

**REASONS WHEREFORE CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO WORSHIP GOD IN
SINGING HIS PRAISES**

**NOT WITH THE MATTER AND SENSE OF DR. WATTS' PSALMS AND
HYMNS, BUT WITH THE MATTER AND SENSE OF DAVID'S PSALMS:**

**BECAUSE GOD HAS COMMANDED THE LATTER, BUT NOT THE
FORMER.**

"And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes," Luke 12:47

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PREFACE TO THE READER

CHRISTIAN Reader,

Forasmuch as it pleased God, in the course of his providence, to cast my lot where Dr. Watts's psalms were in great esteem, I did for a season comply with the people in worshipping God with those composures, but forasmuch as I knew that the commandment of God and not the practice of men, is the fundamental reason of all true and acceptable worship, this put me upon searching whether it was lawful to sing these psalms, but upon the most diligent searching of the Scriptures, earnest prayer to God and reading of the reasons Dr. Watts lays down in his long preface to his psalms, I could find no answer to the question, Who hath required this at your hand? Thus was my conscience alarmed, and I arraigned and convicted, as a guilty criminal at the bar of conscience, because I could find no precept for the reason of my practice; but notwithstanding all this, I still for a season, out of the fear of man, (with shame and blushing be it spoken) went on, till at last the Lord threatened me with removing those gifts for the ministry which he had bestowed upon me. Upon this, (his grace setting in with it) I was brought to this resolution, to worship God with Scripture psalms and hymns only, and of consequence to throw aside those composed by Dr. Watts. This made a great stir in the congregation where I then was, and it was made a principal objection against my ministry there (with some) and one special reason of my remove from them, but I had peace in my own soul in what I had done, and have often since blessed God, who gave me repentance for my sin on that account. Moreover, my soul has been strengthened in this matter, by that word, *Rev. 3:10*, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them which dwell upon the earth." By this the Lord shewed me that it is not only my duty, but my safety, to keep close to his command in obedience to Jesus Christ in all things.

The things we have laboured to prove in these papers, are:

First, that the matter and sense of David's psalms is the most proper and fit for Christian psalmody because it is the word of God, and God has commanded us to worship him with those psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Secondly, that it is therefore unlawful to sing Dr. Watts's composures because he has professedly set them up in opposition to the word and commandment of God, for he says, "I am bold to maintain the great principle on which my present work is founded, and that is that if the brightest genius on earth or an angel from heaven should translate David and keep close to the sense of the inspired author, &c. it could never make the fittest psalm-book for a Christian people." *Preface p. 27*. And here I do solemnly appeal to the conscience of every man, especially to Christian teachers, as we must answer it, at the great tribunal of Jesus Christ, how it can be lawful to bring a book into the worship of God that is founded upon such a principle.

As to my reasons for making these things publick, I do solemnly declare as in the presence of God that so far as I know my own heart, there is nothing but the fear of God has moved me to it, for the very word and commandment of God is openly spoken against and opposed, and should I not as openly appear in the defense thereof? For the question is not, whether this or that or the other, translation of David's psalms be the most fit for Christian psalmody, but whether the very word of God, the matter and sense of David's psalms or Dr. Watts's composures, be the most fit for Christian psalmody? Moreover, as I have been myself entangled and drawn into sin by these human composures, love ought to constrain me to this work, and if my brethren render hatred for my love, I shall only fare as the master of the house has done. But if it will please his Majesty to smile upon this attempt to throw down human traditions, and bless it but to one soul, all the labour and pains I have taken shall be abundantly recompenced, for if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. *Jam. 5:20*.

Now Christian reader, may the Lord open thine understanding to know the truth and to receive it in the love thereof, for whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed, and he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. *Prov. 13:13*. Eternal life by Jesus Christ, and a willing subjection of soul to the commandment of God are inseparably connected

together. *John 14:21,23*. On the other hand, eternal death and opposition to the commandment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient contrivance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality; eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile. *Rom. 2:6-9*.

REASONS WHEREFORE CHRISTIANS OUGHT TO WORSHIP GOD IN SINGING HIS PRAISES

NOT WITH THE MATTER AND SENSE OF DR. WATTS' PSALMS AND HYMNS, BUT WITH THE MATTER AND SENSE OF DAVID'S PSALMS:

BECAUSE GOD HAS COMMANDED THE LATTER, BUT NOT THE FORMER.

