

intellectuals may be less quick and penetrating, yet that little knowledge he hath of scripture keeps him from sin ; as a man that hath but weak sight, yet it keeps him from falling into the water.

3. *You may profit by reading scripture, though you have not so excellent memories.*—Many complain their memories leak.

*Nec retinent patulæ commissa fideliter aures.*\*—HORATIUS *Epist.* lib. i. ep. xviii. 70.

Christian, art thou grieved thou canst remember no more ? Then, for thy comfort,

(1.) *Thou mayest have a good heart, though thou hast not so good a memory.*

(2.) *Though thou canst not remember all thou readest, yet thou rememberest that which is most material, and which thou hast most need of.*—At a feast we do not eat of every dish, but we take so much as nourisheth. It is with a good Christian's memory as it is with a lamp : though the lamp be not full of oil, yet it hath so much oil as makes the lamp burn : though thy memory be not full of scripture, yet thou retainest so much as makes thy love to God burn. Then be of good comfort ; thou dost profit by what thou readest ; and take notice of that encouraging scripture : "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall bring all things to your remembrance." (John xiv. 26.)

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## SERMON IX.

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HOW WE MAY MAKE MELODY IN OUR HEARTS TO GOD IN SINGING  
OF PSALMS.

*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.*—Ephesians v. 19.

In the former part of this chapter, especially in verse 4, we have the apostle checking *carnal mirth*, and accounting that a sin which the heathen philosophers (especially Aristotle in his Ethics) made a virtue ; namely, *εὐτραπέλια*, a kind of jesting which they supposed was an ornament to their speech, and a specimen of their ingenuity. But in this verse where the text is, we have the apostle commending *spiritual mirth*, which he approves as a duty, which the Heathens, especially in the primitive times, accounted a crime.

In the verse going before the text, we have the apostle condemning a vice universally reputed so both by Christians and Heathens, namely, "intemperance ; which doth usually frolic it in *putidos sermones*, 'into foolish speeches,' fond gestures, impure songs, wanton sonnets," as

\* " Their leaky ears no secret can retain."—DUNSCOMBE'S Translation.

Bodius observes.\* But here in the text the apostle teacheth us a more refined way of rejoicing, namely, to tune the heart in psalms, to raise the heart in hymns, and to vent the heart in spiritual songs; nay, to make the heart a choir where spiritual music may be chanted.

In the text we have five parts remarkable; namely,

1. *The singers.*—*Λαλουντες εαυτοις*, [“Speaking to themselves;”] Christians; especially those who dwelt in the city of Ephesus. Christians understand how to rejoice in God; their hearts can so set the tune, that God shall hear the music. Zanchius well observes, that the apostle doth here make the comparison between the mirth which is made *ex ubertate vini*, “from abundance of wine,” and that which is made *ex ubertate Spiritus*, “from abundance of the Spirit.” The drunkard’s song, how toyish! but the saint’s singing, how triumphal! How confused the one! how sweet the other! How empty the one, even to the very companions of their cups and mirth! but how melodious the other, even to the Lord himself! And he gravely takes notice, that *gaudent pii, sed garrunt ebrii*; “saints rejoice, but intemperate persons drivel in their chat.”

2. *The song itself.*—And here the apostle runs division, diversifying songs into three species; which, according to the descants of learned men, may be thus understood: † (1.) And here Jerome gives us a dexterous interpretation. (i.) “Psalms,” saith he, “may belong to moral things, what we ought to put in use and practise.” (ii.) “Hymns may belong to sacred things, what we ought to meditate on and to contemplate, as the power, wisdom, goodness, and majesty of God.” (iii.) “Odes, or spiritual songs, may belong to natural things, what we ought to debate, discuss; namely, the race, order, harmony, and continuance of the world, and God’s infinite wisdom manifested in it.” † (2.) Some distinguish these according to the authors of them. (i.) *Psalms.*—They are the composures of holy David. (ii.) *Hymns.*—They are the songs of some other excellent men recorded in scripture, as Moses, Heman, Asaph, &c. (iii.) *Spiritual songs.*—They are odes of some other holy and good men not mentioned in scripture, as the song of Ambrose, Nepos, and others. (3.) Some aver that these several speeches mentioned in the text, answer the Hebrew distinction of psalms. Among them there were, (i.) מזמורים *Mizmorim*, which treated of various and different subjects. (ii.) תהלים [*Tehillim*,] which only mentioned the praises of the Most High. (iii.) שירים [*Shirim*,] which were songs more artificially and musically composed, and, some divines observe, were sung with the help of a musical instrument. But I may add, Are not all these several species mentioned to prefigure the plenty and the joy which is reserved for the saints within the veil, when they shall join in concert with the glorious angels in singing their perpetual hallelujahs to their glorious Creator?

3. *The manner of singing.*—Our text saith, “making melody;” with

\* *E vini assueti oritur lætitia quædam, sed impura, quæ tum in gestibus, tum in putidis sermonibus, se prodit.*—BODIUS. † *Cantio sacra est vel ευχαριστικη, vel ενωτικη, vel διδασκαλικη, vel προφητικη, vel δρηγητικη.*—Idem. “Sacred song is either eucharistical, supplicatory, didactical and instructive, prophetic, or elegiac and mournful.”—EDIT.

† *Psalmi propriè ad locum ethicum pertinent: in hymnis Dei beneficia et facta miramur. Qui verò concordiam et consensum mundi contempletur, ille spirituale canticum canit.*—HIERONYMUS.

inward joy and tripudiation of soul: if the tongue make the pause, the heart must make the elevation. The apostle saith to the Colossians: "We must sing with grace;" (Col. iii. 16;) which is, as some expound it, (1.) *Cum gratiarum actione*, "with giving of thanks."—And, indeed, thankfulness is the very *Selah* of this duty, that which puts an accent upon the music and sweetness of the voice; and then we sing melodiously when we warble out the praises of the Lord. (2.) *With gracefulness*.—With a becoming and graceful dexterity. And this "brings both profit and pleasure" to the hearers, as Davenant observes.\* Psalms are not the comedies of Venus, or the jocular celebrations of a wanton Adonis; but they are the spiritual ebullitions of a composed soul to the incomprehensible Jehovah, with real grace. God's Spirit must breathe in this service; here we must act our joy, our confidence, our delight. Singing is the triumph of a gracious soul, the child joying in the praises of his Father. In singing of psalms, the gracious heart takes wings, and mounts up to God, to join with the celestial choir. It is grace which fits the heart for, and sweetens the heart in, this duty. And where this qualification is wanting, this service is rather an hurry than a duty; it is rather a disturbance than any obedience.†

