

Of Singing Psalms.

by John Gill

Singing is a fundamental part of public worship and a natural act of the voice, which has been a part of natural or revealed religion in all ages and periods of time.

Scripture: Exodus 15:1, Psalm 66:1-2, Psalm 96:1, Isaiah 52:7-9, Matthew 26:30, Acts 16:25, Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, James 5:13, Revelation 5:9-13

Topics: "Worship", "Singing Psalms"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the significance of singing psalms as a vital aspect of public worship, distinguishing it from prayer, giving thanks, and praising God. He argues that singing is a natural and spiritual act that has been practiced throughout history, both by the faithful and even by those outside the faith. Gill highlights that singing should be done with sincerity, understanding, and in a manner that glorifies God, while also addressing common objections to the practice. He asserts that singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs is not only a command but a moral duty for all believers, regardless of their circumstances. Ultimately, Gill encourages the church to embrace this form of worship as a means of expressing joy and gratitude to God.

Transcript

A Body of PRACTICAL Divinity

Book 3--Chapter 7

OF SINGING PSALMS, AS A PART OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

Next to prayer may be considered, singing the praises of God, as a religious duty: this may be done in a private manner, by a person singly and alone (James 5:13), and between two or more; so Paul and Silos sang aloud praises to God in the prison (Acts 16:25), and in the family, between a man and his wife, with his children and servants: of this private singing of psalms in the family Tertullian[1] speaks, and makes use of this as an argument with Christians to marry among themselves, that this duty may be the better and more harmoniously performed; but I shall treat of it as an ordinance of divine and public service; and endeavour, 1.

To show what singing is, according to the common idea we have of it, as a natural act of the voice; and as a religious duty distinct from other acts of religion. Singing may be considered either in a proper or in an

improper sense. When used improperly, it is ascribed to inanimate creatures; the heavens, earth, mountains, hills, forests, trees of the wood, the pastures clothed with flocks, and the valleys covered with grain, are said to sing and shout for joy, or are exhorted to it (Isa. 44:23, 49:13; Ps. 65:12, 13).

Singing, taken in a strict and proper sense, and as a natural act, is an act of the tongue or voice; though not every action of the tongue, or sound of the voice, is to be called singing. Speech is an action of the tongue; but all kind of speaking is not singing; singing is speaking melodiously, musically, or with the modulation of the voice. These two sounds, speaking or saying, and singing, have not the same idea annexed to them; should we be told that such a man, as commonly expressed, said grace before and after a meal, we should at once understand what is meant, that he asked of God a blessing upon his food, before eating, and returned thanks after it, according to the common use of speech, in prayer to God, and in conversation with men: but if it should be said, he sung grace before and after a meal, we should not be able to form any other idea of it, but that he did it in a tonical, musical way, with a modulation of the voice.

It is not any clamour of the tongue, or sound of the voice, that can be called singing; otherwise why should the tuneful voice and warbling notes of birds be called singing (Song 2:12), any more than the sound of the voice of other animals; as the roaring of the lion, the bellowing of the ox, the bleating of the sheep, the neighing of the horse, the braying of the ass, the barking of the dog, or the grunting of the hog? The clamorous noisy shouts of conquerors, and the querulous notes, shrieks, and cries of the conquered, are very different from the voice of singing: when Moses and Joshua came down from the mount, says Joshua, "There is a noise of war in the camp; and he (Moses) said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery; neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome; but the noise of them that sing do I hear;" that sung and danced about the calf (Ex. 32:6, 17, 18).

And singing musically with the voice, as a religious action, is distinct from all other religious acts and exercises. 1a. From prayer: James speaks of them as two distinct things in the place before quoted; and so the apostle Paul, when he says, "I will pray with the Spirit, and I will sing with the Spirit also;" or if he means the same, he must be guilty of a very great tautology (1 Cor. 14:15). Paul and Silas in prison, both prayed and sung praises, which are evidently two distinct exercises (Acts 16:25). 1b.