THE great God of Heaven and Earth has informed us by his word and providences, that the fundamental cause of his wrath and displeasure is disobedience to his command; hence the great prophet of the church teaches us how that "that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes," *Luke 12:47*. Now, for as much as it is become a debate whether we ought to worship God in singing his praises with human composures or the matter and sense of David's psalms, we therefore who profess ourselves to be the servants of the great God and our Lord Jesus Christ, ought to enquire what his will is in this matter. Is it the will of God, that I should worship him by singing the psalms of David, or human composures? for the will and commandment of God is the governing point and fundamental reason of all true worship, or true religion; therefore I am resolved by the grace of God helping me, to act in this point of religion according to the commandment of God. Well then, what is the command and will of my God in this matter? Has he commanded me, or has he not, to worship him by singing human composures? No, my God has not commanded me to worship him by singing human composures, therefore I may not do it, because nothing is to be done in God's worship but what he has commanded; for it is written, 'thou shalt not add,' *Deut. 12:32*. And that there is no command for worshipping God with human composures, Dr. Watts tacitly confesses; his words are, "Blessed be God, we are not confined to the words of any man in our public solemnities." *Preface to his Hymns*. This is an open acknowledgment that there is no command for singing the words of man, human composures, for if there was, we should be confined to do it. Well then, seeing I know it is the will of God that I should not do anything in his worship but only what he has commanded me, and there is no command for singing human composures, therefore I may not do it, because that servant which knows his Lord's will and does not act according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes. Was not Nadab and Abihu punished with death by fire from the Lord, for doing that in God's worship which he had not commanded them? *Lev. 10:1,2*. Was not the disobedient prophet slain by a Lion? *1 Kings 13*. Seeing then that I may not sing human composures because God has not commanded it, what has he commanded me to sing? Why, the great God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, by his Spirit in the prophets, has made a sufficient and plentiful provision for this part of divine worship in that divine collection of heavenly psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs contained in the Book of Psalms, which book is the production of divine and infinite wisdom, which book contains in it every part of the everlasting gospel of salvation which Jesus Christ and the apostles preached; this book is full of Jesus Christ the doctrines of his divinity, personality, atonement, resurrection, ascension and coming to judgment, and it is the will and commandment of the great God and our Lord Jesus Christ that his church should worship him by singing these psalms, as it is written, "Is any merry? Let him sing psalms," *Jam. 5:13*. Moreover, "Hezekiah the king, and the princes, commanded the Levites to sing praises unto the Lord with the words of David and Asaph the seer," *2 Chron. 29:30*. See also *Psalms 105:2*. Moreover, Dr. Watts tacitly confesses that God has commanded us Christians to worship God by singing these psalms. His words are: "I confess it is not unlawful nor absurd &c. to sing any part of the Jewish psalm book, and consider it merely as the word of God." *Preface to his Psalms, p. 11*. Now, if it be not unlawful nor absurd to sing any part of David's psalms in God's worship, it is because God has commanded me so to do; for it is both unlawful and absurd to do anything in God's worship which he has not commanded, because God is my Creator, Father and Master and I am his creature, child and servant. Seeing then it is so plainly and manifestly the will and commandment of God that I should worship him by singing the matter and sense of David's psalms and not human composures, how can I, how dare I, lay aside this divine provision to take up with human hymns which he has not commanded me to sing? Well, I say, how can I do this without coming under the severe threatening of the sacred text, *Luke 12:47*, "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." *Num. 15:30,31*, "But the soul that doth ought presumptuously, (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger,) the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people, because he hath despised the

word of the Lord and hath broken his commandments; that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him." Therefore, seeing it is the command of God that I should worship him by singing his own word, David's psalms, I believe we ought to sing the matter and sense of these psalms, or a mere translation of the Hebrew text into English, or the national language where the church of Christ is gathered, for our Lord and his apostles preached no other gospel but the very same, identical gospel contained in the psalms of David, as may be seen by any man that compares David's psalms and the New Testament together; and surely that doctrine which was the subject matter of our Lord's and his apostles preaching, must needs be the fittest matter for Christian psalmody, and if I cleave to and worship God by singing the matter and sense of David's psalms, I do at the very same instant and moment of time worship God by singing the New Testament gospel which the apostles preached.

