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## Communications

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# Communications

To the Editor of the **Journal**:

I am grateful for the valuable information and commentary, particularly about eighteenth-century English theater and the religious context of Holy Week, provided in John Roberts's "False *Messiah*,"<sup>1</sup> a spirited response principally to my *Journal of Musicology* article "Rejoicing against Judaism in Handel's *Messiah*."<sup>2</sup> I have been surprised and pleased to learn that the articles are being discussed, as a pair, in undergraduate courses and graduate seminars around the country. Encouraged by that, I offer this Communication with the hope of furthering the discussion, in part by responding to criticisms and in part by providing new remarks for readers to contemplate.

*A preliminary observation.* Law students are often taught the adage, "If the facts are against you, hammer the law; if the law is against you, hammer the facts; if the facts and the law are against you, hammer opposing counsel." Roberts's article, unfortunately, approaches the third category when it states:

The most serious problem with Marissen's article, however, lies not in the sources he chose to examine but in how his thinking was shaped and colored by his polemical purpose. He evidently set out to find anything that could by any means be used to support the argument he wanted to make. He focuses primarily on what he calls "rejoicing against Judaism" at the end of Part II [of *Messiah*], but casts a shadow over other parts of the oratorio as well, not least in declaring flatly that it was "designed to teach contempt for Jews and Judaism." Alternative interpretations are hardly ever entertained and the supposed evidence is presented in a highly inflammatory way. We have passed beyond historical inquiry into the realm of propaganda. (p. 50)

Roberts's article expresses loudly and clearly its belief that my *JM* article is not only intellectually but also morally suspect.

*Motivations and provenance.* Roberts's article characterizes my *JM* article as a distorted product of ideas in Tassilo Erhardt's 2005 doctoral dissertation, later

1. This *Journal* 63 (2010): 45–97.  
2. Marissen, "Rejoicing against Judaism in Handel's *Messiah*," *Journal of Musicology* 24 (2007): 167–94. (The journal is henceforth referred to here as *JM*.)

published as *Händels Messiah: Text, Musik, Theologie*.<sup>3</sup> On this question of derivation, Roberts's article states that "much of what Marissen has to say goes back in one way or another to Erhardt" (p. 49), and claims, remarkably, that "as [Marissen] acknowledges, Marissen took his cue from [Erhardt's dissertation]" (p. 45).

My *JM* article calls Erhardt's wide-ranging dissertation "ground-breaking," but it does not say I took my cue from Erhardt. My work, rather, took its cue from my own previous research about Christian reflection on Judaism in general, and the first-century destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in particular.<sup>4</sup> Most of this work, incidentally, argues *against* charges of anti-Judaism in the repertory. My public lecturing on anti-Judaism and *Messiah* predated Erhardt's dissertation, and indeed it was because of my work on issues of anti-Judaism in Bach and Handel that I had the honor of being invited to serve as an examiner for Erhardt's doctoral defense, at the University of Utrecht.

Reasonable persons can differ on the value of the *JM* article, but the speculations in Roberts's article on how I "set out" to find "anything" that could "by any means" be used to support the argument I "wanted to make," and on how my thinking was "shaped by a polemical purpose," are unscholarly, and, as it happens, untrue.

*Misconstrual of thesis.* Roberts's article states that in my "tendentious," "forced," and "exaggerated" *JM* article, "ample evidence, prejudicially interpreted, has yielded a result that is demonstrably false" (pp. 46–47). My article represented its anti-Judaic readings for *Messiah*, however, as one *aspect* of the oratorio's meanings. I declare at the outset (p. 168), "Although rejoicing against Judaism is certainly not the whole story of [*Messiah*], it is a significant and generally unrecognized aspect of the narrative." The fact that Roberts's article does not take this central qualifying statement into account is a glaring flaw in its argument. His article does not prove, then, that a proposed aspect of a work's meaning is "demonstrably false" by showing that there is "ample evidence" for broader aspects within the work's range of plausible meanings. The projection of anti-Judaic sentiment would have to be *incompatible* with the broader aspects in order to render the former "false."

