inquiry to date, and my introduction relies heavily on his work.<sup>2</sup> It is followed by the first English translation of the *Constance Hymnbook* preface, Johannes Zwick's beautifully crafted and deft defense of congregational singing. I have attempted to preserve the special flavor of the original in my translation. Zwick's question and answer format relies on biblical, historical, and logical arguments to counter various objections

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1. From the author's conversation with Dr. Hughes Oliphant Old at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Old in Trenton, NJ, November 25, 2009. Dr. Old has also written, "The *Constance Hymn Book* of 1540 deserves to be recognized as one of the most significant monuments in the history of Reformed worship." Old, *Worship: Reformed*, 44.

2. Jenny, *Geschichte des deutschschweizerischen evangelischen Gesangbuches*, 77–139.

3. The rich musical heritage of the Moravians is well known and their influence on the music of the Reformation merits further study. Of particular interest is the presence of Michael Weisse at Luther's side beginning in 1522.

4. Thomas Blarer was a student in Wittenberg from 1520–1523. Information on Blarer and Zwick is drawn from *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2nd ed. s.v. "Blarer", and s.v. "Zwick."

5. Doctor of both Canon and Civil Law

6. Walter Blankenburg writes, "Zwick's authority was still being invoked at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century when congregational singing was introduced in Zurich itself." "Church Music in Reformed Europe," *Protestant Church Music: A History* (New York: Norton, 1974), 513.

7. Though the promotion of unity is not a stated goal of the *Hymnbook*, it is consistent with Blarer's views in general. Bruce Gordon in *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester UP, 2002), 292–293, writes of Blarer's

that were raised against the inclusion of singing in corporate worship. Zwick also argues that our worship should not be limited to exclusive psalmody, and the *Constance Hymnbook* is a classical model for inclusive psalmody.

#### HISTORY AND CONTEXT

It is fitting that such a significant hymnbook was conceived in Constance, the site where Jan Hus, the founder of what was to become the Moravian church, was martyred on July 6 of 1415.<sup>3</sup> Its primary editors, cousins Ambrosius Blarer and Johannes Zwick, were born in Constance and became leading reformers in that city until its re-Catholicization by Spanish forces in 1548.

Ambrosius Blarer (1492–1562) studied theology in Tübingen but was perhaps most influenced by his brother Thomas and his friend Philip Melancthon. Through them Luther's teachings came to Ambrosius and led to his support of the Reformation. He left the Alpirsbach Abbey on July 5, 1522 and that same year penned the first known Protestant song, "Wies Gott gefällt, so gefällt mir auch." Ambrosius began preaching in Constance in 1525, and the city's fall sent him into exile in Switzerland. He died a broken hearted man in Winterthur in 1562.<sup>4</sup>

Johannes Zwick (1496–1542) was ordained in 1518 and became Doctor *utriusque iuris*<sup>5</sup> in 1520, returning to Constance in 1525. Zwick left Constance for Switzerland in 1542 to minister in the community of Bischofszell which had recently lost its pastor to plague. Before the end of the year his life was cut short by the same disease. Zwick married, but the marriage did not result in children. Despite this, he often focused his ministry on children and their education, and his catechetical hymns are exemplary.

The *Constance Hymnbook*, the product of Zwick and Blarer's collaboration, was printed in Zurich by Christoph Froschauer. Its presence in that city may well have eased the eventual adoption of hymn singing there in 1598.<sup>6</sup> The 1540 edition likely represents a third printing with earlier editions appearing in 1533/34 and 1537. Subsequent editions continued to appear through 1565.

#### CONTENTS AND INFLUENCE

The Reformation in Constance was heavily influenced by the ideas of the Zurich reformers but was by no means ruled by them. Though the Constance reformers did away with instrumental music, they shared Luther's love of congregational singing and adopted it in their churches. Their purpose in compiling the *Constance Hymnbook* was to promote unity in the increasingly fractured Church by providing an inclusive hymnbook drawing on the latest and best Protestant church songs, regardless of the doctrinal leanings of their authors.<sup>7</sup> Among the 34

names listed in the index are Huldreich Zwingli, Johannes Agricola, Justus Jonas, Ludwig Hetzer, Leo Jud, Martin Luther and Wolfgang Capito, representing Lutheran, Zwinglian and Anabaptist teaching.<sup>8</sup>

The format of the *Constance Hymnbook* is also significant; it was the first hymnbook to contain an alphabetical index of incipits and a list of authors. Also included under each song title are the author's initials. Such considerations were immediately imitated and are now standard practice.

The *Hymnbook's* 150 songs are divided into three sections according to the Pauline trio given in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs). It begins with the Psalter which presents 67 settings of 55 psalms or roughly one for each Sunday of the year. The second section includes 60 hymns to be used in the church service "before or after the sermon,"<sup>9</sup> and the third contains 23 hymns that are "thoroughly Christian and modeled after Scripture but not used in the church."<sup>10</sup> The editors' intent was to replace "wanton and shameful worldly songs"<sup>11</sup> with Christian alternatives, a vision worthy of our emulation. Zwick and Blarer worked as both contributors and compilers, providing three of 67 settings in the Psalter and 23 of 83 texts in the subsequent two sections.

