

INSPIRED PSALMODY

A PLEA FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE PSALTER IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

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by the
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"Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

PREFACE
by Rev. David Johnston B.A.

This Preface is written in compliance with a request from the author of the Sermon on Inspired Psalmody. The subject is one of no small importance. Yet there is reason to conclude that thousands and tens of thousands, who, in so far as the singing of God's praise is concerned, have either discarded the Psalter altogether, or placed uninspired hymns on a footing of equality with or superiority to it, have never candidly considered the subject in the light of Holy Scripture. Their practice is simply what they have all along been accustomed to, or what they regard as being in good taste, or in harmony with the spirit of the age; and any proposal that, instead of their present method of praising God, they should use, as their only Hymn Book, the Psalter which He Himself has given, would be immediately rejected as preposterous in the extreme.

There are some who, in this matter, allow themselves to be carried away by their own feelings. They take delight, as intelligent Christians may well do, in sacred songs of undoubted excellence, which uninspired poets have indited; and, without any well-grounded reason for their conduct, they act on the tacit assumption that there can be no harm in assigning to such standard compositions a place not one whit inferior to the place which they assign to the Psalms in the worship of God.

Their conduct would be the same, in point of principle, were they, through being charmed with a chapter in the Apocrypha, or with the Te Deum, or with a sermon of surpassing excellence, to put it at once on a level with Holy Scripture, and to have it read along with, or in substitution for, the Bible, in public or private worship. Others who, though they have not the same refinement, give the same supremacy to mere feeling or impulse, employ uninspired hymns of a very different stamp — unpoetical and coarse, and perhaps inaccurate in language and theology, yet eagerly relished by those who sing them.

There is a different class, whose attitude towards the Psalter may be traced to the absence of due regard for the paramount authority of God's Written Word. Although they claim and are widely credited with enlightenment and liberal-mindedness, and are said to be far above anything like blind bigotry or prejudice, and to attach great importance to freedom of thought, they assert, with the utmost dogmatism, that the Bible gives forth no authoritative decision in such matters as Divine Worship and Church Government, and that, accordingly, Christians are at liberty to worship God in any way they like. It matters not, they say, whether the prayers be free or liturgical; whether the singing be accompanied or unaccompanied by instrumental music; whether standing, or kneeling, or sitting be practised at the Communion; whether the Psalter, or uninspired songs, or a mixture of both, be employed in the service of praise. Thus, setting out with the arbitrary assumption that these and similar matters must be regulated, not by the testimony of the Scriptures, but by the fluctuations of human taste and temper, they decide for instrumental music, and uninspired hymns, and liturgical prayers; and treat as weak brethren any who stand up for having such matters decided by the Word of God, and who, therefore, on Scriptural grounds, advocate free prayer, and the use of the Psalter exclusively, and without instrumental accompaniment, in the service of Christian praise. In this way the ancient Hymn Book, given by God, is pushed aside, and superseded by a multifarious variety of hymnals, devised by men of conflicting and contradictory creeds, and adapted to the diversified views and circumstances of such as are expected to use them. It is not a case like that of those noble-hearted recipients of the Gospel, of whom it is recorded in Acts 17:11, that "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." On the contrary, the teaching of Holy Scripture, so far from being searched out, and thankfully accepted, and implicitly followed, is ignored and disregarded, that full scope may be claimed for walking in the ways of one's heart, and in the sight of one's eyes. And any attempt to reason with such persons, and to bring them to the touchstone of the Word of God, makes it painfully apparent that they belong to the class of whom the prophet Jeremiah writes (Jer. 6:10): "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the LORD is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it."

The position, whether tacitly assumed or dogmatically asserted — that the written Word of God leaves the mode of worshipping Him an open question, to be settled, or rather to be kept unsettled, in accordance with the standardless diversity of human tastes and feelings — has not that a priori obviousness which entitles some statements to be accepted as axiomatic truths. The Scriptures, moreover, so far from favouring the position, either by direct testimony or by silence as to forms of worship, point clearly and explicitly in the opposite direction. One of the devices resorted to by some modern advocates of instrumental music is to assert, as if it were a fact, that the instrumental music of Judaism had no Divine sanction, but was a purely human invention, and that accordingly, as under the law, such music was permitted without being authorised, so, likewise, it may be similarly practised in the worship of the Christian Church. Yet, if this assertion be dealt with as the Bereans dealt with the tidings addressed to them, it cannot stand the test. It is concerning the joyful observance of the new moons and Jewish feast days, characterised, as the primitive worship of those ancient ordinances was, by the sound of the cornet, and the music of timbrel, harp, and psaltery, that the Psalmist declares in Psalm 81:4,5, "This was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This He

ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt." So, likewise, concerning the more elaborate ritual by which the offering of the appointed sacrifices in the temple was distinguished in the days of King Hezekiah, it is recorded in 2 Chronicles 29:25, that "he set the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: for so was the commandment of the LORD by His prophets."

The New Testament, also, so far from being silent or obscure on the subject of Christian worship, gives forth a clear and minute testimony, which extends not only to general principles, as in Matthew 15:9, John 4:23,24, 1 Corinthians 14:15, but to specific details. Now it is worthy of particular notice that this testimony points, not in the direction of such variety in worship as modern latitudinarians commend, but to a simple uniformity, absolutely free from liturgical prayers, and instrumental music, and uninspired hymns, and other favourite innovations on the practice of the Apostolic Church. Yet surely if the worship of God — instead of being regulated by some fixed rule or principle contained in His written Word — had been left to the discretion of each particular congregation, after the analogy of the spurious presbyterianism, or rather congregationalism, now rampant in the Church of Scotland, we might reasonably expect to find in the New Testament, instances of free prayer, and also instances of liturgical prayer — instances of instrumental music in the service of praise, and also instances of purely vocal psalmody — references to the singing of the canonical psalms, and also references to the singing of uninspired hymns. The idea of any such variety, however, is expressly precluded by the plain teaching of the New Testament, which shows that the worship of the primitive Church was characterised by free prayer to the exclusion of liturgies, and by the singing of psalms to the exclusion of instrumental music on the one hand, and human hymnals on the other. Indeed Ephesians 5:19, and Colossians 3:16 — which constitute the theme of the discourse to which these prefatory remarks are prefixed — stand out prominently as specific texts in favour of the exclusive use of the Psalter in the service of praise. As is stated in the sermon, "the reference is simply to the different classes of poems contained in the Psalter."

Yet is it not possible that, if some — who confidently point to the threefold cord in Ephesians 5:19, and Colossians 3:16, for a vindication of their having supplemented or superseded the Psalter with other compositions which they are in the habit of singing in their devotions — were asked to give the specific meaning of the word hymns, or to state wherein hymns and spiritual songs differ from one another, or to explain how it comes to pass that, while they insist on having a Hymn Book in addition to the Book of Psalms, they do not likewise insist on having also a third book of praise, called a Book of Spiritual Songs, but leave out of account one of the three devotional compositions which the Apostle twice enjoins — they would be unable to give anything like a satisfactory or even an intelligible answer? Even if they were aware of the fact that hymn is not a Saxon but a Greek word, they would be found to have no idea of its distinctive meaning as applicable to that alone which is specifically a song of praise to God, and inapplicable to many of the metrical rhymes contained in those manifold collections of printed matter which are popularly called Hymn Books and Hymnals.

One has but to consider the specific meanings of the terms *psalms*, *hymns*, *spiritual songs*, and to observe the manner in which the equivalents of these terms are used in the Hebrew Psalter, and in the ancient Alexandrian version of it, in order that one may see how it was to the Psalter, and to the Psalter alone, as the divinely inspired Hymn Book of the Church, Christian as well as Jewish, that the Apostle was referring. The very title of the Psalter in the Hebrew Bible is a word specifically denoting, not psalms but hymns, being derived from the verb which forms the first part of the well-known Hebrew phrase, HALLELUJAH, Praise ye. Jehovah. This phrase, *Hallelujah*, stands between Psalms 104, 105, and 106, 107, also at the beginning of 106, 111, 112, 113, between 113 and 114, between 115, 116, 117, 118, respectively, at the beginning of 135., between 135 and 136, and at both the beginning and the end of each of the five last Psalms in the Psalter. Now this characteristic phrase, which obviously serves the purpose of a title to the psalms to which it is prefixed, marks off as hymns those sacred odes to which it belongs.