Roberts's article provides not "alternative" but *complementary* interpretations: they do not render invalid the readings for which my *JM* article argued. To say that *Messiah* addresses other contemporary religious concerns, that it was devotional in function, or that it condemns all unbelievers in Jesus does not refute a claim that the work contains significant anti-Judaic sentiment.

3. Tassilo Erhardt, *Händels Messiah: Text, Musik, Theologie* (Bad Reichenhall: Comes Verlag, 2007).

4. Marissen, *Lutheranism, Anti-Judaism, and Bach's St. John Passion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); idem, "The Character and Sources of the Anti-Judaism in Bach's Cantata 46," *Harvard Theological Review* 96 (2003): 63–99; see also idem, "Blood, People, and Crowds in Matthew, Luther, and Bach," *Lutheran Quarterly* 19 (2005): 1–22.

Roberts's article projects a radical misunderstanding of my *JM* article's assessing of evidence, and of its reasoning and conclusions.

*The related issue of selectivity.* Roberts's article states that "Closer examination of the theological literature of [*Messiah* librettist Charles] Jennens's day shows that the theories of [Marissen] are founded on selective and tendentious reading of the sources" (p. 97). Jennens, however, demonstrably knew most of the works I cite. Several of the books on which he evidently relied most heavily were among the most well-known, respected, and widely consulted of such sources in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>5</sup> Jennens's sources discuss many other religious matters as well, but none that is incompatible with their (conventional) anti-Judaism.

*Bishop Kidder.* Roberts's article states that "Marissen enthusiastically endorses" Erhardt's assertion that Jennens used as his primary guide Richard Kidder's *Demonstration of the Messiah*,<sup>6</sup> and asks, "But on what is it based?" (p. 52). I did endorse Erhardt on this point, but in doing so I did not express any special excitement of feeling. I view Erhardt's reasonable assertion as based not simply on how many of the Bible verses that Kidder discusses are selected for Jennens's unusual libretto of mostly verbatim biblical passages. Roberts's article needs to take notice also of Erhardt's qualitative assessment that Jennens relied heavily on Kidder for particular juxtapositions and placements of Bible verses.<sup>7</sup>

On this issue of indebtedness Roberts's article concludes, "Even if it could be convincingly proven that Jennens found Kidder particularly useful for his purposes, that would not mean that he shared Kidder's obsession with Judaism" (p. 53). No one has said, however, that Jennens had (or, to warrant the conclusions in *JM*, would need to have had) an *obsession* with Judaism. Here Roberts's article seriously overreaches.

*Psalm 2.* Roberts's article suggests that Jennens, at *Messiah*'s no. 40, may have substituted "nations" for "heathen" (Psalm 2:1) simply because "nations" is more faithful to the original Hebrew (*goyim*) than "heathen" (p. 62). But had this accuracy been Jennens's concern, he would presumably likewise have changed the King James Bible's "heathen" to "nations" for *Messiah*'s no. 18,

5. Especially the writings of Samuel Clarke, Henry Hammond, Matthew Henry, John Pearson, and Edward Wells.

6. Richard Kidder, *A Demonstration of the Messiah . . . especially against the Jews* (London, 1726), owned by Jennens.

7. Erhardt, *Händels Messiah*, 77, 110, 129, 134, 147, 180, 202, and 241. It is interesting to note, also, that John Boswell, *A Method of Study . . .*, 2 parts in 2 vols. (London, 1738–43), Part 2, *Containing Some Directions for the Study of Divinity*, 334, which Jennens owned, was in the 1740s recommending Kidder as among the very best studies proving that Jesus was God's promised Messiah.

whose middle section includes Jennens's rendering of Zechariah 9:10, "He is the righteous Saviour, and he shall speak peace unto the *heathen* [Hebrew, *goyim*]." Jennens apparently preferred, in *Messiah*, to have Zechariah 9:10 point to Jesus's clearly speaking words of peace to the *gentiles*. (A formidable student of the Bible, Jennens may well have known that in *ancient* Hebrew, *ha-goyim* ["the nations"] can be employed to include Israel.<sup>8</sup>) The evidence suggests that Jennens was specific in his particular word choices in particular movements.