Zwick's exceptional preface is best understood in light of Zwingli's views on music as expressed in articles 44–46 of his *Auslegen und Gründe der Schlußreden* of 1523<sup>12</sup> and in light of Martin Bucer's view that the contents of the Church's worship should be drawn directly from Scripture. The preface was soon widely acknowledged and was so well received that Jakob Dachser, in his own hymnal preface of 1538, wrote that he found it unnecessary to counter various objections that could be raised against congregational singing, deferring instead to Zwick's arguments as presented in the *Constance Hymnbook*.<sup>13</sup>

This translation represents the fulfillment of Dr. Old's desire to make the text readily available to the English reader. I am indebted not only to Dr. Old for his generosity and guidance but also to my friend, mentor and teacher Dr. Samuel Hsu whose encouragement and efforts on my behalf know no bounds. These are true scholars and examples of lives lived for God's glory. Mr. Kile Smith, composer and former curator of the Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music in the Free Library of Philadelphia; my wife Kristen Schäfli; and my father Kurt Schäfli played indispensable editorial roles. This work would not have been possible without the beautiful *Constance Hymnbook* facsimile published by the Zwingli Verlag in 1946. My



prayer is that Zwick's words, penned well over four hundred years ago, would once again shape the contents, purpose and practice of music in the worship of the church.

EPHRAIM SCHÄFLI (Philadelphia, Pa., June, 2011) ■

refusal to firmly articulate his theology. This frustrated more doctrinally precise theologians such as Luther. Furthermore, at the end of his preface Zwick bemoans the fracturing of the church that results from bad doctrine adopted for lack of better judgment.

8. The musicians of the *Constance Hymnbook* should not be overlooked and Benedict Ducis, Sixt Dietrich, Matthias Greiter, Hans Sachs and Paul Speratus are numbered among them.

9. *Hienach volgē die geistlichen Gsang und Christlichen lieder/ deren etliche in der kirchen vor oder nach den predigen/etliche aber allein usserhalb an statt der üppigen und schandlichen wältliedern gesungen werdend.* Zwick, *Nüw gsangbüchle*, CX.

10. *Hienach volgēd etliche gantz Christliche unnd gschriftmässige gsang/welche doch in der kirchen nit gebrucht werdend.* *ibid.* CCXIII.

11. *üppigen und schandlichen wältliedern* *ibid.* CX.

12. Cf. Cherbuliez "Zwingli, Zwick und der Kirchengesang."

13. Vischer, "Die erste Auflage," 316.

**Worred zu beschirm bund  
erhaltung des ordenlichen  
Kirchensangs. Durch  
Joannem Zwick.**

**W**ie vil daran gelägen das man  
in allerley sachen allweg mit rechtem vns  
derscheid richte vñ vzeile/noch sind vunt  
derwänig die sich desß stoffen wöllnd.

Nie dē gfang ists ye ouch also/an dem  
sich vil stoffend / vñnd gar nach ein yeder vff sin eigne wyß.  
Nun gilt aber nit sagen: Der wil dē/ergo es ist recht. Der  
ander wil nit/ergo es ist vnrecht. Sunder also gilt sagē:  
Was nit wider Gott ist/das ist recht: Was wider Gott/dē  
ist vnrecht / Damit wir also ouch nichts wöllnd vfferden/  
dann was vnser Gott wil im himel.

So ist nun die frag/Ob gfang vnder dem Christenlichen **Frag.**  
volck wider Gott sye oder nit. Dahär dann kunlich wir/  
ob es im bruch sin möge oder nit. Etlich sagend/Singenn  
sey deßhalb wider Gott: Dañ Christus hats nienen befol-  
hen noch potten/darum mögs auch nit sein. Antwort. Zum  
ersten/Als wenig Christus singen potten hat/als wenig hat **Gfang wes**  
ers auch verbotten/Darumb gilt die red nichts/vñnd blybt **der gbotten**  
singen ein frey ding / das syn mag oder nit / ye nach dem es **noch vers**  
Gott zū lob dienet/vñ den menschen mag nüt vñ güt sin. **botten.**  
Also gilt die red auch nichts/Christus hat nit gfang/Pfaffen  
söllend wyber haben/darumb mögend sy keine haben. Item  
er hat nit gfang/Sond vñd rouffend kind/darumb mag man  
kind nit rouffen/ze. Wo nun ein ding in der gschrifft nit  
wir mit namen potten noch verbottē/so blybt es fry. Was  
aber fry ist/dē sol man nach glouben vñd liebe richten. Mag  
dann singen by einer gmeynd darzū dienen/so mag man sin-  
gen: Wo nit/so mag mans vnderlassen.