The verbal noun *Tehillah*, derived from the first part of the phrase *hallelujah*, and corresponding to the noun *hymn*, is found in the title of Psalm 145, which may be translated David's praise, or David's hymn, and in 56 other passages, of which 29 are in the Psalter. Yet as (unless perhaps in the title of Psalm 145) *Tehillah* does not appear to have then acquired the technical signification involved in the plural *Tehillim*, *Hymns*, as the Hebrew name of the Psalter, so it is invariably translated *praise* throughout the English Bible, as in Ex. 15:11; Psalms 33:1, 40:3, 65:1, 66:2,8, 100:4, 109:1, 119:171; Is. 60:6, 18; Hab. 3:3; Zeph. 3:19, 20.

Archbishop Trench, in his treatise on the Synonyms of the New Testament, observes, — "A psalm might be a *De profundis*, the story of man's deliverance, or a commemoration of mercies which he had received; and of a 'spiritual song' much the same could be said: a hymn must always be more or less of a Magnificat, a direct address of praise and glory to God. Thus, Jerome (on Eph. 5:19): 'Breviter hymnos esse dicendum, qui fortitudinem et majestatem prædicant Dei, et ejusdem semper vel beneficia, vel facta, mirantur' [Briefly those may be said to be hymns which celebrate the power and majesty of God, and ever extol either his

benefits or his deeds.].... Augustine in more places than one states the notes of what in his mind are the essentials of a hymn — which are three. 1. It must be sung. 2. It must be praise. 3. It must be to God."

The technical word *Mizmor*, Psalm, occurs in the titles of the following 57 Psalms: — 3-6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 19-24, 29-31, 38-41, 47-51, 62-68, 73, 75-77, 79, 80, 82-85, 87, 88, 92, 98, 100, 101, 108-110, 139-141, 143. Thirteen of these 57 Psalms, namely, 30, 48, 65-68, 75, 76, 83, 87, 88, 92, 108, are also intitled *shir*, a *song*; and the same designation *song*, corresponding to spiritual song in Eph. 5:19, and Col. 3:16, occurs in the titles of 18 other Psalms, namely, 18, 45, 46, and the 15 Songs of Degrees, 120-134. The verbal root of *mizmor*, *psalm*, denotes primarily cutting or pruning, as in Lev. 25:3,4, Isa. 5:6; and hence dividing a poetical composition into parts to be sung by the human voice, either alone, as in Psalms 7:17, 30:12, or with an instrumental accompaniment, as in Psalms 33:2, 71:22, 144:9, 147:7. Yet the instrumental accompaniment, where it was in use, was so intimately connected with the ritual of Judaism, and so essentially dependent on the Hebrew rhythm of the Psalms, that it would be absurd in the extreme to imagine that the New Testament references to those Psalms as translated into Greek, and sung by the unaided voices of the disciples in apostolic times, can give any sanction to instrumental music in Christian worship. Calvin, who defines a Hymn as specifically a song of praise, "proprie laudis canticum," says of a spiritual song (*oda*), that it contains not only praises, but counsels and other topics, "non laudes tantum, sed paræneses, et alia argumenta." Indeed it is obvious from the use of the word *shir*, *song*, in the Psalter, that the spiritual song is specifically an ode of a didactic or doctrinal character, such, for instance, as Psalms 102-107, Psalm 119, the fifteen Songs of Degrees, and thirteen Psalms (32, 42, 44, 45, 52-55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142) intitled *Maschil*, a word which denotes giving instruction, and is explained in the first of the thirteen (32:8): "I will INSTRUCT thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." Spiritual songs were sung by the human voice on special occasions, particularly in religious processions, as when a band of joyful worshippers went up to the house of God.

Although in the Septuagint, as in the English Bible, uniformity of translation has not been adhered to, yet the manner in which the three technical words, *psalm*, *hymn*, *song*, are used in that ancient version, is amply sufficient to show how the Apostle's use of them in Eph. 5:19, and Col. 3:16, would be readily understood to refer exclusively to the psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs of the inspired Psalter.

(1.) *Psalms*. — In the Septuagint, as in the Hebrew original, Psalms 3-6, 8, 9, and several others, are intitled "A Psalm by David."

(2.) *Hymns*. — Psalms 54 and 55 are characterised in their titles as being "among the HYMNS of understanding, by David"; and in the note appended to Psalm 72 the translators seem to have read *tehilloth* (hymns), for *tephilloth* (prayers): "The HYMNS of David, the son of Jesse, are ended."

(3.) *Spiritual Songs*. — Psalms 120-134 are each intitled, "A song of the Ascents;" and in the heading of the 18th Psalm David is declared to have spoken "to the Lord the words of this song."

As in the Hebrew original, so in the Septuagint version, the two names, *psalm* and *song*, occur together in several titles. Thus the titles of Psalms 30, 48, 68, 75, 87, 92, contain the phrase, "a PSALM of SONG," while the converse expression, "a SONG of PSALM," occurs in the titles of 66, 83, 88, 108. In like manner, the title of the sixth Psalm contains the significant expression, "a PSALM among the HYMNS"; and: all the three names, *hymn*, *psalm*, *song*, appear in the titles of 67 and 76: —

67. — Unto the end among the HYMNS, a PSALM of SONG by David.

76. — Unto the end among the HYMNS, a PSALM by David, a SONG for the Assyrian.

Since the titles form part of the original text of the Hebrew Scriptures, it is to be regretted that they are not generally printed in the metrical version used in the Church of Scotland. They are similarly omitted from the Psalter in the English Book of Common Prayer, and from the metrical versions by Sternhold and Hopkins, and by Tate and Brady. For this omission nothing like a sufficient reason can be assigned. Hence the present opportunity may be seized of suggesting to any printer or publisher of the Psalms in metre, who happens to peruse this little treatise, that he would be doing a valuable service to the interests of Bible truth if he were to remedy the defect complained of many of the titles throw a flood of light on their respective psalms, by specifying the circumstances in which the psalms were written, or to which they primarily refer; so that the suppression of the titles is a positive mutilation of the text, similarly as the omission of 1 Sam. 19:11, 22:9, 23:19, and 2 Sam. 22:1, which are coincident with the titles of Psalms 59, 52, 54, and 18, would be.

Over and above the clear testimony of the titles, both in the Hebrew original of the Psalter, and in the Septuagint version, the language of the Psalms themselves is similarly conclusive; as for instance in the following passages, translated from the Septuagint: —

69:30. — "I will praise the name of my God with a SONG."

100:4. — "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, [and into] his courts with HYMNS."

119:171. — "My lips shall utter a HYMN when thou hast taught me thy statutes."

137:3. — "There they that had taken us captive asked of us the words of SONGS, and they that had led us away [asked] a HYMN, [saying] Sing to us from the SONGS of Sion. How shall we sing the Lord's SONG upon the land of a stranger."

144: 9. — "O God, a new SONG I will sing to thee."

It may be further observed that whereas Eph. 5:19, and Col. 3:16, are the only passages in which the noun for *hymn* occurs in the New Testament, the cognate verb, denoting to *sing hymns*, is found four times, and is represented in the English Bible by the words, "when they had sung an hymn," (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26); "sang praises" (Acts 16:25); "will I sing praise" (Heb. 2:12); this last passage being quoted from the Septuagint version of Psalm 22:22. "In the midst of the church I will sing hymns to thee." One other passage from the Septuagint may be mentioned, in proof of the fact that it is to hymns in the divinely-inspired Psalter that this verb and the cognate noun, *hymn*, refer, in the New Testament: —

2 Chron. 29:30: "King Hezekiah and the princes told the Levites to SING HYMNS to the Lord IN THE WORDS OF DAVID AND OF ASAPH the prophet; and they SANG HYMNS with gladness, and fell down and worshipped."