Roberts's article states that "without verses 5–8 [of Psalm 2] the object of [Jennens's] 'Thou shalt break them' [*Messiah's* no. 43] becomes not only 'the people' but also [Psalm 2:1–2's] 'the nations,' 'the kings of the earth,' and 'the rulers,' none of them specifically Jewish" (p. 63). But on the contrary, Christians have traditionally understood Psalm 2:2 prophetically in light of the Gospel of Luke's passion narrative and its Jews, as dictated by the glossing of Psalm 2 in the New Testament at Acts 4:25–27. Thus, e.g., Henry Hammond writes of Psalm 2:2, "[Jewish king] *Herod*, and ['king'] *Pilate*, and the Jewish Sanhedrin ['the rulers'] make a solemn opposition . . . against Jesus . . . *Acts.iv.27*"; and Samuel Humphreys writes similarly of Psalm 2:2, "Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the rulers of Israel (*Acts 4:27.*) will conspire against Christ[.]"<sup>9</sup>

Roberts's article goes on to charge (p. 63) that I fail to acknowledge that my condemnatory historical sources make clear they are not talking just about Jews. His article accuses me of omitting gentile-condemning material in Hammond and implies that I do not tell the full Jewish-*and*-gentile story in Matthew Henry, either. These charges are baffling. My *JM* article suggests (p. 182) that Hammond is "focusing on God's *exemplary* rebuke of practitioners of Judaism," and accordingly I provide an extensive quotation from Hammond concerning God's rebuke of gentile unbelievers in Jesus. Soon after (pp. 182–83), I suggest that Henry's commentary reflects on "God's violent antipathy *first of all* toward Jews" and accordingly report in full on Henry's talk of God's antipathy also toward gentile unbelievers, including all of the Henry material block-quoted on p. 63 in Roberts's article.<sup>10</sup> While my reading of Jennens's use of Psalm 2 focuses on verse 9's (*emblematic*) application to Jewish unbelievers in Jesus, it does also in fact explicitly acknowledge the verse's further application to gentile unbelievers.

8. See Genesis 48:19, "[Jacob-*cum*-Israel's grandson Ephraim's] offspring will become a multitude of the nations [*melo ha-goyim*]."

9. Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations upon . . . the Psalms* (London, 1659), 10; Samuel Humphreys, *The Sacred Books of the Old and New Testament*, 3 vols. (London, 1735–39), 2:1426; see also Gerard Rouwhorst and Marcel Poorthuis, "Why do the Nations conspire?": Psalm 2 in Post-Biblical Jewish and Christian Traditions," in *Empsychoi Logoi—Religious Innovations in Antiquity*, ed. Alberdina Houtman, 425–53 (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

10. Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of All the Books of the Old and New Testament*, vol. 3, *An Exposition of the Five Poetical Books of the Old Testament* (London, 1725), 143.

*Preterism.* Roberts's article accurately points out (pp. 65–66) that Hammond, in a move rare among pre-nineteenth-century Protestants, adopted a “preterist” approach to scripture, holding that all or most prophecies (particularly in the Book of Revelation) were already fulfilled within the first two centuries CE. Hammond's view was opposed to a “historicist” approach, the view that prophecies can be fulfilled throughout the history of the Church.

Roberts's article does not recognize, however, that a proposed first-century fulfillment is acceptable to both a preterist like Hammond and a historicist like Henry. Both Hammond and Henry interpret Psalm 2 as fulfilled (wholly or partly) in the first-century fall of Jerusalem, and both of them, like *Messiah*, juxtapose Psalm 2 and the Book of Revelation (11:15 or 11:18).<sup>11</sup> This mutual acceptability works because preterists reject only the historicist's prejudice for later-than-early-CE fulfillments, and because historicists reject only the preterist's prejudice against later-than-early-CE fulfillments. For our discussion it thus effectively becomes a distraction, not an argument, to bring up preterism.

*“Corelli,” Handel, and Lutheran chorales.* Roberts's article states, “There is no need to worry further about that possibility [of a musical quotation of the Lutheran chorale *Wie schön leuchtet* at measures 12–14 from the Hallelujah chorus], because we have at least two more closely related antecedents for this idea” (p. 79). At pp. 79–80, his article calls attention to a very close correspondence between the Hallelujah chorus and a fugue attributed to one Gallario Riccoleno (apparently an anagram for “Arcangiolo Corelli”) and claims that this fugue also bears a strong similarity to a theme from Corelli's Concerto in D Major, Op. 6, No. 1. On its face, this does sound like a good argument. But under scrutiny, problems arise.