Zum anderen/Wiewol die gschrifft nit gebüt vñnd sagt:  
Sond hin jr sollend vñd müßend singen/noch so hale sy vil **Gfang dem**  
güter exempel für vñd vermanungē von gutem gläubigem **alten testas**  
gfang. Moses vñd die kinder Israel sungend dem Herren **ments.**  
ein lied do er sy mit runder vñnd krafft erlöst hatt vñd Egv- **Exod. 15.**  
pten/Solts dann yez wider Gott sin im zū lob vñnd danck  
ein gfang singen/so wir mer dan auß einer gfencknuß erlöst  
sind? Sy sungend ein lied dem Herren/eins vmb das ander

A U

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# Preface for the Protection

## & Preservation of Orderly Church Singing

By Joannem Zwick

How essential it is that we judge with discernment in all things, and yet there are remarkably few who want to do this for themselves.

It is the same with singing which is a stumbling block for many because each one goes his own way. Now it is not valid to say, "One man wants this, so it is right. Another does not want it, so it is wrong." Instead we should say, "What is not against God is right. What is against God is wrong." By this we desire nothing other on earth than what our God wants in heaven.

The question then is whether singing among Christians is against God or not; the answer will clarify whether it may be used or not. Some say that it is against God because Christ has nowhere commanded or forbidden it; therefore it must not be used. Answer: First, though Christ did not command singing, he also did not forbid it. So the argument is invalid, and singing remains a free thing that may or may not be practiced depending on whether or not it serves for God's praise and is useful and valuable to man. Likewise, the argument that clergy should not have wives because Christ did not say that they should is invalid. He also did not say, "Go and baptize children." Is it therefore forbidden to baptize them? When Scripture neither commands nor forbids something by name, then it remains a free matter. That which is free should be guided by faith and love. Does singing in a church serve this purpose? Then sing. If it does not, then let it go.

Question.

Singing is neither commanded nor forbidden.<sup>†</sup>

Furthermore, although Scripture does not command it and say, "Go hither, thou shalt and must sing," it contains many good examples of and admonitions for good, faithful singing. Moses and the children of Israel sang a song to the Lord after he rescued them with miracles and power from out of Egypt. And should it now be against God to sing to him a song of praise and thanks, though we are freed from more than captivity? One after another they sang a song to the Lord

Singing in the Old Testament. Exodus 15.

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<sup>†</sup>This argument is strikingly Lutheran in its framing.

## Vorred.

- Num. 21.** Sy dem brunnen / den Inen Gott gab / Solt man dann nit ouch vnder dem volck / von dem läbendigen brunnen / der Christus ist / singen mögen / vñ solts wider Gott sin? Also möcht ouch nach der lenge vom gsang Davids / Salomons vñd anderer angezeigt werdē. Spricht yemants / Das sind exempel des alten testaments / die geltend im nütwert nit. Wir sind ein geistlichs volck / vñd söllend im geist Gott singen. Antwort. Wir soltend ouch so geleert sin vom heiligen geist in dem herzen / das wir des predigens ouch nichts dörffend. Wo sind aber die selbigen geistlichen? Darzū volget gar nit / das ein geistlich volck nit mit vfferlichen dingen vmbgang / vñd nichts lyblichs thūye. Es solt wol gleych so wenig reden / diewyl es so wol ein lyblich ding ist / arhem vñd stimm hat / als singen. Item solten vil frömer geistlicher Juden nit haben singen dörffen vñd Gott loben? oder söltend sy nit geistlich hon sin mögen / darumb das sy gungen herrtendē. Es sind ouch die exempel zū gütem gschriben / das ander her nach gleycherweys gegen Gott thūn mögind / vñd in vmb sine gütharen lobē. Es kan ye nit wider Gott vñ vngestlich sin / Gott loben / vñd einem gütem exempel nachschlahenn. Was Gott nit loblich / vñ dem nächsten nit nütlich / dē sind werck des alten fleischlichen menschen / es sye dencken / reden oder singen. Vñd hinwider / was Gott zū lob / vñ dem nächsten zū gütem dienet / das ist des nütwen geistlichen mensche / es seye dencken / reden oder ouch singen. Desgleychē habend die Apostel selbs zū singen vermant. Den Ephesiern befehle
- Ephes. 5.** S. Paulus / das sy vndereinanderen / vonn lobgsangen vñd geistlichen liedern redind. Söllend sy darvon reden / so mögend sies ouch singen. Dann das sind lobgsang vñd geistliche lieder / die von Gottes lob / vñd geistlichen dingē lutend.
- Ynred.** Spricht yemants / er rede vom singen im herzen. Antwort. Es volgt nit / Man sol im herzen vñ vom herzē singen / darumb ist mit der stimm vñd Worten verbottē: als wenig ouch volget / Man sol im geist vñ warheit bätten / darūm sol man nit mit Worten bätten. Wār aber recht vrtailen wil / der müß bekennen / was man in dem herzen dencken mag das nit wider Gott / das ist auch nit wider Gott / so mans redt oder singt. Darūm wie S. Paulus vom bätten leert / dē mit dem athem gschicht / das sin mög / so ver der verstand darby syez. Gleych also redt er ouch vom singen / nit das im herzen allein / sunder mit dem athem gschicht. S. Jacob / do er vermanen wil / wann es vffrecht vñd wol nach Gott zūgang / das man jm mit fröuden danck sag / spricht er: Hat yemande übels / der bärte: Ist yemād güts müts / der singe Psalmen.
- Item