4. *The master of the choir, the preceptor*.—That is, the "heart." We must look to the heart in singing, that it be purged by the Spirit, and that it be replete with spiritual affection. *He* plays the hypocrite *who* brings not the heart to this duty. One observes, "There is no tune without the heart." † Singing takes its proper rise from the heart; the voice is only the further progress. And, indeed, God is the Creator of the whole man; and therefore he will be praised not only with our tongues, but with our hearts. The apostle tells us, he "will sing with the spirit." (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) And David informs us, his heart was ready to "sing and give praise." (Psalm lvii. 7, 8; cviii. 1.) Augustine admonisheth us, "It is not a musical string, but a working heart, [that] is harmonious." § The Virgin Mary sings her Magnificat with her heart. (Luke i. 46, 47.) And Bernard tells us in a tract of his,|| that "when we sing psalms, let us take heed that we have the same thing in our mind that we warble forth in our tongue, and that our song and our heart do not run several ways." If we in singing only offer the calves of our lips, it will too much resemble a carnal and a Jewish service.

5. *The end of the duty*.—"To the Lord:" so saith the text; namely, to Jesus Christ, who is here principally meant. Our singing must not serve our gain, or our luxury, or our fancy; but our Christ, our Lord, and dear Redeemer. In this duty it is his praises we must mainly and chiefly celebrate. And most deservedly we magnify the true God by psalms and singing, when the Heathens celebrate their false and dung-hill gods, Jupiter, Neptune, and Apollo, with songs and hymns. One well observes: "Singing of psalms is part of divine worship, and of our homage and service due to the great Jehovah." Bodius takes notice,

\* *Et prodesse velint et delectare*.—DAVENANTIUS. † *Cantemus cum gratiâ a Spiritu Sancto donatâ*.—CHRYSOSTOMUS. "Let us sing with the grace which the Holy Ghost supplies."—EDIT. *Hoc quod præcinitur sine gratiâ Dei impleri non potest*.—ECUMENIUS. "That which is prophetic in singing cannot have its fulfilment without the grace of God."—EDIT. † *Sine corde nulla est modulatio*.—BODIUS. § *Non vox, sed votum, non musica chordula, sed cor*.—AUGUSTINUS. || *De Modo bene vivendi*.

that "God is the true and only scope of all our singing."\* And truly if the Spirit of God be in us, he will be steadily aimed at by us. Thus Deborah and Barak sang their triumphal song "to the Lord." (Judges v. 3.)

## DOCTRINE.

The several parts of the text being thus opened, they may be set together again in this divine and excellent truth:—

*In the ordinance of singing, we must not make noise, but music; and the heart must make melody to the Lord.*—So the text. Augustine complained of some in his time, that "they minded more the tune than the truth; more the manner than the matter; more the governing of the voice, than the raisedness of the mind;" and this was a great offence to him. Singing of psalms must only be the joyous breathing of a raised soul; and here the cleanness of the heart is more considerable than the clearness of the voice. In this service we must study more to act the Christian than the musician.† Many in singing of psalms are like the organs, whose pipes are filled only with wind. The apostle tells us, we must "sing with our hearts." (Col. iii. 16.) We must sing David's psalms with David's spirit. One tells us, "God is a Spirit; and he will be worshipped in spirit even in this duty." Now, to traverse the truth,

I. *We will show the divine authority of this ordinance.*

II. *We will show the sweetness of it;*

III. *The universal practice of it.*

IV. *We shall show the honours God hath put upon this ordinance:*

V. *And then come to the main case;*

VI. *And make application.*

I. For the first: *We shall show the divine authority of this ordinance,*

1. *By scripture-command.* 2. *By scripture-argument.* 3. *By scripture-pattern.* 4. *By scripture-prophecy.*

1. *From scripture-precept.*—And here we have divers commands laid upon us, both in the Old and New Testament. David, who among his honourable titles obtains this, to be called "the sweet singer of Israel," (2 Sam. xxiii. 1.)—he frequently calls upon himself: "I will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high." (Psalm vii. 17.) And sometimes he calls upon others: "Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works." (1 Chron. xvi. 9.) Nay, sometimes he summons the whole earth to join in this duty: "Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation." (1 Chron. xvi. 23; Psalm lxviii. 32.) And holy Hezekiah,—he propagated this service. (2 Chron. xxix. 30.) Nay, in their times when the royal Majesty was lodged in Judah, singers were a peculiar office enjoined constantly to sing the praises of the Lord. (1 Kings x. 12.) And Jehoshaphat "appointed singers." (2 Chron. xx. 21.) Nay, and Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and Ethan, men eminent and holy, were employed in this holy service. (2 Chron. v. 12.) But why should I light a candle at noon-day? Thus this harmonious service was most usual and most acceptable in the times of the law.

\* *Deus est canendi unicus scopus.*—BODIUS. † *Non franges vocem, sed frange voluntatem; non serves tantum consonantium vocum, sed concordiam morum.*—BERNARDUS. For a translation of this passage, see p. 83.—EDIT.

And I need not straggle from my text to bring-in gospel-precept for this sweet ordinance. And the apostle takes care to acquaint other churches with the same injunction. So, Col. iii. 16 : " Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." And so firmly the apostle states this musical service, this exhilarating ordinance, that he himself acts his own injunction, though fettered in a prison, and makes Barnabas\* a companion of his song as well as of his sorrows : ὕμνουσιν τὸν Θεόν (Acts xvi. 25 :) " They hymned God," that is, they celebrated his praises with a hymn; † and, as Bede saith, with singing.

2. *From scripture-argument.*—And I shall only take-out one shaft out of the whole quiver. I shall use one argument among many, which is this, namely, we always find this duty of singing psalms linked to and joined with other moral duties. Thus the Psalmist joins singing and prayer together, Psalm xcvi. : " O come, let us sing unto the Lord," in the first verse. " O come, let us worship and bow down : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker," in the sixth verse. There is prayer and singing connexed ; singing being supposed to be of equal necessity and authority with other ordinances. And so the apostle James joins these two together : " Is any among you afflicted ? Let him pray. Is any merry ? Let him sing psalms." (James v. 13.) So, you may observe, both these services are equally calculated for man's necessity. Thus Paul and Silas join them in their practice. (Acts xvi. 25.) And so Justin Martyr, in his 118th question *ad Orthodoxos*, tells us, that in his time " they sang, and sent up prayers to God ; " † the primitive church confirming David's injunction, and the apostolical command. So that by these instances we may observe, that the duties of praying and singing have walked in the same equipage, and lay claim to an equal authority from divine writ ; the scripture jointly favouring both.