It is distinct from giving thanks; Christ, in the institution of the Supper, gave thanks, this he did as his own act and deed, singly and alone; but after supper he and his disciples sung an hymn or psalm together; and the apostle having directed the church at Ephesus to sing psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, makes mention afterwards of "giving thanks" to God in the name of Christ, as a distinct duty incumbent on them (Matthew 26:26, 27, 30; Eph. 5:19, 20). 1c. It is distinct from praising God; for though we do praise him in singing, yet all praising is not singing.

Singing is only one praising God; there are others; as when we the adorable perfections of God, or speak well of them in preaching, or in common discourse; when we return thanks to him for temporal and spiritual mercies in prayer; when we show forth his praise, and glorify him by our lives and conversations; in neither of which senses can we be said to sing; if praising is singing, what then is singing of praise! 1d. It is different from inward spiritual joy, which is wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, and arises from views of interest in the love of God, in the covenant of grace, in the person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and this indeed fits a person for singing the praises of God, but is distinct from it; "Is any merry?" euyumei tiv, is any of a good mind, or in a good frame of soul?

"let him sing psalms": but then the frame and the duty are different things; spiritual joy is not singing; but the cause and reason of it, and makes a man capable of performing it in the best manner. 1e. Though there is such a thing as mental prayer, there is no such thing as mental singing, or singing in the heart, without the voice. Speaking or preaching without the tongue or voice, are not greater contradictions, or rather impossibilities, than singing without a voice or tongue is.

Such an hypothesis is suited for no scheme but "quakerism;" and we may as well have our silent meetings, dumb preaching, and mute prayer, as silent singing: "singing and making melody in the heart," is no other than singing with or from the heart or heartily; or, as elsewhere expressed, "with grace in the heart"[2], that is, in the exercise of it; it does not exclude the voice in singing, but hypocrisy in the heart, and requires sincerity in it, as a learned man[3] observes.

I go on, 2. To prove, that singing the praises of God has always been a branch of natural or revealed religion, in all ages and periods of time, and ever will be. 2a. It was a part of the worship of God with the heathens; as prayer is a natural and moral duty, so is singing the praises of God: as men by the light of nature are directed to pray to God, when in distress, or for mercies they want (Jon. 1:6), so they are directed by the same to sing the praises of God for mercies received.

A modern learned writer[4] observes, that "though religions the most different have obtained in various nations and ages, yet in this they all agree, that they should be solemnized in hymns and songs:" according to Plato the most ancient kind of poetry lay in those devotions to God which were called hymns[5]; the credit and applause which Homer got[6] was owing to the hymns he composed for the deities; and among his works is still extant an hymn to Apollo; as Orpheus before him, composed hymns to the several deities, which are yet in being under his name.

The whole science of music was employed by the ancient Greeks in the worship of their gods, as Plutarch[7] attests. One part of the religious worship of the Egyptians, consisted of hymns to their deities, suitable to the honour of them, and which they sung morning and evening, at noon, and sun setting, as Clemens of Alexandria and Porphyry relate; and the Indians also spent the greatest part of the day and night in prayers and hymns to the gods, as the last of these writers affirms[8].

Remarkable is the saying of Arrianus the Stoic philosopher[9]; he says, "If we are intelligent creatures, what else should we do, both in public and private, than to sing an hymn to the Deity?--If I was a nightingale, I would do as a nightingale, and if a swan, as a swan; but since I am a rational creature, I ought to praise God, and I exhort you to the selfsame song:-this is my work while I live, to sing an hymn to God, both by myself and before one or many." From these, and other instances which might be produced, we may conclude, that the Gentiles were by the light of nature directed, and by the law of nature obliged, to this part of worship; and consequently that it is a part of natural religion. 2b.

It was practised by the people of God before the giving of the law by Moses; the eighty eighth and eighty ninth psalms are thought by some[10] to be the oldest pieces of writing in the world; being long before the birth of Moses, composed by Heman and Ethan, two sons of Zerah, the son of Judah; the one in a mournful elegy deplores the miserable state of Israel in Egypt; the other joyfully sings prophetically their deliverance out of it. The ninetieth psalm was written by Moses himself, at what time it is not said; however, certain it is, that Moses and the children of Israel, sung a song at the Red Sea, after their passage through it, and the destruction of the Egyptians in it; which is still on record, and it seems will be sung again when the antichristian Pharaoh, and the antichristian powers, are destroyed by the Christian

conquerors, standing on a sea of glass, with the harps of God in their hands (Ex. 15:1; Rev. 15:2, 3).

