

PREFACE.

Singing is practised by almost every nation under heaven, and it has been found in every age to have a powerful operation upon the mind—to elevate it above trifling things—to comfort it under afflictions and trials—to banish sorrows and cares,—and to strengthen the heart for great achievements. Christians are not only invited to this cheerful exercise, but positively commanded, to teach and admonish one another with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, and making melody to the Lord, with grace in their hearts, Col. iii. 10. And we have seen with our eyes that where true religion is in a prosperous state, there is singing and the voice of gladness in the dwellings of the righteous—Ps. cxviii. 15.; and seldom can a company (particularly pious young people) meet without joining their voices together, to sing the praises of God. On the other hand when the children of Zion, hang their harps upon the willow trees, and cannot sing the songs of 'Zion, it is one proof that they are too near the Babal streams, and not drinking abundantly out of the river that makes glad the city of our God.

When the morning-stars sang together, all the sons of God shouted for joy—Job, xxxviii. 7.; and shouting for joy will be a part of the joyful work of the saints in the eternal world.

The Highlands of Scotland have been notable for singing in ages past, and a number of men appeared among them, who had the best of talents for poetry; but alas, true piety, self-denial, and devotedness to God, were little known among them; and then their beautiful talents for poetry were prostituted for the worst of purposes—for the praise of some men, and the disgrace of others; and their vain and profane songs were awfully corrupting the morals of the youth, who took the greatest delight in them. And their brethren in other places who enjoyed the gospel in its purity, for ages neglected the Highlanders, although they were a very interesting race of men, and always found among the bravest and best defenders of our country.