by the well that God gave them. Should we not also desire singing among the people of the living well that is Christ? And can this be against God? One may also point to the lengths of the songs of David, Solomon, and others. Someone may say, "These are examples out of the Old Testament and are not valid in the New. We are a spiritual people and should sing to God in spirit." Answer: We should also be so thoroughly instructed by the Holy Spirit in our hearts that we have no need of preaching. But where are these holy people? Furthermore, it does not follow that a spiritual people has no interaction with external things or that it does nothing physical. Presumably this people would also speak little because speaking is a physical thing and has breath and voice like singing. Besides, should those many pious and spiritual Jews have been forbidden to praise God and to sing? Should they not have desired the uplifted spiritual mind which singing provides? These examples are recorded for the benefit of others, so that they may do the same and praise God for his blessings. It cannot be unspiritual and against God to praise Him and to imitate a good example. What is not for God's praise and profitable to one's neighbor, these are works of the old fleshly man, whether in thinking, speaking, or singing. On the other hand, what serves for God's praise and benefits one's neighbor is of the new spiritual man, whether in thought, speech, or song. Likewise, the Apostles themselves encouraged singing. St. Paul commands the Ephesians to speak to one another in songs of praise and spiritual songs. If they should speak them, they could also sing them, for these are songs of praise and spiritual songs that speak of God's praise and of spiritual things. Someone may say that Paul speaks of singing in the heart. Answer: We should sing in the heart and from the heart, but it does not follow that it is therefore forbidden to sing with the voice and with words just as it does not follow that since one should pray in spirit and in truth, therefore one should not pray with words. He who would judge properly must affirm that whatever one may ponder in the heart that is not against God is also not against God when it is spoken or sung. That is why St. Paul teaches as he does of praying aloud—that it is permitted as long as the mind is present. It is the same then when he speaks of singing, not only that which is in the heart but that which is with breath. St. James, when he admonished that one who is in communion with God should thank him with joy writes, "Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone among you cheerful? Let him sing Psalms."

Numbers 21.

Objection.

A spiritual people sings as well.

Example.

Ephesians 5.

Objection.

I. Corinthians 14.

James 5.

## Vorred.

Item do die Christen übel verklagt wurden/ als soltends Plinius So  
schädlich litz sein/ vnd deshalb täglich on zal vmb:acht wur cunvus.  
dend/entschuldiger sy Plinius der ander gegen dem Keyser  
Traiano/ vnd vnder anderem spricht er / das iren bruch sye/  
morgen vor tag / item Gott Christo ein lobgsang zefingen.  
Welches frylich nit allein mit dencken vund reden/ sunder  
mit rechtem singen zügangen ist. Sölte aber sölich gfang  
dem Herzen Christo zü lob vnnnd eer nit ein geistlich gfang/  
ob soltend die Christen vmb des gfangs willen nit ein geist-  
lich volck gewesen syn?

Spricht man widerumb/ Ja das hertz ist aber nit allweg **Gfang on**  
darbey. Antwort. Noch volget nit das gfang gemeinlich **hertz.**  
wider Gott sye/ vnd in der gemeind nit möge gehalten wer-  
den. Dann sunst müßt man gemein bätt/predig vnd anders  
ouch abthün/ vñ müßt Christus vmb des Judas hertz wil-  
len/ouch das Nachmal nit ghalten haben. Ist jm aber also  
daß das gfang nichts sol/ wann das hertz nit darby ist/ so vol-  
get/wann das hertz darby ist/daß gfang nüt vnd güt ist.