Now this being before the law of Moses, when first sung, it was not done by virtue of that law; nor was it of ceremonious institution, nor a part of worship peculiar to the Levitical dispensation; nor was it by any positive law of God to the sons of men that we know of; but was sung by the Israelites according to the dictates of their consciences, and the examples of others before them, by which they were influenced, as to cry to the Lord when in distress, so to sing his praises when they were delivered. 2c.

It was not a part of divine service peculiar to Israel under the law; but when psalmody was in the most flourishing condition, under the direction and influence of David their king, he in many of his psalms, calls upon and exhorts the nations of the earth, to sing the praises of God; "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands," or "all the earth;" let the people, even "all the people praise thee; let the nations be glad and sing for joy, sing unto the Lord all the earth!" &c. (Ps. 66:1, 2, 67:3, 5, 96:1): Now if singing was not a part of moral worship, but of a ceremonious kind, the nations of the earth would have had no concern in it, nor would it have been obligatory upon them. 2d.

When the ceremonial law was in its greatest glory, and legal sacrifices in highest esteem, singing of psalms and spiritual songs was preferred unto them, as more acceptable to God than the offering of an "ox or bullock" (Ps. 69:30, 31). Now no other reason of this preference can be given, but that the sacrifice of an ox was of ceremonial institution, whereas singing the praises of God was a part of moral worship, which might be performed in a spiritual and evangelic manner. 2e.

When the ceremonial law, with all its rites, was abolished, this duty of singing the praises of God remained in full force; at the same time the apostle tells the churches, that the law of commandments was abolished, and they were no more to be judged with respect to meats, and drinks, and holy days, these shadows being gone; he exhorts them most strongly to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 2:14, 15, 5:19; Col. 2:16, 17, 3:16). Now it is not reasonable to suppose that the apostle, in the same epistles, written to the same persons, should declare them disengaged from the one, and under obligation to regard the other, if they equally belonged to the same ceremonial law. 2f.

That the churches of Christ under the gospel dispensation were to sing, have sung, and ought to sing the praises of God vocally, appears 2f1. From the prophesies of the Old Testament concerning it. In many of the psalms respecting the times of the Messiah, the churches of God in them are invited to sing the praises of God; as in Psalms forty seventh, sixty eighth, and ninety fifth, and in many of the prophesies of Isaiah it is declared, that not only the watchmen, the ministers of the word, "should lift up the voice, and with the voice together sing;" but that churches "should break forth into joy, and sing together," (Isa. 52:7-9; see Isa. 26:1, 35:1, 2, 54:1) blessed be God these predictions are in a great measure fulfilled; gospel churches among the Gentiles, as well as in Judea, have lift up their voices and sung the praises of God, according to these prophesies. 2f2.

This also is evident from express precepts and directions given to gospel churches concerning it; it is not only prophesied of in the Old Testament, but is commanded in the New; particularly the churches at; Ephesus and Colosse, are expressly enjoined to sing "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and directions are given them in what manner they are to sing them, which will be observed hereafter. 2f3. This is clear from New Testament instances and examples.

Christ and his disciples sung an hymn or psalm together at the celebration of the Lord's Supper; which they did as a church, in the midst of which Christ sung an hymn, and they with him (Matthew 26:30)[11]. In

Hebrews 2:12 the church at Corinth sung psalms in the times of the apostles; there were indeed disorders among them in the performance of this ordinance, as of others, which the apostle rectifies, and blames them, but not for that itself, provided they observed the rules he gave them (1 Cor. 14:26). 2f4.

This practice obtained in the earliest times of Christianity, and has continued to the present time. Pliny[12], an heathen, in his letter to Trajan the emperor, written at the latter end of the first, or beginning of the second century, acquaints him, that the sum of the charge against the Christians was, that "they met together on a stated day, before it was light, and sung a song among themselves to Christ, as to God." And Tertullian[13], in the beginning of the third century, speaks of reading the scriptures, singing psalms, preaching, and prayer, as parts of public worship.