3. *From scripture-pattern.*—Moses both pens a psalm, namely, the ninetieth ; and sings a holy song, and Exodus xv. is the record of it. So David tripudiates in the practice of this delightful service. (Psalm civ. 33.) Nay, David composeth psalms, and Hezekiah appoints them to be sung. (2 Chron. xxix. 30.) So David and Asaph, Hezekiah and the Levites, all join to sing forth the praises of the Lord. Nay, our dearest Jesus, the King of saints, and the Redeemer of mankind, practiseth this sweet duty, (Rev. xv. 3,) and calls-in his blessed apostles to make up the choir : " And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives." (Matt. xxvi. 30.) Our blessed Saviour honours this ordinance with his own practice ; and this he did a little before his death, so to seal this ordinance with his blood as well as to consecrate it with his lips. Thus this celestial choir of Christ and his apostles fix this sweet ordinance in the church for future successions.

4. *From scripture-prophecy.*—And here I may speak of singing as Paul speaks of Timothy's ordination : It " was given by prophecy." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) There are divers prophecies in the Old Testament cou-

\* Our author has here mistaken Barnabas for Silas ; an error which he has himself rectified in several subsequent references to their prison-songs.—EDIT. † LORINUS. † ὕμνουσιν καὶ προσεύχασιν τῷ Θεῷ ἀναπέμπομεν.—JUSTINUS MARTYR, 118 *quest. ad Orthodoxos*.

cerning this ordinance in the New. So in Psalm cviii. 3; upon which Mollerus observes, that in that text David pours forth ardent prayers and wishes for the kingdom of Christ. And so divines observe that the first and second verses of Psalm c. are prophetic: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lauds. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing." To which may be added that pregnant prophecy recorded in Isai. lii. 8: "Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing;" which clearly prognosticates this musical ordinance in gospel-times. And Musculus much favours this interpretation, when he saith, "These watchmen shall jubilee when they shall consider the great joy approaching for the redemption obtained by Christ."\* And there are two things which not only establish, but sweeten and honour, an ordinance: (1.) Promises; (2.) Prophecies. Christ himself was the fruit and issue of both.

II. Secondly: *We may take notice of the sweetness of this duty.*—Singing is the soul's jubilee, our spiritual recreation, the shout of the heart, our tuning of our hallelujahs, the sweetest solace of a sanctified soul. David was in a kind of rapture, when he cries out, "I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." (Psalm civ. 33.) One well observes of singing, "There is a dilating of the sound, and a drawing out of the voice, which gives more time for the fixing of the heart upon that which is sung, and so puts the soul upon a sweeter meditation." (Psalm civ. 34.) And we may animadvert it, that when we sing psalms, there is more than ordinary raising and lifting up of the soul, there is an elevation to a higher degree of communion with God. It is the soul's high mount towards heaven; the saint flies higher towards the element and sphere of joy; then we are fledged for sublime things. One asserts: "There is not a greater resemblance of heaven upon earth, than a company of God's people singing a psalm together." Then the soul rejoiceth in divine goodness, and exults in divine excellencies, meditates on divine promises. And whatever we make the matter of our singing, it will much affect the heart.

1. *If we sing of God.*—Of his goodness, it inflames our heart to love; of his wisdom, it raiseth our heart to admiration; (Rom. xi. 33;) of his power, it engageth the heart to faith and confidence; nay, of his judgments, it over-awes the heart to a due and reverential fear.

2. *If we sing of any thing concerning ourselves.*—If for the diversion of a trouble, it fills the heart with humility: if for the obtaining of a mercy, it boils up the heart in desire.

3. *If we sing of our enemies.*—This likewise draws the heart to a just indignation, zeal, and compassion. The very matter we sing doth abundantly sweeten this duty. Nay, further,

1. *Singing is the music of nature.*—The scriptures tell us, the mountains sing; (Isai. xlv. 23;) the valleys sing; (Psalm lxxv. 13;) the trees of the wood sing. (1 Chron. xvi. 33.) Nay, the air is the birds' music-room, where they chant their musical notes.

2. *Singing is the music of ordinances.*—Augustine reports of himself, † that when he came to Milan and heard the people sing, he wept for

\* *Speculatores simul jubilabunt, opinari quantum sit gaudium futurum ob redemptionem adeptam per Christum.*—MUSCULUS. † AUGUSTINUS, lib. iii. *Confessionum*, cap. 6.

joy in the church to hear that pleasing melody. And Beza confesses, that at his first entrance into the congregation, and hearing them sing Psalm xci., he felt himself exceedingly comforted, and did retain the sound of it afterwards upon his heart. The rabbies tell us, that the Jews, after the feast of the Passover was celebrated, they sang Psalm xci., and the five following psalms; and our Saviour and his apostles "sang an hymn" immediately after the blessed supper. (Matt. xxvi. 30.)

3. *Singing is the music of saints.*—(1.) They have performed this duty in their greatest numbers. (Psalm cxlix. 2.) (2.) In their greatest straits. (Isai. xxvi. 19.) (3.) In their greatest flight. (Isai. xlii. 10, 11.) (4.) In their greatest deliverances. (Isai. lxxv. 14.) (5.) In their greatest plenties. In all these changes singing hath been their stated duty and delight. And indeed it is meet that the saints and servants of God should sing forth their joys and praises to the Lord Almighty: every attribute of him can set both their song and their tune.

4. *Singing is the music of angels.*—Job tells us, "The morning stars sang together." (Job xxxviii. 7.) Now these morning stars, as Pineda tells us,\* are the angels; to which the Chaldee paraphrase accords, naming these morning stars, *aciem angelorum*, "a host of angels." Nay, when this heavenly host was sent to proclaim the birth of our dearest Jesus, they deliver their message in this raised way of duty. (Luke ii. 13.) They were *amboures*, delivering their messages in a "laudatory singing," the whole company of angels making a musical choir. Nay, in heaven, there is the angels' joyous music, they there sing hallelujahs to the Most High, and to the Lamb who sits upon the throne.† (Rev. v. 11, 12.)

5. *Singing is the music of heaven.*—The glorious saints and angels accent their praises this way, and make one harmony in their state of blessedness;‡ and this is the music of the bride-chamber. (Rev. xv. 3.) The saints who were tuning here their psalms, are now singing there hallelujahs in a louder strain, and articulating their joys, which here they could not express to their perfect satisfaction. Here they laboured with drowsy hearts, and faltering tongues; but in glory these impediments are removed, and nothing is left to jar their joyous celebrations.