So spricht man dann es sye aber glych gnüg am hertzen/  
man dörfte der stimm nichts darzü. Antwort. Wie man nit **Hertz on**  
recht kan mit worten bätten on das hertz/also kan man ouch **gfang.**  
nit recht singen mit der stimm on das hertz. Hinwider / wie  
man bätten kan im hertzen on wort/ also kan man ouch sin-  
gen im hertzen on stimm. Die beide sind war/ Noch volget  
aber nit/das man darüm nit möge mit worten bätten/ oder  
mit der stimm singen. Sunder wie das hertz sin übung hat zü  
gütem oder bösem innerlich / also habend ouch wort vnnnd  
stimm jr übung vfferlich/ vñ das ouch zü gütem oder bösem.  
Wann nun hertz/wort vnd stimm sich miteinander übend ge-  
gen Gott / vnnnd der mensch vfferlich vnnnd innerlich gegen  
Gott redt oder singt/ der bättet vñ singt vff die besten wyß.  
Item wort vnd stimm komend dem hertze wol in vil wäg. Es  
machers inb:ünstiger/ vnd das es sin selbs nit bald vergift.  
Es woeret darby vil anderen fantishen vñ züfällen. Vnd sol  
ein mensch an der predig wol ein halb stund anderen dingen  
nachsinnen/ spräche es dem prediger die wort nach/ oder dz  
es by einē yeden güten puncten Amen sagte/es geschähe jm  
vil minder. Dan wort vñ stimm habend jr art/würckung vnd  
eigenschafft/ ja jr läben so wol als das hertz/ es sye in geist-  
lichen oder fleischlichē dingen. Item wiewol stimm vnd wort  
das hertz nit machend/ noch so reizends vnd bewegeds das  
hertz zü gütem ob bösem/ye nach dē sy güt od böß sind. Eie-  
ner der wol redē kan/ bewegt einen dz er ganz einer anderen  
meinung wirt dann er vohin was. Böse wort reizend den

Furthermore, as Christians were being wickedly accused of being harmful people and therefore daily murdered beyond number, Pliny the Younger.<sup>†</sup> Pliny the Younger also charged them before Emperor Trajan, and, among other things, he said that their custom was to sing to their God Christ a song of praise at dawn. Obviously this does not refer to thinking and speaking alone but concerns real singing. Can such singing – which praises and honors the heart of Christ—be unspiritual? Were those Christians unspiritual because of it?

Someone may respond by saying, “Yes, but the heart is not always present.” Answer: Still, it does not follow that singing in general is against God and is not to be practiced in the congregation, for then one would also have to do away with corporate prayer and preaching, among other things. Christ too, because of Judas’s heart, should not have held the Last Supper. If, for the one who objects, singing accomplishes nothing when the heart is not present, then it is logical that when the heart is present, singing is useful and good.

He then says, “Still, it is enough to sing in the heart; one need not add the voice.” Answer: Just as one cannot properly pray with words but without the heart, one cannot properly sing with the voice but without the heart. On the other hand, if one can pray in the heart without words one can also sing in the heart without voice. Both are true, and yet it does not follow that one should neither pray with words nor sing with the voice. However, just as the heart has its internal tendency to goodness or wickedness, so words and voice have their external tendencies to goodness or wickedness. Now, when heart, word, and voice are practiced together toward God, and man, whether externally or internally, speaks or sings to God, he prays and sings in the best way. Furthermore, words and voice benefit the heart in many ways. They make it more fervent so that it does not soon forget itself and thereby ward off many other fantasies and hazards. During a sermon, one may think about other things for a good half hour. It would have been much better for that person to repeat every word or to say “Amen” after every good point because words and voice have their ways, effects, and means—yes, their life—as does the heart, whether in spiritual or fleshly things. Though words and voice do not make the heart, still they entice and move it to goodness or wickedness depending on whether it is good or wicked. A good speaker moves a man so that he is persuaded of a completely different position than he had to start with. Wicked words provoke a man

<sup>†</sup> Cf. Pliny, Book 10, Letter 96; also Eusebius, *Church History*, NPNF2 1.165.

## Vorred.

menschen das er vor korn mit weisheit woz er thut. Trumen vnd pffissen gebend das hertz nit in dē kriegē oder tangē/sy reizend aber das hertz zu dem dz vorhin darin steckt. Nalt wasser macht den kalch nit hiezig/es trybt im aber die hiez herfür. Wasserbad macht rüdig/ spricht man / vñ machet doch das wasser die rud nit/es trybt aber die rud herfür. Den man vñ schlauff vñ froect/dem gibt man das läben nit/man ermunde ret in aber dz er nit ligt wie ein fuler schelm. Ein böß/fleischlich/vnrein gfang/macht das hertz nit von nürwē fleischlich vnd vnrein/aber es hilfft dem bösen fleisch vñ der vnreinigkeit herfür. Ein böß falsch geistlich vñnd abgöttisch gfang macht nit abgöttery/vnd ein falsch andächtig hertz von nürwem/es beruegt aber darzu/vñ hilfft im heruß zu dem dazü es sunst von natur geneigt ist. Ja wañ man bösen schädlichen wercken vnd gfangen glich wol zülegt/ das sy ein böß hertz machind/ists dannoch nit übel geredt. Dañ es machet ein recht war empfinden vñ wüssen des bösen des man vorhin nie gwar genommen hatt. Es ligt der wohn im faßz vff der hepff vnd ist dannoch luter. Wañ man aber die hepff rürt/ so wirts alles trüb. Darum die Götlich gschafft allenthalb vermanet/ sich vor falscher leer vnd exempel zehüten/ damit man dardurch nit verfürd werd ic. Wie nun böse wort vnd gfang schädlich sind/ zum bösen reizend vñ vsach gebend/ also ists hinwider/das gute wort vñnd gfang nützlich sind/ zu gutem reizend vñ vsach gebend. Wie man aber warlich nit sagen kan noch sol das man nit singen ob reden köñ von Götlichen dingen im hertzen/ouch on alle vfferliche stimm vñnd wort: also kan man ouch vnd solz nit sagen/ das man darumb mit worten vñnd gfang nit möge oder künde Gott loben vñnd priesen ic. Nun aber sprächend etlich / Wanns gfang schon hez gut sye vñnd recht brucht werde/ so mögs doch bald wider böß vñ misbruch werden. Antwort. Das ist wol mütlich/aber vmb des misbruchs willen sol darumb der rechte bruch nit verworffen werden. Silber vñnd gold/wohn vñnd korn wirdt ouch misbrucht/solt man darumb nit mütigen/sähen vnd pflanzet Das predigämpt wirt ouch in ein grossen misbruch kōmen mögen / solt man darumb hez vom predigen lassen? Vnd wiewol singen nit so norwendig noch gebortē ist/als predigen/noch so hats ouch/so es recht bschicht/ Gottes lob vñ des nächsten besserung so wol als andere vfferliche ding/vñnd ist so wol ein hertzliche vermanung/als sunst mit worten geschehen mag. Vnd solte vorgelgfang Gottes lob syn mögen/vñ nit der Christen gfang? Das aber etlich sorgen möchtē/das hezige gfang vff die Häpftichen