And Origen, a little later in the same century, observes[14], the need of the Spirit of God to assist in singing psalms and hymns to the Father in Christ, eurymwv, emmelwv, emmerwv kai sumfwnwv, in good rhyme, melody, and metre, and in vocal concert. The proofs would be too numerous, and indeed endless, to give of its continuance and use in after ages[15]; it will be sufficient to observe, that the book of the Revelation is a representation of the service of the churches of Christ on earth, as well as of their state, condition, and sufferings, and their deliverance from them, in each of the periods of time until his second coming; in which we frequently have an account of their being concerned in this work of singing (Rev. 4:9-11, 5:9-13, 7:10-12), particularly at the time of the reformation from popery, and at the fall of Babylon, or antichrist (Rev. 14:1-8, 15:2, 3, 19:1-7), when the spiritual reign of Christ will take place; at which time, "from the uttermost parts of the earth will be heard songs, even glory to the righteous," (Isa. 24:16) and in the millennium, upon the first resurrection, when the personal reign of Christ will begin, the raised ones will sing, as they will be exhorted, and will have reason so to do; "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust," (Isa. 26:19) in short, when all other ordinances will cease, this of singing the praises of God will be in its highest glory and perfection (Isa. 35:10).

I shall next inquire, 3. What that is which is to be sung, or the subject matter of singing; and the direction is to these three, "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). 3a. By Psalms may be meant the Book of Psalms, composed by David, Asaph, and others; but chiefly by David; hence he is called "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," (2 Sam. 23:1) this is the only sense in which the word is used throughout the whole New Testament; nor is there any reason to believe the apostle Paul designs any other in the places referred to; nor the apostle James, in James 5:13.

Those who are of a different mind ought to show in what other sense the word is used, and where; and what those Psalms are we are to sing, if not the "Psalms of David," &c. since it is certain there are psalms which are to be sung under the gospel dispensation. 3b. By "hymns" are intended, not any mere human compositions; since I can hardly think the apostle would place such between psalms and spiritual songs, made by men inspired by the Holy Ghost, and put them upon a level with them, to be sung; but rather this is only another name for the Book of Psalms; the running title of which may as well be the "Book of Hymns," as it is rendered by Ainsworth[16].

The hundred and forty fifth psalm is called an hymn of David; and the psalm our Lord sung with his disciples after the Supper, is said to be an hymn; and so the psalms of David in general are called umnoi, "hymns," both by Josephus[17] and Philo the Jew[18]. 3c. By "spiritual songs" may also be meant the same psalms of David, Asaph, &c. the titles of some of which are songs; as sometimes "a psalm and song, a song and psalm, a song of degrees," and the like; together with all other spiritual songs written by men inspired of God; called "spiritual," because of the author of them, the Spirit of God; the penmen of

them, such as were moved by the same Spirit; and the matter of them spiritual, useful for spiritual edification; and are opposed to all loose, profane, and wanton songs.

And as these three words, "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," answer to Myrmzm Mylht and Myryv the titles of David's Psalms, and are by the "Septuagint" rendered by the Greek words used by the apostle, it may be reasonably concluded, that it was his intention that the churches he writes to should sing them; but inasmuch as the "word of God" and Christ in general furnishes out matter for singing his praises, I deny not, but that such hymns and spiritual songs, composed by good men, uninspired, may be made use of; provided care is taken that they be agreeable to the sacred writings, and to the analogy of faith, and are expressed as much as may be in scripture language; of such sort were those Tertullian[19] speaks of, used in his time, as were either out of the holy scripture, or "de proprio ingenio," of a man's own composure; and such seem to be the songs of the brethren, in praise of Christ, as the Word of God, ascribing divinity to him, condemned by some heretics[20]. 4.

The manner in which psalms, &c. are to be sung may be next considered. 4a. Socially, and with united voices; so Moses and the children of Israel sung at the Red Sea; so Christ and his disciples sung after the Lord's Supper; so the watchmen will sing in the latter day, even with their voice together; so did Paul and Silas in prison; and thus the churches are directed in Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16. 4b. With the heart along with the mouth, as heartily as well as vocally, which is making "melody in the heart," (Eph. 5:19) or performing the duty in sincerity and truth; and not as the Israelites, who flattered God with their lips, sung the praises of God, but soon forgot his works. 4c.