III. Now, thirdly: *We come to show the universal practice of this duty.*—Singing psalms and spiritual songs to God is not more sweet than œcumenical; it hath been always the way of saints thus to express their joy in the Lord. This duty hath been practised,

1. *By all varieties of persons.*

(1.) *By Christ and his apostles.*—As hath been shown. (Matt. xxvi. 30.) The glorious sun and stars have shined in favour upon this joyous service, and left their practice of it upon record; the supernal and upper orders of the world have not been too high for this spiritual harmony.

(2.) *Godly princes have glorified God in this duty.* (2 Chron. xxix. 30.)—Their thrones have not raised them above this spiritual service.

\* *Comment. in Job.* † *Creaturarum psalmus est.*—STELLA. "This is a psalm of praise from every living creature."—EDIT. ‡ *Ihi nil nisi laus Dei, nisi amor Dei.*—AUGUSTINUS. "In that glorious place nothing is known but praise to God, and love to him."—EDIT.

King Jehoshaphat assaults his enemies not only with the brandishing of his sword, but with the singing of his song. (2 Chron. xx. 21.) Princes who have swayed regal sceptres, have sung spiritual songs, and have minded the choir as well as the crown. David not only takes the sceptre into his hand to rule the people, but takes the harp into his hand to sing the praises of the Lord.

(3.) *Worthy governors.*—Nehemiah takes care, that as soon as the wall of Jerusalem was set up, singers should be appointed to perform this part of God's worship. (Neh. vii. 1.) These eminent magistrates held not only the reins of government, but lifted up those hands which held them with the voices in singing the praises of God. Magistracy is a spur, not a curb, to duty. I need not mention Ethan, Heman, and Asaph, eminent and worthy men, engaged in this pleasing service. (2 Chron. v. 12.)

(4.) *Holy prophets.*—They did not only prophesy of things to come, but they practised duties for the present, more especially this. And as David pens prophetic, so he sings musical, psalms, and professes his dying and his singing air should both expire together. (Psalm cxlvi. 2.) This duty should lie by him on his death-bed; and, as Moses in Deuteronomy xxxii., he will close up his life with a swan-like, with a saint-like song. So 2 Samuel xxii. was a song of thanksgiving for manifold mercies, a little before his death.

(5.) *The body of the people.*—As singing is not too low for kings, so not too choice for subjects. The whole multitude sometimes engaged in the harmony: "Then Israel sang this song." (Num. xxi. 17.) The people's voice may make melody, as the lesser birds contribute to the music of the grove, their chirping notes filling up the harmony.

(6.) *Eminent fathers.*—Basil calls the singing of psalms "spiritual incense." Augustine was highly commendatory of this service, and assures us Ambrose and Athanasius were coincident with him in this particular.\*

(7.) *Primitive Christians.*—And here I shall only mention what Tertullian relates of the practice of those times he lived in: "When we come to a feast," saith he, "we do not sit down before there is prayer; and after the meal is past, one cometh forth, and either out of the holy scriptures, or else from some composure of his own, begins a spiritual song."†

2. *In all ages.*—This service of singing to God was soon started in the world. Moses, the first penman of scripture,—he both sung a song and penned a Psalm, as we hinted before. In the Judges' time, Deborah and Barak sang a triumphant song. (Judges v. 1, 2, &c.) During the time of the kings of Judah, the Levites sang the praises of God in the sanctuary. A little before the captivity, we find the church praising God in singing. (Isai. xxxv. 2.) In the time of the captivity, Israel did not forget the songs of Zion, though they were in Babylon. (Psalm cxxvi. 2.) After their return from captivity, we soon find them return to this joyous service. (Neh. vii. 1.) Their long exile had not banished this duty. Towards the close of their prophets' prophesying, the church is again engaged in this part of God's worship. (Zeph. iii. 15, 17.)

\* AUGUSTINE, lib. ix. *Confessionum*, cap. 6.  
oratio ad Deum sit, &c.—TERTULLIANUS.

† *Non discumbitur priusquam*



In the beginning of the Christian era, when the gospel first made the world happy with its glorious shine, we find the primitive Christians much taken up in this duty. Cyprian, in his epistle to Donatus, adviseth, "that there may not be an hour of feasting without some heavenly grace; and let every sober feast be accompanied with singing of psalms."\* And Chrysostom, in his Commentary on Psalm xli., admonishes all persons, "country-men, mariners, weavers, &c., to sing psalms and spiritual songs." Estius cries out, "Take notice of the custom of the primitive Christians, who did not only sing psalms and hymns in their public assemblies, but in their private families." Eusebius relates, that "Plinius Secundus, in an epistle he wrote to Trajan the emperor, makes mention, that the Christians of those times, being gathered together before day, sang hymns and praises to Christ, as to a God." This was about the year 98 after the birth of our Saviour. Those early and more pure times rejoiced in this duty. Nicephorus tells us, that Chrysostom caused psalms to be sung for the suppression of the Arian heresy. And Ruffin witnesseth, that Basil commanded the people to meet "for the pouring-out of their prayers to God, and for singing of psalms to the Most High." The worthy Junius informs us, that "the eastern church, from the time the Sun of Righteousness arose in the east, did propagate the practice of singing of psalms to successive generations." And Paulinus testifies, that "this practice overspread every province of the western church."† Holy Ambrose so zealously pressed this duty of singing psalms, that he would not allow times of persecution to be a sufficient excuse for the neglect of it. But the empress Justina raging against Ambrose, "he commanded the common people to lie in the church, and there sing psalms and hymns according to the practice of the Oriental Christians, that they might not be sensible of their sorrows or tediousness. And this custom prevailed in after-times, and was scattered in other places, the churches in other parts imitating this worthy practice." This, then, was the genius of the primitive times.

In the middle times of the church, Rabanus Maurus and Gregory the Great mention this service with great approbation, and speak liberally of the practice of it. But since the Reformation, the universal practice of the Reformed churches gives free suffrage to the duty of singing psalms; and I need not cite Zanchius, &c., to give-in their testimony, our judgments being best discovered by our practices.

3. *In all places.*—Moses praiseth God by singing in the wilderness, throughout Exodus xv. David practises this duty in the tabernacle; (Psalm xlvi. 6;) Solomon in the temple; (1 Kings x. 12;) Jehoshaphat in the camp; (2 Chron. xx. 21;) Christ and his apostles in a particular chamber; (Matt. xxvi. 30;) and Paul and Silas in an uncomfortable prison. (Acts xvi. 25.) We may say of singing, as the apostle speaks of prayer: "I will," saith he, "that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands." (1 Tim. ii. 8.) Thus every place is now commodious for lifting up pure voices and pure hearts to the Most High. Where devout Christians meet in any convenient place to sing praises to the Lord, they make up a heavenly choir.