Gegen  
würff.  
Sorg des  
misbruchs.

so that, on account of anger, he knows not what he does. Drumming and whistling do not give the heart over to war or dancing, but they inflame the heart to that which was already within it. Cold water does not make lime sulfurous but it drives the sulfur forth. Someone might say that a water bath makes a person dirty. However, the water does not make the dirt; it simply drives the dirt forth. One who wakes a man from sleep has not given that man life, but he encourages him not to lie there like a lazy wretch. Wicked, fleshly, and unclean singing does not make the heart fleshly and unclean again, but it does help bring the wicked flesh and uncleanness forth. A wicked, unspiritual, and idolatrous singing does not recreate idols and a falsely reverent heart, but it helps bring them forth and moves the heart toward that to which it is naturally inclined. It is often true that wicked and detrimental works and singing make a wicked heart. These create a true sensitivity toward and knowledge of wickedness, the depth of which one could not fathom before. Wine lies on the yeast in a barrel, and yet it remains pure. But if one stirs the yeast, then everything becomes cloudy. That is why the Holy Scriptures constantly admonish us to guard ourselves from false teaching and examples and not to be led astray by them. Just as wicked words and singing are harmful and entice towards and give cause to wickedness, so it is equally true that good words and singing are useful and entice towards and give cause to good. One cannot truthfully say, nor should one say, that godly things cannot be sung or spoken of in the heart even without any external voice or words. Likewise, one cannot say, nor should one say, that one cannot and may not therefore praise and bless God with words and singing. Now some may say, “Even if singing is good and used correctly, it may quickly be misused and turned to wickedness.” Answer: That is always possible, but proper use should not be discarded for the sake of the possibility of misuse. Silver and gold, wine and corn, are also misused. Should one therefore not mint coins or sow or plant? The office of preaching may also fall into great misuse. Should one therefore abstain from preaching? Though singing is not as necessary as preaching and also not commanded, when done in a right manner it effects God’s praise and betters one’s neighbor—as do other such things. It is at the same time as genial an exhortation as words can be. Should a bird’s singing be for God’s praise and not the singing of the Christian? The worries of some that the current singing is in the

Rebuttal.

Fear of misuse.

## Vorred.

Bäpftischen art zickind/kan auch nit warlich gfangt werden. **D**is gfang  
 Dañ man leert nit Welſch oder Latinisch ſingen vnder den dem bapſt  
 Tütſchen/ vñ das woed der ſingt noch der zühör: / das gfang ſchen vñ  
 verſtand/ vñ das niemants könd Amen darzü ſagen/ Item glich.  
 Dz man vil gnad vñ ablaß oder groſſen verdiens darby ver  
 künde/ Item das allein grohecht lät ſingen ſöllind/ vñnd das  
 vß dem geſang ein fleiſchlicher luſt vñ orenweid werde/ das  
 man die gurgel mit gutem ſtarckem roeyn ſalben müſſe/ das  
 ſich in der kirchen mancherley ſtimmen hoch vñ nider/ klein  
 vñ groß durch einanderen reimen müſſind. Vñd voruß hats  
 die meinung nit das die gfang abgöttiſch ſy gind/ vñnd das  
 ein hantierung darauß werde/ oder einer für den andern vñ  
 den taglon ſinge.