Evidence could scarcely be clearer or more conclusive than this is of the fact that in Eph. 5:19, and Col. 3:16, the terms, *hymns* and *spiritual songs* refer, not to uncanonical poems like those now commonly called hymns, but to those divinely-inspired odes in the Book of Psalms, which are expressly designated hymns and songs in that ancient version which was current among the early Christians, and was frequently quoted from by the Apostles.

This point might be still further illustrated by various portions of the New Testament. In Luke 1:46-55, for instance, Mary's triumphant outburst of thanksgiving, though not sung, but said, is pervaded by language taken from the Book of Psalms; and the same remark is applicable to the prophecy uttered by Zacharias when he was filled with the Holy Spirit, as described in the same chapter of Luke's Gospel.

It was in words from the 118th Psalm that Sion's unworldly King was saluted on his entry into Jerusalem, by the multitudes going before, and following after. It was in the same words that the children in the Temple sounded His praise; and when the chief priests and scribes complained of them for so doing, it was in words from the eighth Psalm that the Saviour silenced the complainers. (Matt. 21:1-16.)

As with the HOSANNA of the Gospels, so with the HALLELUJAH of the Revelation (19:1-6). The Hallelujah, thundered forth by a great voice of much people in heaven, like the Hosannah cheerfully sung by the voices of happy children on the earth, was taken from the Psalter; and it was from the same inspired hymn-book that the voice which came out from the throne, and the voice of the great multitude, selected the words of their praise: "A voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.... Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" James, in his epistle to the twelve tribes, exhorts merry-hearted Christians to sing psalms. And there is not a shadow of evidence for the supposition that the primitive Christians may have sung, in their worship, any hymns except those contained in the Psalter.

Chrysostom, in the fourth century, mentions that the Psalms were used by all classes of Christians. "David was always in their mouths, not only in the cities and the churches, but in the courts, in the monasteries, and in the wilderness. He turned earth into heaven, and men into angels, being adapted to all orders and all capacities, children, young men, virgins, old men, and sinners."

At a still earlier period, the well-known words of Pliny, about the early Christians being wont to assemble before sunrise on a stated day, and to sing a hymn to Christ as God, *carmenque Christo ut Deo*, yield an incidental testimony none the less valuable, but all the more so from the circumstance that they are sometimes adduced on the other side.

Several of the most frequently cited among the Psalms are just hymns to Christ as God. The Master himself quoted the 110th Psalm as a hymn of this description, when he asked the Pharisees how the Messiah could be both David's son and David's Lord. (Matt. 22:41-45). It was with a similar application that the same Psalm and Psalm 16 were quoted by the Apostle Peter in his address on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:22-36); and in the prophetic prayer of the early Christians, recorded in Acts 4:24-30, the second Psalm is quoted in the same way. The same second and sixteenth Psalms were similarly quoted by the Apostle Paul in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:22-39); and the telling words, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," are expressly-mentioned in Hebrews 1:8, as addressed by the Father to the Son.

It may be still further observed that it was not till the dignity of Christ as God was called in question by the Arians in the fourth century, that the practice of singing uninspired hymns was introduced; and it was thus introduced, not by those who still maintained the Godhead of the Son, but by those who denied it. It was because hymns sung to Christ as God did not suit the views of the Arians, that they became dissatisfied with the Book of Psalms, and devised hymns of their own; and it is to be regretted that Chrysostom, while repudiating their doctrines, followed their example in the adoption of uninspired hymns, and thus paved the way for the spread of one of the most prolific of all propagators of unsound theology.

Sometimes the suitability of the Psalms as hymns to be sung in the worship of the Christian Church is objected to on account of the imprecations and judgments recorded in them. This objection, however, indicates a misapprehension of the divine plan, and of that system of sacred doctrine which is common to Judaism and Christianity alike. To demur on such a ground as this to the singing of the Psalms is to impugn the teaching of the New Testament; and it is not easy to see how any one who implicitly accepts the Apostolic writings can consistently call in question the use of the Psalter in Christian worship. Such passages as Matt. 25:41; Luke 19:27; Acts 5:1-11; 13:9-11; 1 Cor. 5:3-5; Gal. 1:8-9, 5:12; 2 Tim. 4:14; Rev. 6:9,10, 16:5-7, 18:6-8,20, are strictly analogous to the imprecations and judgments of the ancient Psalter. So likewise it was concerning an imprecation of judgment, in Psalms 69 and 109, that Peter declared to the assembled disciples after their Lord's ascension that the Holy Spirit spake it through the mouth of David, and that it must needs have been fulfilled (Acts 1:16-20); and it was in a similar strain that Paul quoted another portion of the same 69th Psalm, in Rom. 16:9,10. A sentimentalism which looks with disfavour on the revelation of God's wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and shrinks from the singing of psalms in which His true and righteous judgments are invoked, not on the innocent but on the guilty, is a sentimentalism incompatible with the theology of both Testaments, and with unfeigned belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God. "Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) By no means; for then how shall God judge the world?"

Much more might be said of the Psalter as a doctrinal standard, tending to check error, and unbelief, and ignorance of God's character and attributes, to keep the salt of the earth from losing its savour, and to preserve soundness in the faith among those who use the Psalms as the early Christians used them. Good and excellent though many uninspired hymns are when kept in their own place and used lawfully, the admitting of them to a position of practical equality with the Psalms in the service of praise is like the letting in of water, and has done far more to misrepresent and injure than to promote the interests of sacred truth.

The origin of uninspired hymns in Christian worship is thus deeply instructive. In answer to the arguments of those who defend the practice on account of the edification which they derive from such compositions, and the pleasure they have in singing them, it may be observed that, as the end does not necessarily justify the means, so good and solemn impressions are not in themselves sufficient to prove that that which has given rise to them is right or appropriate. Good and grand music has a sublime and elevating influence of its own, be the circumstances what they may, — whether it is the music of a military band engaged in unrighteous warfare, or the music of an elaborately arranged concert, or the music of a choir of mercenary singers and players, hired for purposes of attraction, to conduct the musical performances in a Romanist or Protestant place of worship, or the music of a group of skilful street musicians. But this fact can surely afford no argument for the practice of such music in the devotions of a Christian congregation.

The case is similar with the impressiveness of uncanonical hymns. Let a Christian man assign to the Hymn Book given by inspiration of God its own proper place in the worship of God, and such a man need be at no loss to derive from the legitimate use of uninspired hymns not one whit less edification and profit than if, in his devotions, he placed them on a level with the Book of Psalms. It is to be lamented that, in this worldly age, many professors of Christianity addict themselves to such recreations and amusements as are obviously incompatible with the Apostolic rule, "whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Between them and the men of the world there is not that wide difference which the Scriptures require and insist on. From their social gatherings all references to God and to the paramount claims of Christ and of Christianity are as completely excluded as if they did not profess the Christian religion at all. Whatever music they indulge in is entirely secular; and any proposal to make some acknowledgment of God would be

treated as altogether out of the question. "The harp, and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine are in their feasts; but they regard not the work of the LORD, neither consider the operation of his hands."