\* *Ne sit hora convivii coelestis gratia immunis; sonet psalmis convivium sobrium.*—  
CYPRIANUS. † *Per omnes penè occidentis provincias manasse refert.*—PAULINUS.

4. *In all conditions.*—(1.) *In a time of cheerfulness and inward joy.*—The apostle James commands us then to take the advantage of singing psalms. (James v. 13.) Holy singing is the best exertion of inward rejoicing. Joy may excite, must not stifle, this duty. A dilated heart is fittest for a raised voice. (2.) *In a time of affliction.*—Paul and Silas sang in prison, a place of sorrow and confinement. (Acts xvi. 25.) A chain might bind their feet, but not their tongue; while others sleep, they sing, and turn their dungeon into a chapel. Holy singing can nobilitate every duty, and raise it to a better notion. (3.) *In a time of fear.*—When some would press Luther with the dangers the church was in, and what a black cloud hung over Zion, he would presently call for Psalm xli. to be sung; and he thought that psalm was a charm against all fears whatsoever. And since, this psalm is called “Luther’s psalm,” his sacred spell against invading fears.

5. *By all sexes.*—Miriam sings a song to God, as well as Moses. (Exod. xv. 21.) Rivet well observes, “God is the Lord of both sexes, and therefore both may sing his praises.”\* Every sex may tune their hearts to proclaim their thanksgivings to God. And so Deborah may sing her song as well as Barak. (Judges v. 1.) Holy singing befits the female as well as the masculine tongue. Though women may not speak, yet they may sing, in the church; there is no silence imposed on them in this particular. Rivet here takes notice, “Women are not to be driven from joining in divine praises, when the apostle enjoins singing of psalms and hymns upon all believers, in Col. iii. 16.” And here Isidore Pelusiota well interposes: “Although the holy apostles, those masters of modesty, will not permit women’s loquacity, and the loudness of their tongues; yet, in the greatness of their wisdom, they do permit the loudness of their voices in singing forth the praises of the Almighty.”† Thus he. Women, though they are removed by apostolical command from the desk or pulpit, yet they are not debarred the choir, to join in that harmony where God’s praises are elevated.

IV. *And now we come to speak of that honour which God hath put upon this heavenly duty.*—And this will appear in three things; namely,

1. *God hath honoured this duty with glorious appearances.*—This we find upon record in 2 Chron. v. 13: “And it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.” The cloud was a certain sign of divine presence in those times: a cloud, to rain blessings; a cloud, because divine brightness would overpower human sight; a cloud, not to darken service, but to denote the certainty of God’s approach.

2. *With eminent victories.*—This we find upon record, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22: “And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed

\* *Quemadmodum est omnium Deus, olim uterque sexus adhibebatur ad laudes Dei canendas.*—RIVETUS. † *Importunas in ecclesiâ loquacitates apostoli Domini in ecclesiis, et magistri modestiæ et gravitatis, reprimere studentes, ut mulieres in ipsis concernerent sapienti consilio permisissent.*—ISIDORUS PELUSIOTA.

singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Israel; and they were smitten." Israel's success follows Israel's singing. If the people of Israel will look to their duty, God will look to their enemy, and lay that ambush which shall ensnare and overthrow their power.

3. *With evident miracles.*—This we find upon record, Acts xvi. 25, 26: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." Behold here an eminent miracle! Prisons saluting the prisoners' liberty: Paul and Silas's singing set God on working; and if their tongues were loosed in duty, their hands shall be loosed for liberty. Singing, like praying, can work wonders. Lorinus observes, that "the prisoners' chains were taken off, and their bands loosed, by the peculiar power and work of angels." \*

## CASE.

And now I come to the main case, *How we may make melody in our hearts to God in singing of psalms.*

ANSWER 1. *We must sing with understanding.*—We must not be guided by the tune, but the words, of the psalm; we must mind the matter more than the music, and consider *what* we sing, as well as *how* we sing. The tune may affect the fancy; but it is the matter [which] affects the heart, and *that* God principally eyes. The Psalmist adviseth us in this particular; (Psalm xlvi. 7;) and so doth the apostle. (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) Otherwise, this sweet duty would be more the work of a chorister than of a Christian; and we should be more delighted in an anthem of the musician's making, than in a psalm of the Spirit's making. A Lapidè observes, that in the text, 1 Cor. xiv. 15, the word "understanding" is *maschel*, מַשְׁכֵּל, "profound judgment." We must sing wisely, if we will sing gratefully; we must relish what we sing. In a word, we must sing as we must pray. Now the most rude petitioner will understand what he prays. (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) If we do not understand what we sing, it argues carelessness of spirit, or hardness of heart; and this makes the service impotent. Upon this the worthy Davenant cries out, "Adieu to the bellowing of the Papists, who sing in an unknown tongue." † God will not understand us in this service, which we understand not ourselves. One of the first pieces of the creation was light, and this must break out in every duty.

2. *We must sing with affection.*—Love is the fulfilling of this law. It is a notable saying of Augustine: "It is not crying, but loving, that sounds in the ears of God." † In Isai. v. 1, it is said, "I will sing to my well-beloved." The pretty child sings a mean song; but it delights the mother, because there is love on both sides. It is love, not skill, [which]

\* *Angelicâ peculiari operâ solutio vinculorum accidit.*—LORINUS. † *Facescant beatus Papistarum, qui Psalmos in templis reboant, sed lingua non intellectâ.*—DAVENANTIS. † *Non clamans, sed amans, cantat in aure Dei.*—AUGUSTINUS.

makes the music and the service most pleasing. When we go about this work, we must lay our book before us,—a heart full of love. The primitive Christians sang hymns to Christ, whom they entirely loved. Love, indeed, is that ingredient which sweetens and indulcorates every service.

3. *We must sing with real grace.*—This the apostle admonishes us. (Col. iii. 16.) It is grace, not nature, sweetens the voice to sing. We must draw out our spices, our graces, in this duty. The hundred forty and four thousand, who were elected and glorified saints, sang the “new song.” (Rev. xiv. 3.) Singing is the tripudiating of a gracious soul. Gorran well notes, that “grace is the root of true devotion.”\* Wicked men only make a noise, they do not sing; they are like cracked strings of a lute or a viol,—they spoil, they do not make, music. The righteous “rejoice in the Lord.” (Psalm xxxiii. 1.) The raven croaks, the nightingale sings, the tune. As God will not hear sinners when they pray, so neither when they sing; the singing of wicked men is disturbance, not obedience. Indeed the saints’ singing is a more solemn ovation; † praising Him who “causeth them to triumph in Christ.” (2 Cor. ii. 14.) The saints above sing their hallelujahs in glory, and the saints below must sing their psalms with grace. Fashion puppets as you please, they cannot sing; it is the alive bird can chirrup that pleasing noise.