Etlich laſſend ſölichs güt vñnd waar ſyn/ das man mög **A**llein Pſal  
 ſingen/ vñnd das es nit wider Gott ſye / habend aber ander men ſingen.  
 gegenwörff/ als / das man nichts ſingen ſölke dann allein  
 Pſalmen/ oder was ſunſt nach dem büchſtaben in der Bibel  
 geſchriben ſtand. Die ſelbigen habend nit ein böſe meinung/  
 es fällt inē aber am rechten vrtailen vñ vnderſcheiden. Das  
 man vff geſchriſt dringt/ vñb viler willen die ſy mißbrucht  
 hand/ vñ hinfür mißbruchē möchten/ iſt recht vñ wol thon/  
 doch das man darnābend die gaaben des heiligen geiſts die  
 er vff mancherley wyß wärrt/ nit gar verwerffe/ vñd dz man  
 allweg vil mee vff den inhalt vñ verſtand der geſchriſt trins  
 ge/ dann vff die wort. Es müſſend alle menſchen des ver  
 ſtands gfangner ſin/ gleert vñ vngleert / der büchſtab aber  
 vñ die wort ſind fry. Wz nun dem verſtand glich iſt/ das iſt  
 ouch geſchriſt/ wie vngleich die wort: Was dem verſtand  
 vnglich iſt/ das iſt wider geſchriſt/ wie glich die wort ſin mö  
 gend/ vñd wañ ſy ſchon ytel guldin wärind. Darumb lieſt **Tertull. in**  
 ſend etlich der alten Chriſten vff ire gaſtmäler/ die ſy mit den **Apol. ca. 39**  
 armen hieltē/ nit allein vß der geſchriſt ſingen/ ſunder was  
 einer ouch ſunſt eigens kund/ doch frylich nichts das wider  
 Gott vñ den verſtand der heiligen geſchriſt wāre. Ander **Das gfang**  
 ſtoſſend ſich daran das die Pſalmen vñ andere gfang gern **gerymet.**  
 met ſind/ Denen iſts ouch allein vñb die wort zethūn. **Ge**  
 denckend darby nit/ dz/ wie man ein ding zu ein gütē grunde  
 lichen verſtand bringē mag das es güt iſt/ doch allweg/ das  
 dem verſtand nāts abgang. Die wort ſind der glöubigen/  
 vñnd nit die glöubigen der wortē/ wie Chriſtus ouch von **Marc. 2.**  
 dem Sabbath ſagt/ vñd **Sant Paulus / Es ſye alles vnſer/ 1. Cor 3.**  
 wir aber ſhend Chriſti/ allein das es alles dem glauben vñd  
 der liebe ānlich ſye/ welchs der verſtand iſt der ganzen göt  
 lichen geſchriſt. Darnach ergerend ſich etlich daran/ das die  
 A iij

Papist manner are unfounded. We do not teach singing in French or Latin among Germans because then neither he who sings nor he who listens understands the song, and no one can say Amen to it. We also do not declare mercy and indulgence or great merit through singing. Furthermore, we reject that only important people should sing, or that singing will become a fleshly pleasure and ear pleaser, or that one must first anoint the throat with good strong wine, or that in the church all manner of voices, high and low, small and great, must rhyme together. In any case, we do not begin with the assumption that singing is idolatrous, or becomes a trade to be plied, or that one sings for another for his day's wages.

This singing is different from that of the Papists.

Many affirm this truth—that one may sing and it is not against God—but they have other objections, such as that one should sing nothing but Psalms or whatever else is spelled out in the Bible. They do not have a wicked view but are lacking proper judgment and discernment. To insist on Scripture, word for word, because of the many who have misused it and desire to misuse it is to do well and right, but one should not at the same time discard the gifts of the Holy Spirit which the Spirit works in so many ways. One must always insist much more on the meaning and understanding of the Scriptures than on the words. All men are prisoners of their own understanding, both the erudite and the ignorant, but the letter and the word are free. Therefore, that which is approved by reason is also Scripture however different the words may be. What is not approved by reason is contrary to Scripture however exact the words may be and even if they are already vainly gilt. That is why, in their banquets that they held with the poor, many of the old Christians allowed not only the singing of Scripture but also of songs which they brought themselves; though, to be sure, they allowed nothing that would be against God or the understanding of the Holy Scriptures. Others stumble on the fact that the Psalms and other songs are rhymed. They are also concerned solely with the words. They do not consider that if one can bring a thing to a good and thorough understanding, then it is good, although in any case nothing can be accepted apart from a proper understanding of Scripture. The words belong to the believer and not the believer to the words, as Christ also said of the Sabbath. St. Paul wrote, "It is all ours, but we are Christ's." Only let everything be according to faith and love, the understanding of which is the entirety of the Holy Scriptures. And still some are vexed

Exclusive Psalmody.

Tertullian in *Apologeticus pro Christianis* Ch. 39.<sup>†</sup>

On rhymed singing.

Mark 2.

I. Corinthians 3.

<sup>†</sup> Cf. *Apologeticus*, ed. John E. B. Mayor, trans. Alex Souter (Cambridge: 1917) 115.

## Vorred.

Vnzucht  
des wältli-  
che gfangs.

Ephes. 5.