"With grace in the heart," (Col. 3:16) with the several graces; not one note, but a mixture of notes, makes melody; many voices, yet one sound, make a chorus[21]: so singing must be with various graces; with faith in God, without which it is impossible to please him; and with strong love and affection for him; and also "with reverence and godly fear;" for God is "fearful in praises" arwn reverend in them, to be praised with great fear and reverence of his Majesty. 4d. "With the Spirit," as the apostle Paul determined to do (1 Cor. 14:15), with the Spirit of God, whose assistance is necessary in this as in prayer; and with our spirits, sincerely, fervently, and affectionately, and in a spiritual manner, suitable to the nature of God, who is a Spirit. 4e.

"With the understanding also;" with the understanding of what is sung; and in such a manner, and in such language, as may be understood by others; for one end of the duty is, not only to speak to ourselves in it, but to "teach" and "admonish" others; and perhaps the apostle may have some regard to one of the titles of David's psalms lykvm "Maschil," which signifies, a psalm giving instruction, and causing to understand. In a word, besides our mutual edification. 4f. We should have in view the glory of God; for we are to "sing unto the Lord;" not to ourselves, merely to raise our natural affections, to gain applause from others, by the fineness of our voice, and by observing an exact conformity to the tune; but to the glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, the one God, who condescends to inhabit the praises of Israel.

What remains now is only, 5. To answer to some of the principal objections made to this duty; these are chiefly made against the matter and manner of singing, and the persons, at least some of them, who join in this service. 5a. First, the matter and manner of singing, particularly David's psalms; to which are objected, 5a1. That they were not written originally in metre; and therefore are not to be sung in such manner; nor to be translated into metre for such a purpose. The contrary to this is universally allowed by the Jews, and appears from the different accentuation of them from that of other books, and is asserted by such who are best skilled in the Hebrew language, both ancients and moderns.

Josephus[22] says, David, in a time of peace, composed divine songs and hymns, of various metre, some trimetre, that is, of three feet; and others of pentametre, that is, of five feet. And Jerom[23], who, of all the fathers best understood the Hebrew tongue, takes the psalms to be of the Lyric kind, and therefore compares David, to Pindar, Horace, and others; and for the metre of them appeals to Philo, Josephus, Origen, Eusebius, and others. Gomar[24] has given hundreds of verses out of the psalms, which agree with Pindar and Sophocles[25]; and the word commonly used throughout that Book, in the judgment of learned men, signifies metre[26]; and since then the Psalms were originally written in metre, it is lawful to translate them into it, in order to be sung in the churches of Christ. 5a2.

It is doubted whether the Book of Psalms is suited to the gospel dispensation, and proper to be sung in gospel churches. Nothing more suitable to it, nor more proper to be sung in it; since it abounds with prophecies concerning the person and offices of the Messiah, his suffering and death, resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God, now more clearly understood, and more capable of being sung in an evangelic manner; and also is full of precious promises; is a large fund of experience, a rich mine of gospel grace and truth, and so is greatly suited to every case and condition the church of Christ, or a particular believer may be in at any time; a little care and prudence in the choice of proper psalms on particular occasions, would fully discover the truth of this. 5a3.

It is objected, that cases are often met with in this book we cannot make our own; and to sing them, it is suggested, would be lying to God; and that some are quite shocking, as curses and imprecations on wicked men; and seem to show a want of that charity which is recommended in the gospel. To which it may be replied, that singing cases not our own, are no more lying to God than reading them is, singing being but a slower way of pronunciation, in a musical manner. Besides, when we sing the cases of others, we sing them as such, and not our own; which yet may be useful by way of example, advice, comfort, or instruction; and being sung in public, may be suitable to some in the community, though not to others; and so the end of singing be answered: and the same objection will lie equally against public prayer, and joining in that, since it cannot be thought that every petition is suitable to all: and as for curses and imprecations on wicked men, these may be avoided; we are not obliged to sing all that are in the psalms; besides, these may be considered only as prophetic hints of what may be expected will befall such persons, and may be sung to the glory of God, and with instruction to ourselves; since herein may be observed the justice and holiness of God, the vile nature of sin, the indignation of God against it, and abhorrence of it, and in which it is to be had with all good men. 5a4.