Having therefore seen that the will and commandment of God is the fundamental reason and rule of all true worship, and that it is his will and commandment that we should worship him by singing the matter and sense of David's psalms, I shall in the next place shew wherefore I cannot worship God by singing the psalms and hymns composed by Dr. Watts; but first, let it be premised that the very same identical gospel, both in matter and sense, and frequently in style and words, is contained in the psalms of David as in the New Testament, this is manifest by comparing them together, *Psalm 2:7* with *Acts 13:38*, *Heb. 1:5* and *5:5*. Again, compare *Psa. 45:6,7* with *Heb. 1:8,9*, and *Psa. 102:25-27* with *Heb. 1:10-12*. Compare *Psa. 110:1* with *Heb. 1:13*, *Matt. 22:44*. Compare *Psa. 16:10* with *Acts 2:27, 13:35*. Compare *Psa. 32:1,2* with *Rom. 4:7,8*.

Thus it is manifest that there is frequently the very same style and words in the New Testament as in David's psalms, but always, where the gospel is treated of, the very same, identical, gospel matter and sense, and it must needs be so because Jesus Christ, David and the Apostles all spake by one and the same spirit of truth, *2 Cor. 4:13*, *1 Pet. 1:11*, *2 Sam. 23:2*. This one thing being premised, we shall shew wherefore we cannot use Dr. Watts's psalms or hymns in God's worship. I cannot serve two masters whose wills stand opposed to each other, *Matt. 6:24*. But the wisdom and will of Dr. Watts in his books, which he calls a sufficient provision for Christian psalmody, stands in direct opposition to the wisdom and will of God; therefore I cannot use this author's psalms or hymns in the worship of God, for if I serve God, I must of necessity cleave to and abide by his wisdom, his will, his commandment, and then, of unavoidable consequence, I must reject every work that opposes. Now, that the very reason and foundation on which this author proceeds in his work is directly opposite to the wisdom and will of God, we shall make manifest.

The wisdom of God has thought it most fit, and therefore commanded the Christian Church, to worship him by singing his praises with the precise matter of the Hebrew psalter, the Word of God, the words of David and Asaph the seer, *2 Chron. 29:30*, *Jam. 5:13*. But, in direct opposition to the wisdom and commandment of God, this author affirms, "that the Hebrew psalter (and to be sure the Hebrew psalter is the word of the living God) is very improper to be the precise matter and style of our songs in a Christian church" *Preface to David's Psalms Imitated p. 17*. He adds, "I am bold to maintain the great principle on which my present work is founded, and that is that if the brightest genius on earth, or an angel from heaven, should translate David and keep close to the sense and style of the inspired author, &c. it could never make the fittest psalm book for a Christian people." *p. 26. ibid.*

Thus it appears plain and manifest that the great principle on which this author proceeds is directly opposite to the command of God. God says the Hebrew psalter is the most fit psalm book for Christians, but this author rises up against God and says, No, the matter and sense of the Hebrew psalter is not the fittest psalm book for Christians; therefore I must of necessity reject this author's psalms and hymns if I serve God, because no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other, *Matt. 6:24*. But this author's opposition to the will of God will further appear if we consider a few things:

1. Let us consider how reproachfully he treats the word of God, and the inspired author, David, for he affirms that "where the Jewish psalmist seems to mean the gospel, but he was not able to speak it plain by reason of the infancy of that dispensation and longs for the aid of a Christian poet." *Preface to his Psalms, p.8.*

But did not the Jewish psalmist speak by the Spirit of infinite wisdom and power, *2 Sam. 23:2*? Did he not also by the spirit of the Lord, speak the gospel plain, where he meant the gospel? for all the words of wisdom's mouth are plain to him that understandeth, *Prov. 7:8,9*. Is it not then a reproach to the inspired author to say he was not able to speak the gospel plain without the aid of a Christian poet? Again, we are commanded by the apostle of our lord Jesus Christ, saying, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," *Col. 3:16*. But this author, in direct opposition to the apostle, teaches us to object against and revile the words of Christ. His words are, "Does every menial servant in the assembly know how to use these words devoutly (*viz.*) "When I receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly," *Psa. 75:2*. "A bow of steel is broken by mine arms.. - As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me," *Psa. 18:34,44*. Would I encourage a parish clerk to stand up in the midst of a country church and bid all the people join with his words, (i. e. the words of Jesus Christ) and say, "I will praise thee upon a psaltery, or I will open my dark saying upon the harp." p.13. He goes on with this deistical rant against God and the voids of his holiness, and says, "In all places I have kept my grand design in view, and that is to teach my author to speak like a Christian, for why should I now address God my saviour in a song with burnt sacrifices of fatlings and with the incense of rams; why should I pray to be sprinkled with hyssop, &c. Why should I bind my sacrifice with cords to the horns of an altar." *Preface to his Psalms, p. 19*. Thus we see that the command of God, to sing praises with the words of David and Asaph the seer, stand for nothing with this author, except it be to manifest his enmity against God and the words of his holiness.- Oh sad! where will this end! - Again, the wisdom of God has commanded and recommended the words of the inspired writings as the only and the best matter for all Christian churches to worship God with, but this author's wisdom calls this command of God a fond opinion: His words are, "Some pretend it is but a just respect for the holy Scriptures, for they have imbibed a fond opinion from their very childhood that nothing is to be sung at church but the inspired writings." *Preface to his Psalms, p.8*.