But here comes in the lawful use of sacred music. While no Christian who adheres to the views maintained in this treatise can feel himself at liberty to employ such things as instrumental music and uninspired hymns either in domestic or in public worship, it does not follow that such a person is precluded from the enjoyment of good music, whether vocal or instrumental, or from the singing of uninspired sacred poetry. It is perhaps not too much to say that, among all such innocent and profitable recreations as Christians may with propriety enjoy, music stands pre-eminent. So likewise, what can be better as a recreation, whether in the family circle or in a social gathering of Christian friends, than to sing such sacred songs as Christian poets have from time to time indited? If the line of demarcation between the canonical and the uncanonical be faithfully observed, so that there can be no difficulty in distinguishing Christian recreation from direct religious worship, uninspired songs will be enjoyed with all the greater relish, from the fact that they are kept in their own place, and are left behind when the worshippers enter the inner circle, and present their prayers and praises at the throne of grace. Whereas, when no such distinction is kept up, when, in the service of praise, the human is placed above, or on a level with, the divine, and the purely vocal psalmody of primitive Christian worship is superseded by the professional services of "one who hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument," and who is ready to hire himself out to Presbyterians and Episcopalians, to Protestants and Romanists, by turns, according to the prices offered for his musical performances the worship of God degenerates into the entertainment of men, and the Church sinks down to the level of the world. In such circumstances, social intercourse is unsanctified by homage to God; and even what purports to be divine worship is more akin to the music of a concert than to Christian psalmody. At the present time, for instance, when latitudinarianism in doctrine and anarchy in worship are sadly prevalent, it is no uncommon thing for fashionable congregations to have pieces of music, called doxologies, sung to them before the benediction is pronounced. Is there any one whether among the pastors who tolerate such performances, or among the congregations that listen to them who, in his heart, believes that these so-called doxologies are sung to the glory of God?

An important point, bearing on the relation between praise and prayer, must yet be noticed before this Preface is brought to a close. Sometimes the use of a liturgy of praise is put forward as an argument in favour of liturgical prayers. It is asserted that if a hymn book be lawful in Christian worship, a prayer book cannot be unlawful, and that it is therefore inconsistent for any advocate of the use of the Psalms in the ordinance of praise to insist on free prayer, to the exclusion of liturgical. Yet this argument is shallow and inconclusive in the extreme.

Any relevant comparison between the ordinances of praise and prayer must point in the opposite direction. If there were in the Bible a book of Prayers analogous to the Book of Psalms, and divinely sanctioned, as the Psalms are, for liturgical use in the public worship of the Christian Church, it would be the obvious duty of Christians to use the one liturgy in prayer, similarly as it is their duty to use the other liturgy in praise. The fact, however, that no such liturgy of prayers is in existence, and that the Scriptures contain not even the remotest hint of liturgical prayer having been authorised by the Lord or His Apostles, or employed in the early Church, is one of the strongest of all arguments in favour of free prayer to the exclusion of liturgical. It is indeed true that sundry prayers, and portions of prayers, are embodied in the Scriptures, and that several of the Psalms, as for instance 17, 86, 90, may be either sung in praise or uttered in prayer. The Bible, however, contains no liturgical collection of prayers, given, as the Psalms were given, to be used in public or domestic worship. On the contrary, the prayers of the Bible are profusely scattered throughout it, some of them being recorded in the midst of historic narratives, while others are recorded as simple specimens of prayer. Hence, in so far as the worship of God is concerned, these prayers occupy a very different platform from the liturgical platform occupied by the Book of Psalms in the service of praise.

It may be still further observed that, from the nature of the case, this is one of the most prominent of the points in which prayer and praise differ from each other. In social and public prayer, there is no necessity for any one to speak, except the leader of the devotions; and the circumstance that, in so far as the teaching of Holy Scripture is concerned, the other worshippers are expected, not to utter the words of the prayer; but simply to express their concurrence by saying the Amen, (Neh. 8:6; 1 Cor. 14:16) is in itself a clear incidental evidence of the important yet much neglected fact that free prayer alone has the sanction of God's written Word.

The singing of God's praise, however, is intended to be joined in vocally by all the worshippers. Hence it is indispensably necessary for the very words in which the praise is to be sung to exist and be made known to the worshippers beforehand. Accordingly a prescribed liturgy of praise is a simple necessity; and being thus a necessity, the fact that the Lord has not left his people to provide liturgies of praise for themselves, but has given them a hymn book (though not a prayer book) in His Written Word, and has commanded, not only Jews under the Old Covenant, but Christians under the New, to sing his praise in the words of the liturgy

which He himself has given, is an argument which, like a sharp two-edged sword, cuts in two ways — against uninspired hymnals on the one hand, and against liturgical prayers on the other. Seeing that He who has given the Church an inspired hymn book has neither given a prayer book nor authorised the making or using of one, how can his servants have any right either to supplement with hymns of their own, the hymn book which He has given, or to compile prayer books to be employed whether as prescribed liturgies or as substitutes for free prayer?

In the absence of anything like Scriptural authority for manuals of prayer, it were perhaps not too much to assert that one of the most detrimental of all hindrances to the enjoyment of spiritual health, is the practice of employing prescribed forms instead of free prayer. The injury done to domestic and social worship through the publication of books of family prayer is incalculable. So far from promoting, it has checked and stifled the spirit of devotion in many professors of Christianity, especially in fashionable society. Family worship, instead of being so conducted as to be acceptable to God and profitable to those who engage in it, has degenerated into a dead form. In the worship, such as it is, the head of the house reads prayers, but seldom or never prays; and many, even among the most influential members and office-bearers of the Church, who would not hesitate to speak at public meetings, or in Parliament, or on the floor of the General Assembly, would on no account offer prayer at a prayer-meeting, or in family or social worship. Indeed the contrast between their worship, carried on as it is through the medium of printed prayer-books, and the worship of the early Christians, who knew no mode of prayer but that which the Word of God sanctions, is about as complete as it is possible for a contrast to be.

The fact, also, that many, even among the clergy of the Church of England, seldom or never open their lips to offer free prayer either in social or in public worship, tells a most lamentable tale as to the way in which the liturgical system of prayer promotes defection from that standard of ministerial qualifications which is laid down in the Scriptures. And the other fact that the introduction of prayer-books into the worship of the Church of Scotland is eagerly advocated by not a few of her Anglicising pastors, without the Church taking any step to check so retrograde a movement, affords a sad illustration of the manner in which the most sacred interests of the Church are now being subverted by men who have come under the most solemn obligations to do the opposite of what they are doing. In these days of clamorous agitation for disestablishment, more is to be dreaded from internal treachery than from external assaults. Were the Church faithful to her own principles, and resolute in maintaining that uniformity of worship to which she is pledged, she would have nothing to fear from outside hostility. But true prosperity is impossible so long as, under the time-serving policy which now prevails, the subversion of the Church's worship and doctrines is the passport to the Church's favour.

One of the most prolific sources of departure from the truth of the Gospel is the theory already noticed, that men may do as they please in matters of worship, provided that they acknowledge the authority of the Scriptures in matters of doctrine. Between worship and doctrine, however; there is a connection of the most intimate kind; and it is scarcely to be expected that men who disregard apostolic precept and example in matters of worship will accept, with implicit obedience, the teaching of the Apostles in matters of doctrine. Accordingly, departure from the simple worship of apostolic times is largely connected with indifference to the cardinal truths of the Gospel, and with the preaching of a vague, shallow, and unscriptural theology. A munificent benefactor of the Church of Scotland complained (shortly before his decease), as well he might, of the recent spread of latitudinarianism and unbelief in the Church to which he had dedicated a large amount of his wealth. A little reflection, however, might have shown him that one of the most powerful agencies in promoting what he called veiled infidelity, is the style of unapostolic worship now connived at and encouraged under the plea of congregational liberty. And it would have conduced to his own satisfaction, as well as to the best interests of religion, had he given the influence of his Trust, not only to the encouragement of the important doctrines which he specified, but also to the support of that uniformity of worship which the Church of Scotland, as by law established, is pledged to maintain.