4. *We must sing with excited grace.*—Not only with grace habitual, but with excited and actual. The musical instrument delights not but when it is played upon. In this duty we must follow Paul’s advice to Timothy, *αναζωπυρειν*, “stir up” the grace that is in us; (2 Tim. i. 6;) and cry out as David, “Awake, love, awake, delight.” (Psalm lvii. 8.) The clock must be plucked up before it can guide our time; the bird pleaseth not in her nest, but in her notes; the chimes only make music while they are going. Let us therefore beg the Spirit to “blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow out,” when we set upon this joyous service. (Canticles iv. 16.) God loves active grace in duty; that the soul should be ready trimmed, when it presents itself to Christ in any worship.

5. *We must sing with spiritual joy.*—Indeed, singing only makes joy articulate; it is only the turning of bullion into coin; as the prophet speaks to this purpose. (Isai. lxxv. 14.) Singing is only the triumphant gladness of a gracious heart, a softer rapture. We must sing as David danced before the ark, “with shouting” and rejoicing in God. (2 Sam. vi. 15.) We sing to Christ. And Dr. Bound observes, “There is no joy comparable to that we have in him; this is ‘joy unspeakable and full of glory.’” Joy must be the *selah* of this duty.

6. *We must sing with faith.*—This grace only puts a pleasingness upon every service: if we hear, the word must be “mixed with faith;” (Heb. iv. 2;) if we pray, it must be “the prayer of faith.” (James v. 15.) We must bring faith to Christ’s table, or else, as Austin saith, *dormit Christus, si dormit fides*; “if faith sleeps, Christ is likewise asleep.” And so faith must carry-on this ordinance of singing: especially

\* *Gratia est devotionis radix.*—GORRANUS. † In the first edition, this word is printed *occasion*; but to all who are familiar with the minor triumphs of the Romans, on account of some bloodless victory, “ovation,” which is the reading of the second edition, will recommend itself as the most correct.—EUIT.

there must be a credence in the hallelujahs above ; we must believe that the saints here are only tuning their instruments, and the louder music will be above ; that in glory there will be such pleasing sounds, which, the apostle tells us, no ear ever heard. (1 Cor. ii. 9.)

7. *We must sing in the Spirit.*—As we must pray in the Spirit, (Jude 20,) so we must sing in the Spirit ; the Spirit must breathe, as well as grace act, or the voice sound, in this duty. Davenant well observes, “They are called spiritual songs, *ratione originis*, ‘in point of their original:’ the Spirit excites and impels the soul to this holy service.”\* And he observes, that the Spirit is the prime artificer in this work. Thus, in the foregoing verse to the text, the apostle adviseth us to “be filled with the Spirit ;” (Eph. v. 18 ;) and in the text itself, he calls us to be singing of psalms and hymns, &c. When the Spirit fell upon the apostles, then they spake those glorious things recorded, Acts ii. 4 : and so must we sing, being sublimated and raised with the Spirit. This “wind” (as the Spirit is called, John iii. 8) must fill our organ, before we can make any music.

8. And what Davenant suggests is very pertinent here : “*In singing of psalms, our principal care must be of our hearts, and to follow the wise man’s counsel, to ‘keep our hearts with all diligence.’*” (Prov. iv. 23.)† —And this learned man gives us a good reason : “For they who neglect their hearts, may please men with the artificial suavity of their voice ; but they will displease God with the odious impurity of their hearts.” And we must watch our hearts ; for vain and sinful thoughts will fly-blow this duty as well as others. Gorran well observes, “There are four conditions of right singing : there must be, (1.) The alacrity of the voice ; (2.) The conformity of the work ; (3.) The attention of the heart ; (4.) A rectitude towards God.”‡ And holy Bernard draws-up an indictment against offenders in this kind : “Thou singest,” saith he, “to please the people more than God ; thou breakest thy voice musically, break thy will morally ; thou keepest a consonancy in thy voice, keep a concord and harmony in thy manners.”§ A holy heart and life make them that sing to chant melodiously. First purify, then thou wilt tune, thy heart.

9. *Neglect not preparatory prayer.*—Prayer prepares for singing as well as other ordinances. Indeed *Jehovah est Archimusicus*, “the great Harmonist,” who must put every heart in tune : He must screw-up every peg of affection, and strain every string of meditation, in this ordinance. The wise man observes : “The preparations of the heart in man are from God.” (Prov. xvi. 1.) “Preparations” in the plural number,—preparation to hearing, preparation to praying, preparation to receiving of the holy supper, and so preparation to singing. Our singing must needs be melody to the Lord, if it be assisted by the Lord : God will surely hear the melody he himself makes in a gracious heart engaged in this duty. Thus the case may be answered.

\* *Spiritu Sancto impellente et excitante.*—DAVENANTIUS. † *In psalmis canendis præcipua Christianorum cura esse debet, ut cor ritè afficiatur.*—DAVENANTIUS. ‡ *Quatuor sunt conditiones rectè canendi : 1. Vocis alacritas ; 2. Operis conformitas ; 3. Cordis attentio ; 4. Pia rectitudo.*—GORRANUS. § *Cantas ut placeas populo, non Deo ; fraugis vocem, &c.*—BERNARDUS.

## USES.

USE 1. *This checks those who despise this ordinance.*—Who look upon it as noise, but not singing, as the crackling of thorns, but not the music of hearts. But,

1. These do not consider *the holy ends of this duty*; namely,

(1.) *Psalms are sung for instruction.*—We instruct one another in this service; this duty is for spiritual and mutual edification. As a learned man well observes, “That knowledge we acquire from the scriptures, we draw out in this duty for our brother’s edification.”\* We edify our brother by singing as well as by speaking; by warbling forth the word in holy singing, as well as by urging and pressing the word in holy discourse. A proclamation is never the less authentical because it is proclaimed by sound of trumpet: the tune only accents the matter. Clemens Alexandrinus well observes: “There is an appetite in good persons to strengthen their brethren;”† and this may be done in singing as well as in other ordinances.