Again, the apostle says that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning," *Rom. 15:4*. But this author affirms, in direct opposition to the apostle, that there are a thousand lines in it, (*viz.* David's psalm book) which were not made for a church in our days to assume as its own." *Preface to his Hymns, p. 6*. Again, the wisdom of God has declared that the matter and sense of David's psalms is, to the Christian religion, as a light that shineth in a dark place, *2 Pet. 1:19-21*. But in direct opposition to this wisdom of God and the experience of all the saints, this author suggests that the matter and sense of David's psalms darkens our religion. His words are: "Others maintain that a strict and scrupulous confinement to the sense of the original is necessary to do justice to the royal author, &c. Such a mere translation of all his verse into English, to be sung in our worship, seems to darken our religion," *Preface to his Psalms p. 9*. Thus we see how reproachfully this author treats the word of God and the inspired author David. Is this the way to heaven? Is this the way to please God?

2. The matter and sense of this author's psalms and hymns is opposite to the wisdom and commandment of God because he has both professedly and practically departed from the ancient sense and meaning of the word of God, and he himself confesses that the songs of his framing are spoiled by cursed pride, are faithless to the cause of God, &c. - These things are manifest by comparing this author's practice and doctrine with the word of God and the practice of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles.

Our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles did not feed the church with groundless suppositions, but according to that apostolical precept, *1 Pet. 4:11*, "they spake as the oracles of God," were very curious and exact everywhere in striving to express the ancient sense and meaning of David and the prophets; for they said none other things than those which the prophets and apostles did lay, *Acts 26:22*. But this author, being led by another spirit, says, "I have not been so curious and exact in striving everywhere to express the ancient sense and meaning of David; but have rather expressed myself as I may suppose David would have done, had he lived in the days of Christianity," *Preface to his Psalms, p.18*. To be sure, this author is far enough from the ancient sense of David and the Holy Ghost, where he substitutes King William, or King George the First, in the room of our Lord Jesus Christ as the subject matter of our song in God's worship. See his 75th psalm compared with David's 75th psalm. As to this author's taking the liberty to suppose, contrary to the express testimony of God, *Psa. 33:11, Isa. 31:2*, that David would have

spoken otherwise than he did, let his own pen describe the nature of his groundless supposition: "Ah me! Where roves my fancy! What kind dreams crowd with sweet violence on my waking mind! perhaps illusion all." *Lyric Poems*, p. 267. Again, the matter and sense of this author's psalms is opposite to the word of God; for instance, the subject matter which the wisdom of God has provided for Christian psalmody, is the everlasting gospel, kingdom and government, of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is written, "When I (says Christ) shall receive the congregation, I will judge uprightly. The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it." *Psa. 75:2,3*. But this author's wisdom rejects the subject matter of this song and substitutes in the room of it a song, which is neither law nor gospel, nor truth, but a false declaration concerning King William, or King George the First: His words are, (speaking to God concerning King Willam, &c.)

"He from thy hand received his crown,
And sware to rule by wholesome laws;
His foot shall tread the oppressor down,
His arm defend the righteous cause"

But how shall a dead man's foot tread the oppressor down? How shall a dead man's arm defend the righteous cause? Is this doctrine law? Is it gospel? Is it truth? Thus we see, this author having rejected the matter and sense of the Hebrew psalter, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, substitutes in the room of it rottenness and corruption, so that there is as much difference between the subject matter and sense of this author's songs and those which the wisdom of God has provided for Christians as there is between our Lord Jesus in heaven and King William in Westminster Abbey.

Objection. But ought we not to bless God for the Glorious Revolution by King William, &c.? True, we ought; but the question is, whether Jesus Christ or King William be the fittest matter of our songs in God's worship?

Again, this author confesses to God that cursed pride has spoiled all his performances, that the songs of his framing are faithless to the cause of God and rob God. His words are, speaking to God:

Stanza vi.