What the Apostle Paul said, in 1 Timothy, 3:15, with reference to the Church of the living God, may well be said of that hymn book which the living God has given for the use of His Church, that it is a "pillar and ground of the truth." As such, it stands out in bold relief from the motley multitude of hymns and hymnals put forth from time to time to be sung along with or instead of it. Their name is legion, for they are many; and it may be said that "of the making of [such] books there is no end." It often happens that when, with much discussion and labour, an ecclesiastical sect or denomination gets a hymn book of its own compiled and put into circulation, those for whom the book was prepared soon become tired of it, and set about getting it superseded by a new edition, enlarged or diminished, and more agreeable to the new tastes which have meanwhile been developed. Amidst such restless changes, one is reminded of the Preacher's words, "All things are full of labour: man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." In striking contrast to such fluctuations, there stands forth, firm as a rock, the Book of Psalms, as acceptable now as it was two thousand years ago, to those who appreciate its true position in the Word and

Church of God. "All flesh is grass; and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.... The grass withereth; the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever."

As Anglicising innovators in Scotland are apt to assume that the exclusive use of the Psalter in the service of praise is confined to unenlightened bigots, and is, accordingly, a sure indication of narrow-mindedness or ignorance, it may be here mentioned, as an interesting fact, that, up to a recent date, the University of Oxford had the high distinction of using Psalms exclusively in the service of praise. On all occasions when hymns were sung and sermons preached in the presence of the University in St. Mary's Church, the hymns were selected from the Book of Psalms; and not till the year 1872 was the inspired Psalter superseded by a hymn book of very different calibre, intitled "Hymns for the use of the University of Oxford in St. Mary's Church," containing 124 hymns, of which 22 consist of Psalms or portions of Psalms.

In the Church of England, which, though it has a liturgy of prayers, has no prescribed hymn book, the hymnals employed in different parishes according to the varying tastes and sentiments of the incumbents, are numerous and diversified — some of them ritualistic, others latitudinarian — some tasteful and poetic in their style and composition, others prosaic and commonplace — some giving prominence to the great doctrines of the Gospel, others pushing these doctrines into the background, and ascribing to the sacraments a saving virtue unknown to the New Testament, and incompatible with its most solemn declarations. How much more satisfactory would it be if all parties were to unite in accepting the Hymn Book which God has given, and in using it, not merely for lessons to be read or chaunted, but for songs of praise to be sung! In this capacity it occupies a position of peerless pre-eminence; for, without disparagement of what is good and excellent in uninspired poetry, it may be said that the Psalms contain a spiritual nourishment peculiar to themselves, in which variety and harmony are exquisitely combined — milk for babes, and strong meat for those of riper experience, so that "young men and maidens, old men and children" may heartily unite in singing them. Many uninspired songs are indeed pleasant and refreshing in their own place; but to put them above or even on a level with the Psalms in the singing of God's praise, is like substituting sweetmeats and confections for good wholesome food in the diet of a labouring man. And, as has already been observed, it is a prolific source of spiritual unhealthiness and decrepitude, where otherwise there might be deep-toned vigorous devotion. Children, instead of being early taught, in their Bible classes, to sing the Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of God's written Word, have childish hymn books put into their hands; and the result is that their Scripture training lacks that bracing and strengthening influence for good which it would otherwise possess. The Psalmist's words are reversed, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength, because of thine adversaries, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Consequently, such noble scenes are unappreciated as that in which Zion's King vindicated, from the complaints of the fault-finding chief priests and scribes, the children crying in the temple, "Hosanna to the son of David." Where God, through the medium of the Psalms, has ordained strength, the supplanters of the Psalms foster weakness; and where God's way is to make children manly, their way is to make men childish. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

The ideas with which many professing Christians in the present day regard the Psalter, as they regard the whole of the Old Testament, are altogether alien to the spirit of Christianity. They assign to the Old Testament a position of inferiority directly contrary to the position of supremacy assigned to it in the New Testament. Yet the Old Testament was to the early Christians their only Bible; and it could never have occurred to them to look on the Psalms as insufficient for Christian worship, unless other sacred songs had been supplied to them from the same divine source, or some hint had been given to them by the Lord or his Apostles that they ought to prepare such songs for themselves. The New Testament Scriptures, coming as they did with the same divine sanction by which the Old Testament had been sealed, claimed for themselves a similar reception in the Christian Church, (1 Cor. 14:37; Gal. 1:11,12; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Thess. 2:15; Rev. 1:11-19, 2:7). But the fact that these more recent Scriptures contain no hymns or liturgy of hymns, and no warrant for the singing of anything in Christian worship but the Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs which had been given under the former dispensation, is in itself conclusive evidence of the sufficiency of the ancient Psalter for Christian praise, and of the impropriety of superceding or even supplementing it by uninspired hymns, which, however good they may be in their own place, yet have not that Divine sanction which makes the Psalms what they are, and what no other hymn can be. The songs of the ancient Psalter — new when they were written — are new still; and new they will continue to be so long as the new covenant, and the new name, and the new Jerusalem are new. Hence a devout Christian worshipper, who knows what it is to be a new creature, and to serve God in the newness of the spirit rather than in the oldness of the letter, may say, in singing the Psalms, what a devout Israelite, delivered from the noisome pit and from the miry clay, and established on the rock, might have sung five-and-twenty centuries ago, "He hath put into my mouth a new song, even praise to our God."

D. J.
The Manse, HARRY,
May 1878.

INSPIRED PSALMODY
by Rev. H.C.B. Bazely B.C.L.

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." — Eph. 5:19.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." — Col. 3:16.

I wish dear brethren, to state to you my reasons for the practice which I have constantly followed, since I became your Minister, of choosing our songs of praise to Almighty God exclusively from the book of Psalms. I ought perhaps to have done this sooner, since you may naturally have desired a fuller statement than the statement I gave in a brief paper on Public Worship, written for your inspection, before I accepted this pastoral charge, of the reasons which compel me, under a solemn sense of duty to God and to our Church, to abstain from the use of uninspired hymns in the public worship of the congregation. Will you now lend me your kind attention, while I set before you as plainly and as succinctly as I can, my reasons for the exclusive use of the Psalter? And permit me to say, by the way, that I shall esteem it a real kindness if any of you who feel a difficulty in regard of what I may do, either in the conduct of public worship or otherwise, will speak to me frankly and at once. Let there be no want of mutual confidence between a minister and his people.

At the time of the Reformation, one of the important subjects of controversy discussed between the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed Churches was the rule of worship. The Roman Catholic Church — to put the controversy in the fewest words — adopted this principle: whatever Scripture does not forbid, it allows," (*Quod Scriptura non vetat; permittit*); whereas the Reformed Churches took as their principle: "Whatever Scripture does not command, it forbids," (*Quod Scriptura non jubet, vetat.*) Observe the vast difference between these two principles, and in the practical results which follow from the maintenance of the one or the other of them. According to the Roman principle, there is scope for the introduction of ten thousand rites and practices unknown in the days of the Apostles. The manner of worship is thus made to depend on the various and ever-changing tastes of men, and their ideas of what is expedient and comely. The only sort of uniformity possible is that which is enforced by the despotic government of the rulers of the Church for the time being. On the other hand, according to the principle of the Reformed Churches, the manner of worship is wholly regulated by the perfect wisdom of God. And an end is at once put to controversy. Does a Church or a private Christian desire to make an alteration in the accustomed manner of worship? it is incumbent on the Church or the individual to bring forward the express warrant from God's written Word. If no such warrant can be produced, the proposed change is *ipso facto* condemned; whereas, according to the Roman principle, a door is opened to an interminable controversy as to men's tastes and notions of expediency. I do not intend to enter now upon the proof of the soundness of the Reformation principle. Let me simply remind you that it was received, with hardly an exception, by all the Reformed Churches. The Church of England, most unhappily for herself, did not accept it. She rejected indeed a vast multitude of ungodly and superstitious inventions which the wayward folly of men had introduced into the public worship of God, but, refusing to adopt the true principle which guided her sister Churches of the Reformation, she retained some rites and practices unwarranted by Holy Scripture, and notwithstanding the remonstrances of the wisest of her ministers, sought to justify herself by a clause, admitted after much hesitation into her 20th Article, to the effect that: "The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies which are not contrary to God's Word." And what have been the results? Take these as specimens: First, the loss of 2000 of her best ministers in 1662, who resigned their benefices because they could not conscientiously allow themselves to be compelled to adopt various rites, unwarranted by God's Word, and especially the posture of kneeling at the Lord's Supper; a posture without a shadow of authority from Holy Scripture, and the practice of the Church for ten centuries after Christ.¹ Secondly, the growth of extravagant