It is urged, that to sing David's Psalms, and others, is to sing by a form, and then why not pray by one? I answer, the case is different; the one may be done without a form, the other not; the Spirit is promised as a Spirit of supplication, but not as a Spirit of poetry; and if a man had an extraordinary gift of delivering out an extempore psalm or hymn, that would be a form to others who joined him; add to this, that we have a Book of Psalms, but not a book of prayers. David's Psalms were composed to be sung by form, and in the express words of them, and were so sung (see 1 Chron. 16:7; 2 Chron. 29:30); hence the people of God are bid, not to "make" a psalm, but to "take" a psalm, ready made to their hands (Ps. 81:1, 2). 5a5.

It is observed, that David's psalms were sung formerly with musical instruments, as the harp, timbrel, and cymbal, and organs; and why not with these now? if these are to be disused, why not singing not singing itself? I answer, these are not essential to singing, and so may be laid aside, and that continue; it was usual to burn incense at the time of prayer, typical of Christ's mediation, and of the acceptance of prayer through it; that is now disused; but prayer being a moral duty, still remains: the above instruments were used only when the church was in its infant state, and what is showy, gaudy, and pompous, are pleasing

to children; and as an ancient writer[27] observes, "these were fit for babes, but in the churches (under the gospel dispensation, which is more manly) the use of these, fit for babes, is taken away, and bare or plain singing is left."

As for organs, of which mention is made in Psalm 150:1-6, the word there used signifies another kind of instruments than those now in use, which are of a later device and use; and were first introduced by a pope of Rome, Vitalianus, and that in the seventh century, and not before[28]. 5b. Secondly, there are other objections, which lie against some persons singing; as, 5b1. Women, because they are ordered to "keep silence in the churches;" and are not "permitted to speak," (1 Cor. 14:34, 35) but this is to be understood only of speaking and teaching in public, in an authoritative way (1 Tim. 2:11, 12), otherwise it would not be lawful for them to give an account of the work of grace upon their hearts; nor to give evidence in any case, and the like: as for singing the praises of God, it is a moral duty, and equally binding as prayer on both sexes; and the God of nature and grace has given women faculties capable of performing it; and having a voice suited for it, to join in harmonious concert, ought to be exhorted to it, and encouraged, and not discouraged and discountenanced.

Miriam, and the women with her, sung at the Red Sea; and Deborah sung with Barak; and it is a prophesy of gospel times, that "women" should come and "sing in the height of Zion," (Jer. 31:8-12) and, indeed, what else is the "woman's prophesying," but singing, allowed by the apostle, with her "head covered;" as is well judged by a learned writer[29]; since prophesying is explained by singing, as well as by praying and preaching, (1 Cor. 11:5, 14:15, 24, 26; see 1 Chron. 25:1-3) where prophesying is used in the same sense. 5b2.

The singing of unbelievers, and singing with them, are objected to by some; but then this supposes that it is the duty of believers, and is allowed of; or otherwise the objection is impertinent. Now let it be observed, that singing the praises of God, as well as prayer, is a moral duty, and so binding on all men, believers and unbelievers; and though none but the former can sing in a spiritual and evangelical manner; yet the latter are obliged to do it, in the best way they can; and it may be as well objected to their admission to public prayer, as to public singing; and it will be difficult, if not impossible, to know who are such in public assemblies; and supposing they ought not to sing, how can this affect believers? it is not their sin; nor should they neglect their duty on this account; but rather blush to see such so forward to it, to whom it is thought it does not belong, and they so backward to it.

Besides, it has been the practice of the saints in all ages, to sing in mixed assemblies; there was a mixed multitude that came out of Egypt with the Israelites, in whose presence they sung at the Red Sea, and who very probably joined them in it, since they shared in the common deliverance. It was the resolution and practice of David, to sing the praises of God among the heathen (Ps. 18:49, 51:9), and, indeed, some ends of this ordinance cannot be otherwise answered; which are to declare the Lord's doings, his wonders, and his glory among them (Ps. 9:11, 96:3), and this has been an ordinance for conversion; it was of great use in forwarding the reformation from popery, as bishop Burnet[30], in his history of it, relates; and it has been made very useful to souls under their first awakenings.