But Pride, that busy sin,
Spoils all that I perform;
Curs'd pride that creeps securely in,
And swells a haughty worm. .

Stanza viii.

The very songs I frame
Are faithless to thy cause,
And steal the honours of thy name
To build their own applause.

Song entitled Sincere Praise, p. 45. Lyr. Poems.

Thus we see that the matter and sense of this author's psalms, or hymns, is directly opposite to the word of God, for the songs of the Hebrew psalter are pure and holy, but this author confesses that his are spoiled by cursed pride; the songs of the Hebrew psalter are the faithful and excellent word of God, but the songs of this author's psalter, he confesses, are the faithless word of man. Now should I be so stupid, as to throw away the matter and sense of the Hebrew psalter, which God has commanded me to worship him with, and instead thereof bring into God's worship songs which their own author confesses are spoiled by his own cursed pride, are faithless to the cause of God and steal the honours of God's name; how can God be pleased with faithless songs, seeing it is written, "without faith it is impossible to please him," *Heb. 11:6*. "Oh consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver," *Psa. 50:22*.

3. This author's opposition to the will and commandment of God appears in the end proposed, for the wisdom of God teaches us that the chief design of psalmody, and all worship, is obedience to his voice, for to obey is better than sacrifice, *1 Sam. 15:22,23*. But

this author, in direct opposition to God, teaches that the chief design of psalmody is, "that we should represent our own sense of things in singing and address ourselves to God, expressing our own case." *Preface to his Psalms*, p.10. Moreover, is not this a direct opposition to *Isa. 58:13, last words*. And also *Num. 15:39*, "Seek not after your own heart." Moreover, the absurdity, as also the impossibility, of this author's chief end is sufficiently manifested by Mr. Pike in his *Preface to his Psalms*, for how can it be possible for any church to address themselves to God in one and the same psalm, or hymn, and yet every one express their own case, seeing it is well known that the frames and circumstances of true believers are so various, to say nothing of the tares that are mingled with the wheat? Thus it is manifest that the wisdom and will of this author stands in direct opposition to the wisdom and will of God, (1.) In the great principle on which this work is founded, *viz.* that the very word of God, the matter and sense of the Hebrew psalter, is not the fittest psalm book for Christians. (2.) In his reproachful treatment of the word of God and the inspired author. (3.) In the matter and sense of his composures (4.) In the end proposed. (5.) And lastly, he tacitly confesses that there is no commandment for singing his composures in the worship of God, for he says, "blessed be God we are not confined to the words of any man in our public solemnities." *Preface to his Hymns*.

Seeing then that this author's wisdom stands in direct opposition to the wisdom of God, the only question that remains is this: shall I hate this author and love God, or shall I hate God and love this author? Shall I hold to this author and despise God, or shall I hold to God and despise this author? One of these I must do, for "no man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other," *Matt. 6:24*. "Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto man more than unto God, let any man judge," *Acts 4:19*. Moreover, our Godly forefathers, and martyrs of Jesus Christ, believed that the matter and sense of the Hebrew psalter is the most proper and fit for Christian psalmody, as appears by their own words and Dr. Watts's confession. They say, "Our devotion is best secured where the matter and the words are of immediate divine inspiration, and to us David's psalms seem plainly intended by those terms of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs which the Apostle useth," *Eph.5:19, Col.3:16*. (these Hymns &c. cannot intend human composures because human hymns are the words of man, but these are the words of Christ.) "The translation which is now put into thy hands cometh nearest to the original of any that we have seen, &c. that we thought fit to recommend it to thy Christian acceptance, some of us having used it already with great comfort and satisfaction." *Preface to that version of David's psalms commonly called the Scotch Version, printed in London, c.1693, subscribed by Thomas Manton, D.D., Henry Langley D.D., John Owen, D.D., W. Jenkyn, Thomas Watson, Ja. Innes, Tho. Lye, Mat. Poole, Jo Milward, John Chester, George Cockayn, Mat. Mead, Robert Franklin, Tho. Doolittle, Tho. Vincent, Joh. Ryther, Will. Thomson, Nico. Blakie, Charles Morton, Edm. Calamy, Will. Carslake, James Janeway, John Hicckes, John Baker, Ri. Mayo*. Again, I am informed by Mr. Pike in the *Preface to his Psalms*, that "this version of David's psalms is no other than Mr Rous's version, revised by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster and sent down to the Scotch church and by them again revised and approved; and the use of it was enjoined there by publick authority, as it was also in England, to be sung in all churches, chapels, &c." Again; Dr. Watts confesses that "the way of a close translation of this whole book of Hebrew psalms for English psalmody has generally obtained among us." See his long *Preface to David's Psalms imitated*. Thus it is evident enough that our godly forefathers believed that the matter and sense of David's psalms is the most proper and fit for Christian psalmody, but Dr. Watts, in direct opposition to the command of God and the faith of our godly forefathers, builds his work upon this principle, *viz.* not that this or that or the other version of David's psalms is improper for Christian psalmody, but that the very word of God, the matter and sense of the Hebrew psalter, is very improper for Christian psalmody. Now why should I forsake the good old way in which our godly forefathers worshipped God to follow one single man, especially since I am commanded to follow them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises, for what is religion but to "fear God, and keep his commandments," *Eccl. 12:13*; or, as our godly forefathers have defined it: "to have our created wills steered and guided by the rule and measure of the divine and uncreated will, which is the supreme reason of all things." With respect to our duty, this, and all God's ordinances, as also the danger there is in speaking or acting against the revealed will of God, I desire the words of our godly forefathers may be considered. Mr. Henry observes in his notes on that text, *Deut. 4:2*, "Ye shall not add thereto any invention of your own under pretence of making the ordinance either more significant or more magnificent, nor diminish from it under pretence of making it more easy and practicable, or of setting aside that which may be