First, the fugue is not so clearly attributable to Corelli as Roberts's article reports. Surviving in only a single manuscript copy, the music remained unpublished until the twentieth century. In the Corelli *Gesamtausgabe* the piece is printed not in the main text with Corelli's genuine works but in the appendix, entitled “Doubtful Works, a Selection.” Although the editor's critical commentary describes the Corellian authenticity of the fugue as “supposable” or even “very likely,” he nonetheless opts not to incorporate the music into the Corelli canon.<sup>12</sup> Handel's having known the fugue is not impossible (whoever its composer was), but the more obscure the provenance and authorship of the piece, the less likely Handel is to have been familiar with it.

A second problem is that although the Corelli Opus 6 concerto theme is musically somewhat close to the Riccoleno fugue theme and the Riccoleno

11. A generation afterward, the renowned historicist Philip Doddridge can likewise link Revelation prophetically to the first-century destruction of Jerusalem, at his discussion of 11:15 via 6:17 in *The Family Expositor* (London, 1739–56), 6:485, 519.

12. Hans-Joachim Marx, *Die Überlieferung der Werke Corellis: Catalogue raisonné, in Arcangelo Corelli . . . Gesamtausgabe* (Cologne: Arno Volk, 1980), 46.

theme is musically very close to the Handel chorus theme, the *bona fide* Corelli theme is musically not very close to the Handel theme. What we seem to have here is not two Corelli antecedents but simply one perhaps-Corelli correspondence.

This close correspondence of the setting of “For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” in the Hallelujah chorus with the obscure Riccoleno fugue might well be coincidental. Certainly the question of what Charles Burney meant when he said these words were “set to a fragment of *canto fermo*” needs to be considered.<sup>13</sup> Was he indicating that Handel’s melodic idea was *like* a hymn tune or Gregorian chant, or that it *was* such a thing? Whatever the answer, Burney most likely was not thinking of the Riccoleno fugue. (This is not to say, however, that he must have been right in suggesting that Handel was using a *cantus firmus*.)

Perhaps the simpler and more plausible solution, after all, is to follow Erhardt in understanding this Hallelujah chorus theme in the context of Protestant hymnody, music with which Handel was familiar from his Lutheran upbringing and from his keeping abreast of German church music (notably Telemann’s). Furthermore, this would fit well with the allusion to the chorale *Wachet auf* in the Hallelujah chorus, an identification accepted by leading Handel scholars.<sup>14</sup>

*Further remarks and materials to consider.* Even if Handel’s *Messiah* indeed expresses triumphal rejoicing against Judaism, does it not project the very same attitude toward *all* populations who do not believe in Jesus? Can and should *Messiah*’s rejoicing against Judaism be understood as a *special* problem? The answer is: yes. Historically, Christian triumphing over Judaism has played out rather differently from its triumphing over paganism, Islam, and other cultural-religious traditions. Notably, Christians’ violence against Jews—to cite only several examples: the eleventh-century First Crusade, the fifteenth-century expulsion from Spain, and the complicity in the twentieth-century murder of millions—was against civilians. The pagans, Muslims, and others—like the Christians but *not* the Jews after the first century CE—typically had armies.<sup>15</sup>

For Jennens’s intended Christian audience, and therefore for historically informed study of *Messiah*, there is another reason that rejoicing against Judaism has to be understood as a special problem: such rejoicing is contrary to the spirit—and in all probability to the letter—of a (highly specific) directive of the New Testament. In Romans, the Apostle Paul writes:

13. Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in . . . 1784, in Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785), 83; see Marissen, “Rejoicing,” 187.