Psalmz hin vñ her vff der gassen vnd in heüßern nit mit ernst vnd zucht gesungen werden. Die habend nit vnrecht dz inen der mißbruch übel gfallt. Dann stude vnzucht vnd grobheyt übel in zytlichen dingen / so stude ouch vil übler in göttlichen dingen. Vnd es sind zwar grob lüt gnüg/nit allein die göttliche gfang mit vnzucht bruchend/sonder die für söliche vil äppiger lieder vnd gfang in täglicher übüg habend. Vñ als voll das Papstum ist falsch geistlicher/ abgöttischer/ eygenütziger vñnd vnuerstendiger gfang / als voll ist ouch die wält geistloser/lychtfertiger/vnreiner vnd schädlicher lieder/in denen Gott vnd der nächst geschender wirt. Darum ouch die guten Göttlichen gfang der Psalmen vnd anderer lieder dester minder zü verwerffen sind/ ob durch söliche der anderen etwas minder vurdind. Darumb vermanet ouch S. Paulus die Ephesier/wie sy sich der schamperen wort söltend abthün/narrenthädig vnd leichtfertiger schumpff/ also soltēd sy sich frylich auch abthün d schantlichen wältlieder/die sich nit rymēd zü Gottes lob/vñ eer des heilge gloubēs.

Summa des alles ist die / das gfang nit müß sin von nöten/dañ es ist nit gebotten : das gfang aber mag syn/ dan es ist nit verbotten. Item das der bruch des gfangs recht mag syn/die mißbrütich sind nimmer recht. Saff gloubige menschen alle vfferliche ding zü Gottes lob/ jrer vñnd des nächsten besserung bruchen vnd richten mögend/ vñnd sind danoch geistlich lüt. Das falsche gfang zü beyden seytē des Papstthums vñnd der welt durch verbesserung abgangind/ vnd voruß das man lerne recht vnd nach der warheit in dem vnd anderen stücken richten vnd vreylen/ vñnd alle ding ordentlich vnderscheiden/damit nit das güt mit dem bösen vffgerüt werde. Dan es hat nit wenig vnrat angericht/das man in allerley sachen/ein yeder nach sinem eignen willen gericht vnd geurteilt hat/vñnd in huffen hinyn verwozffen was ein nit gefallen/on allen vnderscheid des gütten oder des bösen. Es kan auch keiner wartlich recht vreylen der nit ouch kan vnderscheiden/ dann es kampt gütts vnd böß so gemeinlich vñnd so ring vndereinanderen. Wann man nit ein flyssig vffsähen hat/was vor Gott güt oder böß sye / so hat man das güt bald für böß verwozffen/vnd hinwider das böß für güt angenommen/so ist dann schon gfallt / vñnd wäre aber der fäl nit so schädlich als die trennung/zvontzucht/vneinigkeit/secten vnd anhang/so daruß kompt. Gott mache vnns recht verständig durch sin wort vnd geist/das wir mit einē mund vnd herzen allzyt vnd in allen dingen sin lob vnd eer einhelziglich sächind. Amen.

Hienach

that the Psalms are sung back and forth in the alleyways and houses without seriousness and propriety. Their displeasure at this misuse is not mistaken, for, if lewdness and crassness are ill fit in temporal things, how much worse they are in godly things. There is no shortage of crass people who use not only godly singing in a lewd manner but who have much more wanton songs and singing in regular use. As full as papism is of falsely spiritual, idolatrous, self-serving, and unregenerate singing, so full is the world of unspiritual, frivolous, impure, and harmful songs in which God and one's neighbor are profaned. Therefore, let there be good and godly singing of the Psalms and other songs with which little fault can be found, so that through them the use of the others would diminish. That is why St. Paul admonishes the Ephesians that they should put away their shameful words, foolish works, and frivolous quarrels. Likewise, they should happily put away their shameful worldly songs which are not rhymed for God's praise and the honor of the holy faith.

The lewdness of worldly singing.

Ephesians 5.

The summation of all this is as follows: Singing is not a requirement or necessity for it is not commanded, but singing may take place for it is not forbidden; the use of singing may be right, but its misuse is never right; believers do all things for God's praise, using and directing all things to their own and their neighbor's betterment, and they are therefore a spiritual people; false singing, both that of papism and worldliness, would disappear through reform; and foremost, that one should learn to judge rightly, according to the truth and to discern fairly in this and in all matters, so that the good is not thrown out with the wicked. Much dross has been created because each one judges according to his own preferences in all things, casting on the rubbish heap what he did not like without distinguishing between the good and the wicked. One cannot truly judge who cannot also wisely discern, for goodness and wickedness become so easily and thoroughly confused. If one does not have an assiduous understanding of what is good or wicked before God, then good is quickly cast off for wickedness and wickedness accepted in exchange for good, and then the tragedy has already occurred. This fall would not be so devastating were it not for the division, discord, dissension, sects, and related refuse that spew from it. May God make us judicious through his word and Spirit so that we would, with one mind and heart, united at all times and in all things, seek his praise and honor. Amen. ■