spared, but observe to do all that, and that only, which God has commanded, we may then hope in our religious worship to obtain the divine acceptance when we observe the divine appointment. God will have his own work done in his own way." And elsewhere he says, "Ye shall not add your own inventions, as if the divine institutions were defective, &c. nor shall ye diminish or set aside anything that is appointed as needless or superfluous; God's work is perfect, nothing can be put to it or taken from it, but it makes it the worse." *Eccl.3:14*. Again he adds, "God's commands were the way they must keep in, the rule they must keep to, they must govern themselves by the moral precepts, perform their devotion according to the divine ritual." He concludes his discourse, ver. 40, with this repeated charge: "Thou shalt keep his statutes, and his commandments which I command thee. - What are laws made for but to be observed and obeyed?" - *Henry on Deut. 4:2,3. &c.* Another observes, that "the great evil of sin lies in this, that a man doth his own will and not the will of God. *Eph. 2:3*, 'fulfilling the will of the flesh and of the mind.' In the most religious duties, when men take not God's will for the rule, it is will-worship, *Col. 2:18*, whereby men unlord the law of God, making it of none effect; for if the will of man be set up, then the will of God is put out of its dominion; therefore this is their charge, *Amos 4:5*, 'this liketh you well, O House of Israel;' they took more care what would please themselves than what would please God, and what was agreeable to their wills than to his most just and holy will." *Mr. Strong, in his book entitled, The Will of Man Subjected to the Will of God, p. 17*. Mr. Strong adds, p.312, "When the will of God is manifested, it is the duty of the saints neither to speak nor act against it, they are to cease from both. In the opening hereof I must shew:

1. first that the will of God, as manifested, is to be the rule of our wills and ways, and here we are to consider, (1.) No man is to speak or act according to his own will. It is in a state of sin, that fulfils the will of the flesh and of the mind, *Eph. 2:3*. A man's own will, in opposition to the will of God, is the will of the Devil, *2 Tim. 2:26*. We are said to be led captive by him at his will. This therefore cannot be a rule unto any man either for speaking or acting, but unto him who hath no other God but the God of this world. Christ himself doth not make his will the rule of his actions. "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," *John. 6:38*. The angels do not their own wills, &c. (2.) It is the will of God as manifested that is the rule of all the actions of the creatures. *Deut. 29:29*, 'Things revealed are to us and our children for ever.' This is a constant rule of all their motions for ever; there will never be a time in this world when the scripture, which is the revelation of the will of God, shall be laid aside as of no use, for they belong unto us to do them. (3.) The will of God is revealed and made known both by his word and by his works, &c. And there are three things the saints have mainly to do in this life: 1. To obey his precepts, 2. To believe his promises, 3. To submit to his providences, &c.

2. This will manifested, being the rule of duty, the saints ought neither to speak nor act against it. (1.) A man must not speak against the will of God as manifested, not against his commanding will. A man must not dispute any command of God, for God only is the Lord of his own law, and therefore every thought and reasoning of ours must be brought into subjection thereunto, *2 Cor. 10:5*. Here an implicit faith is only necessary to obey when a man sees no reason for it, therefore the apostle condemns those, *1 Tim. 6:5*, 'perverse disputings of the commands of God by men of corrupt minds destitute of the truth.' (2.) As the saints must not speak against the will of God when it is manifested, so they must not act against it, &c.