14. See the literature cited in Marissen, “Rejoicing,” 188n65.

15. For a history, see James Carroll, *Constantine’s Sword: The Church and the Jews; A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

but if some of the branches [i.e., Jews who do not follow Jesus] were broken off [from the cultivated olive tree, Israel] and you [gentile follower of Jesus], being a [shoot from a] wild olive tree, were grafted in among them and became a joint sharer of the root of the richness of the [cultivated] olive tree, *do not rejoice against the branches* [*mē katakauchō tōn kladōn*].<sup>16</sup> (Romans 11:17–18)

Jennens may have missed or ignored Paul's concerns about historical Israel, but their significance was not lost, for example, on a leading contemporaneous biblical interpreter like Matthew Henry, who writes (via his early eighteenth-century redactors) of these sentiments in Romans 11:17–18, “[Christians] must not insult and triumph over those poor *Jews* [i.e., the *temporarily* broken-off ‘branches’—11:23, 26, 28–29], but rather pity them, and desire their Welfare, and long for the receiving of them in again.”<sup>17</sup>

While the New Testament often projects a remarkable severity when speaking of Jews who do not believe in Jesus, there are no scriptural texts that counter Romans 11 by suggesting that Christian *schadenfreude* against Judaism is meet or salutary at any time and in any place.

From the standpoint of Paul's directive regarding the peculiar problem of gentile Christian attitudes toward Jewish unbelievers in Jesus, an objection that the Hallelujah chorus also exults over or expresses gratitude for the dashing to pieces of gentile nations who do not believe in Jesus would be beside the point. Both for secular and for biblical ethics, Christian rejoicing against Judaism is a special, and morally urgent, problem.

Whether or not one accepts that Psalm 2 is to be understood in part as prefiguring specifically the first-century destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, the Hallelujah chorus is nevertheless undeniably a joyous utterance following directly upon movements that are to be understood prophetically to speak, in significant part, of some fierce ruin or another for “the people of Israel.” We know *Messiah* speaks of ruin for “the people of Israel,” i.e., the Jews, from the fact that for Jennens's intended Christian audience the meaning of Psalm 2:1 is normatively to be governed by the way this passage is employed in the New Testament at Acts 4:25–27. If a chorus gives expression to *any* joy or gratitude right after the libretto's reference to the dashing to pieces of a “them” that includes Jews, then that choral number—whether intentionally or not, and whether naturally picked up and endorsed by listeners or not—is effectively disobeying Paul's instruction not to rejoice/self-boast against Judaism.<sup>18</sup>

16. This passage served as the epigraph for my *JM* article. The key word here is “*katakauchō*.” Biblical-Greek dictionaries define it as “to boast in triumphant comparison with others,” “to boast one's self to the injury of,” and “to rejoice against.” The word is used also, e.g., at James 2:13b, which the King James Bible gives as “mercy *rejoiceth against* judgment.”

17. Henry, *Exposition of All the Books*, vol. 6, *An Exposition of the Several Epistles in the New Testament . . . and the Revelation* (London, 1721), 48.

18. Given their special history, the very act of rejoicing in any form by New Israel over any sort of ruin experienced by so-called Old Israel inherently involves a kind of self-exaltation. It

*Relevance.* Is it only in the interests of dispassionate historical accuracy that I delve into my topic? I recognize that all or most scholarly work in the humanities involves advocacy of one sort or another. In calling attention to the anti-Judaic aspect of *Messiah*, I am ultimately interested in resisting Christian triumphalism—that is, the (widespread) bad habit of vaingloriously assuming that traditional Christian religious beliefs and practices are superior to all others and should prevail over them. (My aims are not anti-Christian; they are anti-*triumphalist*.)

As a frequent public lecturer I have alas long come to recognize, even among seemingly level-headed people in this country and elsewhere, a burgeoning, unexamined Christian triumphalism that is often linked to an *at best* unconscious, breezy contempt for Judaism.<sup>19</sup> Uncritical or overappreciative responses to Handel's *Messiah* can fuel such triumphalism, but—I hope against hope—critical responses might help to combat it.

In the end, my earnest wish is that my reading of *Messiah* will provide a useful model of how to handle pieces of music that are, or turn out to be, ethically troubling: not by evasion, not through bowdlerization, but by exploring the fullest and most thought-provoking contexts in which to comprehend and interpret the works.