(2.) *Psalms are sung for admonition.*—This the apostle expressly intimates: “Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns.” (Col. iii. 16.) We may reprove a sin in singing of a psalm, as well as in the quoting of a text; and encourage virtue as well by lifting up our voice, as by giving of our praise. Thus David, Psalm li. 13. We may truly be satirists in this very ordinance. When we sing a psalm of judgment, we may awaken sinners; and when we sing psalms of mercy and loving-kindness, we may encourage saints.

(3.) *Psalms are sung for praise and thanksgiving.*—Then, as the Psalmist speaks, we “awake our glory,” (Psalm lvii. 8,) which interpreters call the tongue, an excellent instrument for praising God. Singing of psalms is only the echo of praise, the rebound of a joyous heart in a laudatory speech, praise loudly and musically proclaimed, that men may hear our thanksgivings, and bear testimony to our gratulatory enlargements; as the passenger bears witness to the music of a grove; there the pleasant birds sit and sing.

2. Nor do such consider *the rare effects of this duty*, namely, of singing to the Lord: and they are,

(1.) *Singing can sweeten a prison.*—Thus Paul and Silas indulcorated their bondage by this service. (Acts xvi. 25.) As prayer can shed a perfume, so singing can cast a delight, on the most displacit dungeon; this truly divine service can turn a prison into a paradise, a place of restraint into “the glorious liberty of the sons of God.” As Cyprian used to triumph: “Our conventions sing our psalms.”‡

(2.) *Singing can prepare us for sufferings.*—When Christ was ready to be offered up, he sang an hymn with his disciples: Christ sups and sings, then dies. Joy in the Lord, whereof singing is only the rebound, arms against the dint of suffering. It is a good saying of Chrysostom: “This kind of delight is most natural to the soul. God appointed psalms, that

\* *Scientiam quam comparavimus ex scripturis, expronimus ad fratrem edificandum.*

† *Inest appetitus piis generandi pius et fidelis.*—CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS.

‡ *Ne sit*

*hora gratiæ immunis gaudio; conventus nostri sonent psalmos.*—CYPRIANUS.

from thence profit and pleasure may flow together."\* Singing raises the heart above the discouragement of suffering; nor can we so well muse upon our pains, while we are so sedulously tuning our praises.

(3.) *Singing lightens and exhilarates the soul.*—We may say of this duty, as Tremellius speaks of David's harp, that by the music of it the storms of Saul's spirit were allayed, and he was composed and serene. Singing both reveals and amplifies our joy; it is not only a discovery, but an improvement. As a learned man well takes notice, "Let us delight ourselves in singing psalms, and from them let us draw our cheerfulness and delight."† Let all our sweet waters gush from this spring.

3. Nor do such consider the *sweet allurements, which draw us to this duty.*—And if we inquire what it is that puts us upon rejoicing in God by singing, I shall tell you,—

(1.) *The good Spirit.*—That heavenly principle both leads us to this duty, and helps us in it. This is one of the good motions of the blessed Spirit, to put us upon singing the praises of the Lord. Wine tempts us to vain and wanton songs; but the Spirit excites us to holy and heavenly hymns: the Spirit first sets the tune, and Christ is the burden of the song.

(2.) *The joyous heart.*—Holy singing is both the sign and vent of joy. The little child is pained, and then it cries; the saint is surprised with joy, and then it breaks-out into singing. Smothers will turn into flames; and the heart overcharged with complacency will discharge itself in this holy exultation. In the church's triumph, recorded by the prophet Isaiah, "singing" follows "joy" as its proper and genuine product and birth. (Isai. xxxv. 2.)

(3.) *A sense of obedience.*—To sing praises to the Lord, is a duty which the saints know not how to wave or respite. The apostle James joins praying and singing together; (James v. 13;) and the believer knows not how to neglect the one, no more than the other. Sometimes God calls us to the cross, and then we must be calm and patient; and sometimes he calls us to the choir, and then we must be pleasant and delightful.

USE II. *This checks those who scruple this ordinance.*—Surely this must proceed from the evil one, turning himself into an angel of light. It was a serious moan which sometimes many ministers in New-England made, even in this case: "The singing of psalms," say they, "though it breathe forth nothing but heavenly harmony and sweet melody, yet such is the subtilty of the enemy, and the enmity of our nature against God and the ways of God, that our hearts can find matter of discord in this harmony, and crotchets of division in this holy melody." And hence arise so many questions about singing of psalms. But I shall only touch upon three objections.

#### OBJECTIONS.

**OBJECTION I.** "How can a serious Christian sing in a mixed congregation? The presence of the wicked will surely jar the music, and give a very just occasion of offence."

\* *Hoc genus delectationis est animæ nostræ valde cognatum. Deus psalmos instituit, ut ab his simul caperetur utilitas et voluptas.*—CHRYSOSTOMUS. † *Ps dñis nos oblectemus, et ex hisce hilaritatem nostram promanare annotandum est.*

**ANSWER I.** Many who forbear singing in the congregation, will not forbear it in their families. And is there no Ham, no Judas, no withered branch? Are all the sons of Zion? Are all the friends of the bride-chamber? This is not an usual happiness.

**ANS. II.** And are there not mixtures when we pray, and when we hear? And this scruple may be levelled against these as well as against singing. There is as much purity, and so ought to be, in petitioners and hearers as in singers. And why then are we not as curious in these duties as in singing! which if we were, few would join with us in these solemn approaches. Let us not, dear Christians, consult fancy, but reason and scripture-proof.

**ANS. III.** Singing may be sanctified for conviction of sinners. Moses penned a song, and God commands the people to sing it. (Deut. xxxi. 19, 22, 30.) And this song was to convince the sinful Israelites of their obstinacy and apostasy.

**ANS. IV.** And if we are thus shy and scrupulous, with whom at last shall we join? Our Saviour himself had but twelve apostles, and there was a Judas among them. What constellation shall we aim at, where there is no blazing comet or falling star? Let us at least avoid that language, "Stand further off; I am holier than thou." It was but a pharisaical boast to say, "I am not as this publican." (Luke xviii. 11.)

**ANS. V.** If singing be a duty, as most certainly it is, thou art bound to perform it in the best manner thou canst; and then others' presence will not enfeeble thy comfort, nor invalidate thy service; thou shalt have peace in thy own soul. Heathenish spectators (for so are wicked men at an ordinance) did not eclipse the glory of the martyrs; their stakes were hung with laurel notwithstanding. But it is observed by a worthy and learned man, that all these objections arise from the ignorance of the nature, use, and ends of this blessed duty.