3. The grounds of this doctrine are these:

Reason 1. The will of God hath a majesty, and a sovereignty goes with it, for he is the great, the only potentate, king of kings and lord of lords, none governs by will as an absolute monarch but himself, &c. and if there be a sovereignty, then every disobedience unto this will and every opposition against, whether in word or action, is rebellion. *1 Sam.15:23*. There is a rebellion against God because his will hath a sovereignty in it, and his law is a royal law. Therefore the Lord calls the Babylonians, who were a disobedient people, the Land of Rebels, *Jer. 50:21*. For to speak or act against the will of God as manifested, is a rebellion against the Lord. *Jer. 28:16 &c.*

Reason 2. There is an omnipotency in the will of God, for his will created all things, *Rev. 4:11*, and it is the same omnipotent will that rules all things. Now, shall a creature speak or act against such a will, and thereby become a fighter against God, *Acts 5:39*, "If the thing be of God it shall stand, do not oppose it."

Reason 3. Thirdly, whatsoever favours of stubbornness and a gainsaying spirit, the saints of God must abhor, and when the will of God is discovered, then to go against it must needs proceed from a stubborn and gainsaying people. "When the hand of the Lord is lifted up, they will not see," *Isa.26:11*.

Reason 4. It is a great evil in the saints of God to be heady, *2 Tim. 3:4*. To be heady, violent, hasty men, when their will is engaged against the will of God, nothing can stop them.

Reason 5. This makes a man in God's account to become a son of Belial; that signifies, as Hierom observes, a man that is without a yoke, a lawless man, a name given to the devil upon that account, &c. On what ground doth God give a man that title? When his will is manifested and thou opposest it, thou art become a child of Belial. It is a very remarkable place, *1 Sam. 10:27*.

Reason 6. Lastly, thou wilt surely perish in thy own opposition. He that either speaks or acts against the will of God manifested, will perish in his own opposition, *Jude 11*, "They perished in the gainsaying of Corah." God had gloriously manifested his will for Aaron, but Corah and his company will usurp the priesthood; but now the text saith they perished in that gainsaying. So Christ told Paul, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." This author adds, by way of use, I charge you to take notice of it; in all things wherein God shall manifest his will, do you look upon that will both as sacred and sovereign and therefore do not dare to speak or fight against it? Take heed you be not found fighters against God. Do not oppose anything God will have stand. First, do not speak against it, the apostle saith, "the tongue is a world of evil, full of deadly poison." It is a great evil for a man to be given over to a poisoned tongue; the fire of hell is in that man's heart that doth so constantly fire his tongue. This is an evil that godly men may fall into, men that otherwise are of a meek and quiet temper, *Psa. 106:32*, &c. Now there are six directions herein, &c.:

Direction 1. When the will of God is manifested, cease your disputings, silence your reasonings, &c. Let this be enough to silence thee, which did the Lord Jesus, "even so Father, for so was thy good pleasure."

Direction 2.

Direction 3. Thirdly, cease your mocking; silence them too; the assembly of mockers is the worst society of men you can fall into, and the chair of the scorner is the worst seat you can sit down in. "Be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong," *Isa. 28:22*. Truly, mocking proceeds from a high pitch of pride, and pride goes immediately before a fall.

Direction 4. Fourthly, silence your failing, reviling and bitter speeches; David saith, some men's tongues cut like a sharp razor; and that is a remarkable place, *Psa. 73:9*, "They set their mouths against heaven, and their tongues run through the world." What is that? Their mouths against heaven; that is, saith a learned interpreter, when men speak proudly concerning God and the things of God, the ways of God, the works of God, and the saints of God: they stretch their mouths against heaven, and their tongues run through the world; they have to do with all persons, with all employments; all the world over their tongues walk. Solomon I remember, saith, *Prov. 14:3*, "In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride;" he never is without a rod. It is the pride of a fool that sets his tongue on work to scourge the persons and their actions, that are wiser than himself." (Query. Is not this verified in that proud saying: "Where the Jewish psalmist seems to mean the gospel; but he was not able to speak it plain, &c. and longs for the aid of a Christian poet." Has not the poet spoke proudly concerning God and his work in saying, "that the Hebrew psalter is very improper to be the precise matter and style of our songs in a Christian Church?" Has not the poet in this scourged the persons and actions that are wiser and better than himself?) But our author adds, Secondly, be admonished not to act against it, when God has manifested his will; neither be thou an assistant of those that act against the revealed will of God, and to enforce it, take these considerations:

Mot. 1. First, let your opposition and contrary actings be what it will be, when God hath manifested his will, he will carry on the work. If you make the greatest opposition that heaven or earth can make, yet he will carry it on, &c.