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JOHN H. ROBERTS replies:

Lawyers are in the business of arguing cases for clients and scoring points off the other side. Historians, I like to think, aim at truth, not the whole truth of course, we gave that up a long time ago, but at least, as far as we know, nothing but the truth. There are many things in Michael Marissen's Communication, his reported lecturing on "anti-Judaism and *Messiah*" before he read Tassilo Erhardt's dissertation, for instance, or his distaste for the Christian triumphalism he frequently finds in the audiences he addresses, that I gladly pass over since they have no apparent bearing on the issue at hand: what Jennens and Handel thought they were doing in this oratorio. But I must set the record straight on some of his more relevant objections—relevant, that is, if they are not examined very closely.

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entails the vaunting of assumed superiority by *a mere grafted shoot from a wild olive tree* over and against *the natural branches from the cultivated olive tree*, even if the joy expressed does not feature verbally explicit self-boasting.

19. Such thinking is proclaimed even at the highest ecclesiastical levels, serving as inspiration for ensuing sermons; see, e.g., John Bluck, *The Giveaway God: Ecumenical Bible Studies on Divine Generosity* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001); discussed in Amy-Jill Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 182. (Bluck, an Anglican priest, was the Communication Director for the World Council of Churches.)

One tactic favored by Marissen in this Communication is to attribute to me statements I didn't make and then show why I shouldn't have made them. Most significant and most misleading are his remarks about preterism. In discussing contemporary commentaries on the book of Revelation, from which the text of the "Hallelujah" chorus comes, I pointed out that Marissen's star witness, Henry Hammond, had adopted a preterist interpretation of that colorful but exceedingly obscure book. Recognizing that the author of Revelation had expected his apocalyptic visions to come true in the near future, Hammond followed the Dutch theologian Hugo Grotius in concluding that this must for the most part have happened during the first few centuries of Christianity. This put him at odds with the overwhelming majority of his Anglican contemporaries, who adhered to the traditional anti-Catholic historicist view which saw the events predicted in Revelation as spanning human history down to and including the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgment. Marissen, however, foists on me a very different definition of preterism prevalent among present-day evangelicals, claiming I said that Hammond applied a preterist approach to the entire Bible, "holding that all or most prophecies (particularly in the Book of Revelation) were already fulfilled within the first two centuries CE." Using this definition enables him to counter that there is no conflict between preterism and historicism in the interpretation of Psalm 2. But I never mentioned preterism in relation to Psalm 2 (which would be nonsense from Hammond's point of view), and chapters 11 and 19 of Revelation, those quoted in the "Hallelujah" chorus, were consistently understood by the British historicists of Jennens's time as prophecies that would be fulfilled only in the final days when Christ triumphed throughout the world. Contrary to what Marissen implies, Matthew Henry explicitly describes Revelation 11:15 ("The kingdoms of this world")—which he connects not with verse 9 of Psalm 2 ("Thou shalt break them") but with verse 8, unused in *Messiah*—as yet to be fulfilled.<sup>1</sup> And I am surprised that Marissen calls attention to Philip Doddridge (Communication, n. 11), for what Doddridge actually wrote about Revelation 11:15 was that "the learned *Grotius*, than whom no great Commentator was ever more mistaken in his Explication of this Book, strangely sinks the Importance of the Event here referred to, by expounding it of the *Liberty* given to the *Christians* to profess their Religion in *Judea*, when the *Jews* were banished."<sup>2</sup> The prevalence of such hostility toward preterist interpretation of Revelation in early eighteenth-century England fatally undermines Marissen's contention that Jennens's contemporaries would automatically have associated the words of the "Hallelujah" chorus with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE.

1. Henry, *An Exposition of All the Books*, 3:143.

2. Doddridge, *The Family Expositor*, 6:519. Grotius's interpretation is echoed in Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase, and Annotations upon all the Books of the New Testament, briefly explaining all the Difficult Places thereof*, 7th ed. (London, 1702), 802.