¹To the retention of this mediæval custom the growth of Romish doctrine in the Church of England on the subject of the Lord's Supper is largely due. This backward movement is almost peculiar to that Church, which, unlike the sister Churches of the Reformation, has retained, and even vehemently enforced as a term of communion, the posture of kneeling at the reception of the bread and wine. It is indeed strange that a practice so utterly unknown for many centuries after Christ should be defended by those who profess a high regard for ancient custom. How little can be said in favour of kneeling may be seen from the very unsatisfactory attempt to vindicate it made by the most able of Anglican controversialists, Richard Hooker. While on other subjects of controversy with the Puritans he writes at great length, he gives only ten lines to the question of kneeling at the Lord's Supper, and his chief argument for kneeling is actually the implied assertion that the practice of the English Church is more fit and decent than that of our Lord and His Apostles! (*Eccl. Pol.* v. 68.) There is an excellent, and exhaustive argument against the practice of kneeling, and in defence of sitting — the appropriate posture at a Supper — in Calderwood's "*Altare Damascenum*," pp. 539-603, edn. 1708. It is a great pity that this learned work, probably the most valuable vindication of the polity and worship of the Church of Scotland that has ever been written, is not accessible in an English translation. It is said that when King James VI. had just finished reading it, he was asked by an Anglican Prelate why he looked so grave and anxious. The King replied that his anxiety was due to the contents of the book he had just put down. "Do not let it trouble

ritualism during the last few years, which is grieving the hearts and weakening the efforts of the evangelical members of the Church, which is preparing the way for a multitude of perversions to the Roman apostasy, which, more perhaps than anything else, is helping the enterprise of those who are bent on destroying the Church of England as an Established Church. The Church of Scotland, unlike the Church of England, adopted in its integrity the Reformation principle. As soon as this principle was grasped, a clean sweep was made of every rite and practice for which no sanction could be discovered in the New Testament. The principle is asserted in the Confession of Faith, chap. 21, sec. 1, in the following words: "The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or," — mark this — "any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures." It is for us, if we accept the doctrine of the Confession (and surely every loyal member of our Church does accept it), to inquire, with regard to the matter before us, whether the use of uninspired hymns is prescribed in Holy Scripture. If it is, then such hymns must be used; if not, then the use of such hymns is unlawful. The answer to the question need not detain us long. Our Church, as we shall see presently, has given a plain and decided reply. But let us first look, independently of the formularies of our Church, at two or three passages in the New Testament. The shortest text bearing on the subject is that which contains James's exhortation to Christians who are cheerful in the enjoyment of the good gifts of our merciful God, "Is any merry, let him sing psalms." To the same effect Paul exhorts the Ephesian and Colossian Christians in the passages, so like each other, which I read as my text. Only his phrase in both epistles is, "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." I cannot doubt that many of the Apostle's readers, who have not examined with a little care his meaning, have come to the conclusion that *uninspired* hymns and spiritual songs are in these texts not barely permitted, but explicitly prescribed, by Paul. My brethren, there is not, I am persuaded, the slightest ground for the supposition that the Apostle refers here to uninspired poetry, or to any poems outside the canonical book of Psalms. The reference is simply to the different classes of poems contained in the Psalter, as is sufficiently clear from the fact that the three Greek words for "psalms, hymns, songs," are just the words which are used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the LXX which Paul employed to express the different Hebrew words occurring in the titles of the Psalms, and are rendered in our version by "psalm," "song," "praise," and so forth. That this is the true significance of Paul's phraseology is shown by the instructive circumstance that the praise sung by our Lord and His Apostles after the last Supper — doubtless that portion of the Psalter which was entitled by the Jewish Church the Egyptian *Hallel* or Thanksgiving (Psalms 113-118), and customarily sung by them at the Passover — is designated by the Evangelists Matthew and Mark, "a hymn." "When they had sung an *hymn*, they went to the Mount of Olives." A further proof is furnished by the epithet "spiritual" attached in the above texts to "songs," which means, according to its use in the New Testament, that which comes directly from the Spirit of God.² Moreover, there is no trace in the extant writings of the early Church of the use in Apostolic times of any uninspired hymns; and surely if such had been in use, they would not all have perished.

Indeed, as late as the year 563 we find a decree made by the Council of Braga, in the following terms: "No poetical compositions are to be sung in Church except the Psalms of the Canonical Scriptures."³ That the Bible furnishes us with no warrant for the use of any songs in public worship but those contained in the Psalter, is not the private opinion of this or that individual: it is the deliberate judgment of the Church of Scotland, clearly expressed in her Standards. Of this there can be no reasonable doubt. In the Confession of Faith, chap. 21, sec. 5, "Singing of psalms", is the description given of one of the constituent parts of worship; and at the close of the Directory, in which document there are several references to the Psalmody of the Church, a paragraph contains the following words; "It is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly by singing of Psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family," There is not the most

your Majesty," said the prelate, "I will soon write a refutation." "I should like to see you refute it, my good man," replied the King. "Why, there is nothing in it but Scripture, Reason, and the Fathers."

²The meaning of the three words in these texts is fully discussed in. "*The True Psalmody: or the Bible Psalms the Church's only Manual of Praise*," which is a full and able defence of the exclusive use of the Psalter in Public Worship. The last edition, published at Belfast in 1861, is out of print; but I am very glad to hear that a new edition has just been published by Mr James Gemmell, Edinbuigh. All who are interested in maintaining purity of worship should procure this admirable little book, and promote its circulation as widely as possible. I may add that the correct interpretation of the texts is given in the Church Dictionary of Dr Hook, an Anglican High Churchman. "The first of these words (in Eph. 5:19, and Col. 3:16) would seem to refer to the *mizmor*, or psalm properly so called; the second to the *tehillah*, or jubilant song of praise; the last to the *shir*, or song; all of which words occur both in the titles and the text of the Book of Psalms." — Article on 'Hymns.'

³"There are signs, however, that this influx of hymns [in the fifth and sixth centuries] did not everywhere meet with favour. The complaint made by the orthodox against heretics that they had *innovated*, could now be turned against themselves; and among Catholics there were some who doubted, like the Genevan Reformers later, whether it were right to use in worship any but the words of Scripture.... There were still some Churches, even in the ninth century, which did not admit metrical hymns into their offices." — *Smith's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* — 'Hymn.'

distant allusion in any one of our Formularies, in the Confession, Catechism, or Directory, to uninspired hymns. Such hymns were absolutely unknown in our Churches until the close of the last century. During the latter half of that century, when the unevangelical principles of so-called Moderatism were dominant, and intrusions of unacceptable presentees into vacant parishes were driving many Christian people into secession, some hymns — five only in number — were, in conjunction with 67 Paraphrases of Scripture, "collected and prepared by a Committee of the General Assembly, in order to be sung in Churches." Note the wording of this sentence, which stands on the title page of the Paraphrases. Very different is the wording of the title page of the Psalter: "The Psalms of David, in Metre; according to the version approved by the Church of Scotland, and appointed to be used in worship" The Paraphrases and the five accompanying hymns never received formal ecclesiastical sanction; never, as was necessary to authorise their use, were they approved by a majority of the Presbyteries, in terms of the Barrier Act.⁴ Those who used them did so by nothing more than the temporary sanction of the General Assembly. There is certainly, as has been sometimes pointed out, a difference between Paraphrases, i.e., loose renderings of passages of Holy Scripture, and such hymns as are original compositions. The former are not open to precisely the same objections as the latter. But it may, I think, be fairly argued that Paraphrases are at least unnecessary; and with regard to the 67 attached to our metrical Psalter, while in all of them undue liberties are taken with the inspired text, several are portions of the Bible which were not intended to be sung; so that we may be thankful that our Church was preserved from giving a formal sanction to this collection.