Mot. 2. Secondly, the more eminently the Lord has manifested his will, the more evil there is in thy opposition, and the greater the hardness of thy heart when God's will is manifested signally and in an eminent way.

Mot. 3. Thirdly, It is the greatest judgment that can befall a man in his acting for God, to be given over to engage against the manifest will of God. It is the devil's plague, though he knows this is God's will, and he shall be worsted in it.

Mot. 4. Fourthly, You will certainly, in a way of opposition to God's will, meet with your destruction. If thou art a godly man thou wilt meet with judgment, *Isa. 27:4*, "Who is it, saith God, that sets briars and thorns in battle against me?" When God's will is manifested, all opposition is but as briars and thorns in battle, God will go through and burn them at once; and let me tell you this, the Lord hath said, "all iniquity shall stop her mouth," &c.

Mot. 5. And for a conclusion, do not act against the will of God, for if you submit not to the will of God in one thing, the Lord will heighten the judgment upon you in another. If you will not submit to yokes of wood, truly God will make you yokes of iron." Thus far Mr. Strong.

POSTSCRIPT

The Christian poet frequently objects against the psalms of David because his religion and the Jewish poets are so different, but whether this difference will be of any service to the cause of the Christian poet, we shall represent it, and leave all men to judge; but what is religion? It is to "fear God and keep his commandments," *Eccl. 12:13*. Or, as our godly forefathers have defined it, "to have our created wills steered and guided by the rule and measure of the divine and uncreated will, which is the supreme reason of all things." Well then, let us try the religions of these poets by that part of the revealed will of God we have written, *Exod. 23:13*, "And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect; and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth." The Jewish poet, in obedience to this command says he "would not take the names of other gods into his lips," *Psa. 16:4*. But in direct opposition to this plain and positive precept, the Christian poet takes up the names of other gods into his mouth, such as Urania, Hymen, Venus, Cupid, &c. with many more of the rabblement of heathen deities. See his *Lyric Poems*. Again, when the Jewish poet wanted information, he invoked the name of the true God, *1 Sam. 23:11*. But the Christian poet invokes the names of heathen deities, when he was apprehensive that his poetry was only illusion. His words are, "Ah me, where roves my fancy! what kind dreams, crowd with sweet violence on my waking mind, perhaps illusions all! Inform me, muse, he adds, Tell me, Urania, how her joys heighten, and her golden hours circle in love. O stamp upon my soul some blissful image of the fair deceased." See his *Elegiac Thoughts on Anne Warner, Lyric Poems, p. 268*. But who is Urania? Why a wooden image, or one of the nine muses, or heathen deities. But who is the muse in the sense of the Christian poet? Why, he tells us, it is a strong imagination; his words are, "The muse, in the ancient heathen sense, is supposed to be a goddess; but in the philosophic sense it can mean no more than a bright genius, with a warm and strong imagination, &c." see his *Improvement of the Mind, p.360*. Now observe, the heathens they invoked a wooden god that could neither do good nor evil, *Jer. 10:5*. The Christian poet, he invokes his own strong imagination that can do evil, and only evil, yea continually, *Gen. 6:5*. But the Jewish poet, he invoked the true and living God only. Now let any man judge whether the difference of religion between these poets be any just objection against David's psalms. Moreover, these Christian poets, many of them, as well as this author, pretend to be great lovers of Jesus Christ; but if they love him and know him, why do they not walk as he walked, *1 John 2:6*? Did Jesus Christ ever invoke the muses? Did Jesus Christ ever invoke Urania? Did Jesus Christ ever take up the names of the heathen deities into his lips, such as Hymen, Venus, Cupid, &c.? Well, with respect to such as are passed out of time into eternity, we have nothing to do with; but believe that this and all sin may be forgiven if repented of; but to such as are now living, both writers and such as take delight and pleasure in reading such books where the muse is invoked, &c. "they shall surely perish except they repent," *Luke 13:3*. "For we preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, the sea and all things that are therein," *Acts 14:15*.

THE END