Another strategy of Marissen's is to attack one of my arguments while ignoring others more damaging to his position. He insists he is right and I am wrong about the syntactical effect of Jennens going directly from verse 4 of Psalm 2 to verse 9, a question of dubious importance about which we could argue endlessly. But he says nothing about my observation that Jennens might well have passed over verses 5–8 not in order to give "Thou shalt break them" an anti-Jewish edge but because they were thematically irrelevant, verbally redundant, and would have made this section of the oratorio disproportionately long. In like manner, he attempts to cast doubt on the attribution to Corelli of a fugue whose subject closely resembles the one attached to the words "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" in the "Hallelujah" chorus and questions whether Handel would have known it, all preparatory to reaffirming that Handel's line is a deliberate reference to Philipp Nicolai's "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern," which by a prodigious stretch Marissen construes as a hostile allusion to the Jews. Yet he fails to mention that Handel's chorus, whatever its relationship to the Corellian fugue, is unmistakably based on an anthem chorus of his own in which this subject likewise functions as a *canto fermo*, a movement that no one has linked to the chorale or to anti-Judaism. By contrast, the supposed chorale quotation involves only a single internal phrase of Nicolai's hymn, and the same scalar pattern underlies countless other fugal subjects of the period.

Marissen adds a few new points. He now contends that in Psalm 2:1 ("Why do the nations") Jennens could not have chosen "nations" over the then standard "heathen" on the grounds of accuracy because he didn't make the same change in Zechariah 9:10 ("He shall speak peace unto the heathen"). Jennens took the texts in *Messiah* from the King James Version of the Bible and, for the Psalms, the Coverdale translation in the Book of Common Prayer (1662). As Marissen has shown, Jennens also consulted Hammond's commentary on the Psalms, and it is there that he found the variant in Psalm 2:1, recommended by Hammond as a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew *goyim*. But Hammond wrote no commentary on Zechariah. The King James Version translates the crucial word in Zechariah 9:10 "heathen." So does Edward Wells, whose commentaries both Erhardt and Marissen cite as one of Jennens's principal sources. In Wells, Jennens would have read, "he shall speak Peace unto the Heathen, *i.e. the Preaching of the Gospel shall tend it self to put an End to all Wars and Enmities between Man and Man, particularly between Jews and Gentiles, as well as between God and All Mankind,*" hardly an incitement to anti-Jewish feeling.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding Jennens's alleged dependence on Kidder's *Demonstration of the Messias* I am faulted for not taking account of "Erhardt's qualitative assessment that Jennens relied heavily on Kidder for particular juxtapositions and

3. Edward Wells, *An Help for the more Easy and Clear Understanding of the Holy Scriptures: being the Twelve Lesser Prophets* (Oxford, 1723), 39 (3rd) (italics in the original).

placements of Bible verses.” In support of this complaint Marissen simply gives eight page numbers in Erhardt’s book, not a single example. For the benefit of anyone disinclined to chase down those references, I should explain that the first one (77) concerns the mistaken claim that neither Kidder nor Jennens drew on the book of Daniel (Kidder amply did), and none of the other parallels does much to prove that the *Demonstration* served as Jennens’s main source of inspiration. In two cases, Kidder is merely cited as exemplifying ideas repeatedly encountered in Jennens’s library (129, 134); two others have to do with Jennens and Kidder choosing not to include certain verses, and it is easy to see why both writers might independently have rejected them (147, 202).<sup>4</sup> That Kidder quoted from Psalms 24 and 68 in the same paragraph is offered by Erhardt as a possible reason for Jennens’s use of those Psalms in nonadjacent sections dealing with the Ascension and Pentecost (241), but here Jennens surely needed no special prompting since these very psalms were appointed for reading on Ascension and Whitsun (Pentecost) in the Book of Common Prayer. And so on. Perhaps it was unfair of me not to discuss this line of argument in Erhardt’s book except for noting the bogus Daniel claim (though that is exactly what Marissen did in his *JM* article). But I decided that to do it properly would mean going into more unilluminating detail than the readers of this **Journal** could be expected to bear.

In his most sweeping condemnation, Marissen says that my criticisms are misguided because I don’t understand that he was talking about only one aspect of *Messiah* and complementary interpretations can always coexist. He seems to have lost sight of a more basic principle: if you want to argue that an author intended a work, in whole or in part, to be received in a particular way, you need to come up with some kind of persuasive evidence. That Michael Marissen has not done, and no amount of expert lawyering can fill the gap.

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4. The verses not selected are Isaiah 9:3–5 and 53:7–8a.