**OBJECT. II.** But some are ready to object, there are many passages in the Psalms which are not so accommodate to their condition. As, how can they sing Psalm vi. when they are in prosperity? or Psalm xxxviii. when they are in health? or Psalm li. when they know no notorious scandal hath lately fallen on them? And they must not lie before the Lord.

**ANS. I.** Every passage in the Psalms is matter for meditation; a gracious spirit may spring sweet contemplation from it. In Psalm li. we may meditate on the grievous nature of sin; and in Psalm vi. we may meditate on the mournful effects of sin, and that it will surely be bitterness in the latter end.

**ANS. II.** What is not now, may afterwards be, thy condition. Thou mayest fall, and then Psalm li. is accommodated to thee; thou mayest be under distempers, and then Psalm xxxviii. is not incongruous to thee; thou mayest be penitentially inclined, and then Psalm vi. is well calculated for thy condition.

**OBJECT. III.** "But why must we be confined to David's Psalms?"

**ANS. Why?** What more comprehensive and suitable to every condition? They are the Bible epitomized. How full of sweet counsels, divine raptures, humble complaints, hearty expressions of love to God! Sometimes we may find David swimming in his tears; (Psalm vi. 6.)



sometimes ravished with his joys ; (Psalm xliii. 4 ;) sometimes eclipsed with distrust ; (Psalm lxxvii. 7 ;) sometimes raised with confidences. (Psalm xxx. 7.) The Psalms are a Christian's choicest oracle to fly-to in times of distress. And was not the holy Psalmist guided by an infallible Spirit? How often are the Psalms quoted by Christ, (Luke xx. 42 ; xxiv. 44,) and so by the apostles, (Acts i. 20,) as divine authority to establish truth! Let us therefore not disturb ourselves with these groundless objections, but let us pursue and embrace this holy duty, which is the very suburbs of heaven. And let us observe what a reverend person notes upon this occasion : "I observe," saith he, "they never thrive well who neglect or scruple singing of psalms. They commonly begin at this omission, but they do not end there, but at last they come to be above all ordinances, and so indeed without them ; whose sad condition is not sufficiently to be deplored." And another learned and reverend divine yet living hath observed fatal and judicial proceedings of God against those who have turned their backs upon this joyous and sweet ordinance. But let the Lord lead us into all understanding : the wise Christian will pause and consider.

USE III. *Let this check those who suspend and neglect this heavenly ordinance.*—And this is an evil much to be deplored in our times. We may now walk in the streets on God's holy day, and not hear the least noise of a psalm, or sound of a spiritual song. It was, not long since, the wont of the Puritans, who were the most precious Christians, to echo forth the praises of the great Jehovah in this duty, especially upon the Lord's day. Then was there a holy choir in their houses : their children were the little birds to sing the praises of the Creator ; the servants likewise joining in the harmony to make up a fuller music. But, alas ! now the voice of the bride, singing to her beloved, is not heard in the places of our abode ; there is silence instead of singing, and prating instead of praising, frivolous discourses instead of joyous praises. It might behove us to ponder, how much of heaven do we lose in neglecting this service ! In singing psalms we begin the work of heaven. In heaven we read of "the song of Moses, and of the Lamb ;" (Rev. xv. 3 ;) and of "a new song." (Rev. xiv. 3.) And the angels, though they have not tongues, yet they have voices to sing the praises of the Most High ; and, therefore, that this heavenly service is so neglected and unexercised, "is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation." (Ezek. xix. 14.)

USE IV. *This likewise checks those who formalize in this duty ; who act a part, not a duty.*—They make a noise, and not music ; and more provoke the eyes, than please the ears, of God. Jerome pathetically exclaims against those formalists : "We must not," saith he, "act as players, who stretch their throats to accommodate their tongues to the matter in hand ; but we must sing psalms as saints, praising God not only with our voice, but with our heart, not only with a sweet voice, but with a melting heart." Bernard makes two conditions of grateful singing : "1. We must sing purely, minding what we sing ; nor must we act or think any thing besides ; there must be no vain or vagrant thoughts ; no dissonancy between the mind and the tongue. 2. We must sing strenuously, not idly, not sleepily or perfunctorily ; we must sing *ex animo*, 'most heartily and energetically.'"

USE V. *Let us get an interest in Christ.*—If we are not in Christ, we are certainly out of tune. The singing of a sinner is natural, like the singing of a bird. But the singing of a saint is musical, like the singing of a child. Saints in singing perform a grateful duty; but sinners offer “a vain oblation.” (Isai. i. 13.) It is Christ must put an acceptance upon this service, as well as others; here the altar must sanctify the gift. Christ perfumes the prayers of the saints; (Rev. v. 8;) and he must articulate the singing of the saints. Indeed, he alone can turn our tune into melody; and though in ourselves we have Esau’s garments, yet he can give us Jacob’s voice. We are accepted in Christ in this offer of love. Therefore let us get into Christ: he can raise our voice in singing to a pleasing elevation. Let us be in him; and then our steps shall be metrical, our pauses musical, and our very cadences shall be seraphical; our singing of psalms shall be the music of the spheres.

USE VI. *Let us sometimes raise our hearts in holy contemplation.*—Let us think of the music of the bride-chamber. There shall be no cracked strings, displeasing sounds, harsh voices, nothing to abate or remit our melody: there shall be no willows to hang-up our harps upon. (Psalm cxxxvii. 2.) In the bride-chamber, there shall be no sorrow to interfere, when we sing the song of the Lamb, no grief to jar our harmony. (Rev. xxi. 4.) These pleasing meditations should sometimes possess and sweeten our spirits, that while we are walking “in the galleries,” (Canticles vii. 5,) we may be nearer to the palace of the Great King. (Psalm xlv. 15.)

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## SERMON X.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

HOW OUGHT WE TO IMPROVE OUR BAPTISM?

*Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*—Acts. ii. 38.

THIS chapter gives us an account of the pouring-out of the Spirit according to the promise presently after Christ’s ascension. As soon as the Spirit was poured out, the apostles were enabled to speak in various languages to the astonishment and wonder of the hearers. This was for the glory of God, the confirmation of the gospel, and to authorize them as special messengers sent by Christ. At the sight of this miracle some wonder, others mock, as if this speaking with divers tongues had been a confused jabbering, that proceeded from the fumes of wine, rather than the gift and operation of the Holy Spirit. To satisfy both, Peter declares in a sermon the effect and intent of the miracle; proving Jesus, whom they had crucified, to be Lord and Christ. When they heard this, many of the most obstinate among them were “pricked in their heart,” and relented. A happy sermon it was that Peter preached: it brought-in