No further innovation was attempted in the public service of praise until a few years ago, when, through the influence of a restless party in the Church, bent on assimilating the worship in more points than one to the unscriptural worship of the Church of England, a hymn book was prepared by a Committee of the General Assembly, and the use of it sanctioned in the same irregular way as the Paraphrases had been a century before. I shall not now examine in detail the character of this volume; suffice it to remark that it contains one hymn by an Unitarian and two by a pervert to the Church of Rome, who, as is well known, composed his hymns, which are so attractive to some from their sentimental style, after he had exchanged the position of a Protestant minister for that of a Romish priest. I am glad to be assured that there are many parish ministers faithful to the fundamental principles of our Church, who have not admitted this book into their Congregations. It has no higher sanction than that of a majority of the General Assembly; and I need hardly remind you that a majority of a representative body which is subject to annual change has no power to alter the fundamental principles of the Church.

I have already given sufficient reasons for the exclusive use of the Psalter in public worship, inasmuch as I have shown you that uninspired hymns can find no warrant from either precept or example in Holy Scripture, that they were not used in the purest days of the Reformed Church of Scotland, and that they have at no time — not even at the most unsatisfactory periods of our Church's history — been constitutionally approved. I shall add, however, a few more reasons in confirmation.

(1) The first and most weighty reason is the acknowledgment which we thereby make of the supremacy of Holy Scripture. We thus draw an unmistakable distinction between inspired and uninspired writings. We refuse to put on an apparent level with the words spoken and written by men under the supernatural influence of the Holy Ghost, any words, however true, however beautiful, for which such suggestion and guidance cannot be claimed. To add by way of supplement to the Psalter uninspired hymns — and much more, of course, to substitute these hymns for the Psalms — is really to disparage Holy Scripture as imperfect, and insufficient for the needs of the Christian Church. Can we doubt, brethren, that if the Psalter were inadequate, as some venture to treat it, our blessed Lord would have guided His apostles by His Spirit to draw up a new manual of praise for His Church? He has not done so; and we may surely infer the perfect adequacy of the Psalter which He Himself and His apostles used. Certainly, there was never a time in the history of the Christian Church when it was more dangerous to disparage the perfection of Holy Scripture, or to neglect the assertion of its supremacy, than now, when its specific distinction from all other writings, and its adequateness as the sole rule of doctrine and practice for Christians, are by very many denied.

(2) Secondly, I would insist on the use of the Psalter only in public worship, for the sake of the profitable and delightful familiarity with it which every member of the Church will thus readily attain. No one can express how dear the Psalms have been to devout Christians in all ages, what sound instruction has been furnished by them, what strong encouragement, what real comfort, what unspeakable joy. They who have been best acquainted with the Psalms, have valued them most highly. In the early Church, there was a rule in some provinces that no one should be ordained a presbyter until he could repeat the Psalter by heart. I could almost wish that this rule were revived in the Church of our own day. In the fifth century — so Jerome tells us — the poor husbandman was heard singing the Psalms as he walked behind his plough. Another writer

⁴"It would appear that a majority of Presbyteries did not send up to the Assembly their approval of the Paraphrases. *Certain it is there is no Act of Assembly formally sanctioning them.*" — *Church History of Scotland*, ii. 597, by John Cunningham, D.D., Minister of Crieff.

of the same date (Basil) exhorts the artisans to sing the Psalms in their shops. They were translated into Greek metrical verse that children might learn them in the schools, for, as Augustine writes, the Psalms were specially intended for the delight of children and young men. I have often been greatly pleased in visiting our Scottish poor to discover the accurate knowledge of the Psalms possessed by aged people, who in their youth heard no other songs in the public worship of their Church. Now, alas, since other hymns have been introduced, this knowledge of the Psalter is no longer common, the children of this generation are far better acquainted with uninspired hymns, some perhaps good, many indifferent, and not a few containing positive error.

(3) Thirdly, I plead for the exclusive use of the Psalter as a means of promoting and maintaining ecclesiastical union. Uninspired hymns are essentially sectarian — every Church has its peculiar collection. One collection is used in the Church of Scotland, another in the Free Church, another in the United Presbyterian Church; and in the Church of England there is a multitudinous variety of hymn books, reflecting the doctrinal views of the various ministers and congregations that use them. When a Psalm is sung in our Churches, every true Christian can heartily join in the service of praise; but it sometimes happens that the hymn which is announced is one which some of the worshippers cannot conscientiously unite in singing. A return to the Church of Scotland of those Presbyterians who faithfully adhere to her principles is very earnestly to be desired but as long as uninspired hymns are tolerated in our Church, it is idle to expect that such men will come back to us. The Original Seceders, who have held fast the principle of the Reformation, and who alone among the Presbyterian dissenting bodies petitioned for the Abolition of Patronage, and firmly support the principle of an Established Church, are not likely to return to us until uninspired hymns are put aside.⁵ Nor probably will those earnest men in the Free Church who maintain faithfully in the face of an active majority the constitutional principles of their Church, and who utterly refuse to join in the present agitation for Disestablishment. In illustration of what I have said about the use of the Psalter as a bond of union among Churches, I may remind you that Psalms only were sung — and without the accompaniment of instrumental music⁶ — at the meetings of the Pan-Presbyterian Council, held in Edinburgh last summer, when delegates from many Presbyterian Churches in all parts of the world were present. It was found in making the arrangements that except on this condition, a Pan-Presbyterian Council, i.e., a Council representing all Presbyterian Churches, could not be held.

(4) A fourth reason, and the last that I shall mention now, for the exclusive use of the Psalter, is the danger of erroneous doctrines creeping in through the channel of uninspired hymns. This is not an imaginary danger. Students of early Church history know that the monstrous systems of the Gnostics, and the attractive heresy of the Arians, which denied the perfect Deity of Jesus Christ, and in the fourth century almost overspread the Church, were often covertly introduced, and then greatly helped forward and successfully propagated by the use of uninspired hymns. And in our own day the retrograde movement in the Church of England towards Romish doctrines and practices has been, as Evangelical ministers bitterly complain, largely promoted by the popular book entitled "*Hymns Ancient and Modern*."⁷ Nor shall I conceal my conviction that the false doctrine which is spreading like a canker in the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, is not obscurely connected with the unscriptural innovations which have been made upon the purity of our worship. I cannot dwell longer on these reasons. I ask you to consider them carefully and candidly. Let me now say a few words about some arguments which are often brought forward for the use of uninspired hymns. I shall notice three, being those which I myself have met with most frequently.

(1) First, it is said that some of the Psalms are unsuitable for Christians to sing. If this allegation were true, it would by no means instantly follow that hymns may be lawfully introduced to supply the place of the excluded Psalms. But none of the Psalms are unsuitable for Christian use, neither as containing unchristian sentiments of revenge, as has been sometimes boldly alleged, nor as alluding to Jewish rites and the

⁵The arguments for the exclusive use of the Psalter are put briefly and well in "*The Original Secession Testimony*," pp. 154~156. 7th edn.

⁶On the unlawfulness of instrumental music in the worship of the Christian Church, many valuable books and pamphlets have been published, and are now in circulation. I may mention particularly "*A Treatise on Organs*," by the Rev. Dr. Begg; "*The Organ Question*," by the late Rev. Principal Candlish; "*Heart and Voice*," by the Rev. Dr. Glasgow, the Irish General Assembly's Professor of Oriental Languages; "*The Fruit of our Lips*," a pamphlet published last year, by the Rev. James Kerr, Greerock. The minister of Harray and Birsay printed in 1879, "for free circulation," a treatise on "*Instrumental Music in the Church of Scotland*," which may be noticed, as containing a thorough examination of the teaching of Holy Scripture on this subject, and also a summary of the recent proceedings in the Courts of the Church of Scotland in reference to the introduction of instrumental music into some of our Churches.