Austin[31] speaks of it from his own experience: he says, "How much have I wept at thy hymns and songs, being exceedingly moved at the voices of thy church sweetly sounding. These voices pierced into my ears; thy truth melted into my heart, and from thence pious affections were raised, and the tears ran, and it was well with me." 5b3. It is urged, that singing is not proper for persons in any distress, only when in good and comfortable frames; and which is very much grounded on James 5:13 the sense of which is, not that

such are the only persons that are to sing psalms, or this the only time of doing it; any more than that afflicted persons are the only ones to pray, and the time of affliction the only time of prayer; but as affliction more especially calls for prayer, so a good and joyful frame on account of good things, for singing of psalms.

What more distressed condition could a man well be in, than that in which Heman the Ezrahite was when he penned and sung Psalm 88:1-18? as the church sung in the wilderness in the days of her youth, when she came out of Egypt; so it is prophesied that she should hereafter sing there as then; and as the church is now in the wilderness, where she is nourished with the word and ordinances, for a time, and times; and half a time, she has reason to sing on that account (Hosea 2:14, 15; Rev. 12:14). ENDNOTES:

[1] Ad uxorem, l. 2. c. 6. p. 190. c. 8. p. 191.

[2] "Necesse est hic in corde, ex corde intelligi, scilicet, ut non solum ore, sed etiam corde cantemus," Hieron. in Col.. 3. 16.

[3] Zanchius in Eph.. v. 19.

[4] Lowth. de Sacr. Poesi Heb.. Praelect. 1. p. 21.

[5] Deut. Legibus, l. 3. p. 819. Ed. Ficin.

[6] Herodotus de vita Homeri, c. 9. p. 558. Ed. Gronov.

[7] Deut. Musica, p. 1140.

[8] See my Discourse on Singing, p. 10, 11.

[9] Arrian. Epictetus, l. 1. c. 16. & l. 3. c. 26.

[10] Lightfoot, vol. 1. p. 699, 700.

[11] See the old translation of this text exposed, which is pleaded for, and what was the hymn or psalm sung at this time, in a Discourse of mine on Singing, p. 34, 35, &c.

[12] Ep. l. 10. ep. 97. vid. Tert. Apol. c. 2. & Euseb. Eccl.. Hist. l. 3. c. 33.

[13] Deut. Anima, c. 9.

[14] peri euchv c. 6. p. 7. Ed. Oxon. 1686.

[15] See my Discourse on Singing, p. 45, 46, &c.

[16] "Vox umnoi, cum Hebraeo titulo Mylht multo melius congruit." Lowth.

[17] Antiq. l. 7. c. l2.

[18] L. de mutat. nom. et l. de Somnis, et alibi.

[19] Apolog. c. 39.

[20] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 28. & l. 7. c. 30.

[21] Seneca, Ep. 84.

[22] Antiq. l. 7. c. 12.

[23] Ep. ad Paulin. tom. 3. fol. 3. 2. praefat. in lib. Job fol. 8. 2.

[24] Davidis Lyra inter opera ejus, t. 2. p. 317, &c.

[25] See my Discourse on Singing, p. 23, 24.

[26] rwmzm, "metrum, vel numeros, sive quam Graeci ruymon, vocant, significat," Lowth. de Sacr. Poesi Heb.. Praelect. 3. p. 40. in marg. & Praelect. 4. p. 44. vid. Gejerum, & Michaellem, in Psalm iii. 1.

[27] Autor. Qu. et. Respons. inter opera Justin. p. 462.

[28] Platina de vitis Pontif. p. 86.

[29] Works, vol. 2. p. 785, 1157. see Targum Jon.. in 1 Sam. x. 5. and xix. 20, 23, 24.

[30] Hist. of the Reformation, vol. 2. p. 94.

[31] Confession. l. 9. c. 6.

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