Dr Begg's pamphlets, "*Anarchy in Worship*," and "*A Treatise for the Times*," are most excellent, and should be distributed far and wide by those who wish to stay the progress of unscriptural innovations.

⁷The "Church Association" has published a pamphlet by the Rev. James Ormiston, which faithfully exposes the dangerous character of this favourite Hymnal.

personal circumstances of the authors. The imprecatory Psalms only need for their justification to be rightly interpreted; and the position which Christians now occupy is sufficiently analogous to that of God's people under the old dispensation, to make the language prepared by the Holy Spirit primarily for Israelites, entirely appropriate for Christians. And when it is asserted, as I have heard it asserted by even intelligent persons, that uninspired hymns are necessary in Christian worship, because Christ is not praised in the Psalms, the immediate answer is that such an assertion can be seriously made only by those who are grossly ignorant, not merely of the Psalter, but of the New Testament, in which many Psalms are quoted as expressly referring to Christ, and, moreover as containing His own words. Enough to point to the 40th Psalm, in which Christ speaks to His Father, and to the 45th Psalm, in which the Psalmist tells of the things which concern the Divine King, addressing Him thus: "Thou art fairer than the children of men.... Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." What more sublime and beautiful hymn, telling of Christ and addressing Christ, can we desire than this song of loves?

(2) Secondly, it is said that hymns are so nice, so pretty, so attractive. "You will never get people — especially young people — to like the old Psalms." This has been said to me again and again. My answer is very simple. We, as reverent worshippers of Almighty God, and faithful servants of the King of saints, have nothing to do with such a consideration as the prettiness of hymns. Nor is it our duty, nay, we are not even permitted, to make the public worship of God attractive by innovations which He has not authorised, by — for it really comes to this — the erasure of what He has authorised, and the substitution in its place of what men venture to say they like better. I regard many of the attempts in our day to make public worship attractive as both dishonouring to God and discreditable to the Christian Church. I am ashamed to hear men on all sides asking whether this or that novelty will draw a congregation, and not whether it is in accordance with the mind of God, who is jealous of the purity of that homage which He demands from His servants. Once admit the rule of "attractiveness" in worship, and no one can conjecture where you will stop. You may innovate in one point after another on the established worship of your Church; but unless you literally revolutionise it, you will never compete successfully in point of "attractiveness" with the worship of the Church of Rome, or even with that of the Church of England. To attract is the plea put forward for the gorgeous and worldly pomp of Ritualism on the one hand, and for the irregular and sensational extravagances of Revivalism on the other hand. Brethren, I would not dare — and I say this solemnly as in the sight of God — to introduce a hymn book, supplementary to the Psalter, into this Church, although I knew that it would "attract" five hundred worshippers within a month.

(3) Thirdly, people often ask me questions of this sort: "If you so positively refuse to sing hymns in public worship, what use is to be made of all the hymns, the truthful and beautiful hymns which have been written by Christian men and women, and which have gladdened and solaced so many of God's children? Do you really mean to say that these cannot be lawfully used, but ought to be got rid of as so much worthless, and worse than worthless, rubbish? Would you have us throw them into the fire like the magical books of the Ephesians?" No, I say nothing of the kind. There is a lawful — there is a profitable use of such hymns. Read them if you like, sing them if you like in private and social gatherings, but not in the public assembly, and as a formal act of worship. To substitute them for the Psalms, or to put them in your use on a level with the Psalms, is to do exactly what the Church of England does, and what the Church of Scotland has expressly refused to do, with the Apocryphal books sometimes inserted between the Old and New Testaments. A chapter from these uninspired writings is, on certain days in the year, substituted in the service of the Church of England for a lesson from the Canonical Scriptures. I cannot see that they act in principle differently, who substitute in the services of our Church uninspired hymns for the inspired Psalms. Rather their practice is more reprehensible than that of the Church of England, inasmuch as they make this unwarrantable substitution not on a few days in the year, but every Lord's day. Whatever use you make of uninspired hymns, never so misuse them as to allow them to usurp the place, even in private use, of the Psalms. Remember the infinite distance which there must always be between the words of the Holy Spirit and the words of the best of men. Among English Dissenters, uninspired hymns, since the days of Watts and Wesley, who were, perhaps, the first to introduce such hymns into the worship of English congregations, have almost entirely displaced the Psalms. Most rarely is a Psalm sung in a Wesleyan, Baptist, or Independent Chapel. Thus one of the Divinely appointed parts of worship is among these Dissenters habitually omitted.⁸ Things have not yet come to quite so bad a pass in Presbyterian Churches. But where uninspired hymns are in use, I have hardly ever heard more than two portions of the Psalms at the most, and not unfrequently only one. O, brethren, it does stir my indignation, it does distress me sorely, to see the songs of the Spirit of Truth thus repudiated for the songs of erring men.

⁸In this respect public worship in the Church of England is much more satisfactory. Though uninspired hymns are now almost universally used, a considerable portion of the Psalter is either sung or read in every service. But of the worship of Dissenters the Psalms form now no essential part.

Listen to the words of one who, in the days when he was true to the Church of Scotland, preached, I am told, from this pulpit — I mean Edward Irving. In his faithful and eloquent ordination charge to the minister of the Scotch Church, London Wall, in 1827, he said, "First, then, concerning those Psalms, of which I would not forego one out of the collection for all the paraphrases, hymns, and spiritual songs of these Methodistical times. Thou must taste and drink deeply into the Spirit of them, and open them to the flock and congregation.... They are the essence of Divine truth.... upon which I charge thee to admit no modern innovations, and in their stead to take no modern substitutes; and stir up the people to love and relish them, which is best done by leading them to know and understand them." — (*Miscellanies from the collected writings of Ed. Irving*, p. 284.)

I have now given you my reasons for the exclusive use of the Psalms in worship. I have also touched upon some of the arguments which, in modern times, have been adduced for the use of other hymns, and have pointed out to you their unsoundness.

The question is not one of mere taste or expediency, but of serious principle; it is a question concerning a fundamental matter in religion, which is, alas, too carelessly handled at the present time, namely, the acceptable way of approaching the Most High in our public worship. It is a question of rendering due honour to the words of the Holy Spirit, by giving to His words a distinct and unmistakeable precedence over the fallible words of men, and by removing inspired poetry from uninspired by a manifest line of demarcation. My brethren, if the question were simply one of taste, I would gladly surrender the gratification of my taste to the wishes of my congregation. I should deem it my duty to do so, and, God helping me, I would do so cheerfully. For instance, if you liked certain tunes, which, from a musical point of view, were to me distasteful, I should say, by all means sing the tunes which you like best. But this question is, in my opinion, one of the gravest importance. My conscience positively forbids me to give out uninspired hymns in our worship. Apart from such considerations as I have brought before you now, I am mindful of the promise which I solemnly made as one of the conditions of ordination to the office of Presbyter, namely, that I would firmly and constantly adhere to, and to the utmost of my power assert, maintain, and defend the purity of worship practised in the Church of Scotland in 1707, and asserted in the 15th Act of the General Assembly of that year — an Act against innovations in the worship of God. Certainly, I cannot deny that as a matter of taste I like the Psalms a thousand times better than any other hymns I have ever heard. There is no part of the service in which I take a keener delight. I cannot describe to you the deep peace, the strong consolation, the thrilling joy which the words of the Holy Spirit sung by us here bring to my heart. How can I take the same pleasure in the uninspired utterances of men, to which no such power has been promised as to the inspired Scriptures of truth? "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." I thoroughly agree with a faithful minister of the Church of England in the last century — William Romaine, Rector of St Ann's, Blackfriars — the author of the "*Life and Triumph of Faith*," and other well-known devotional books, who, when he was urged to displace the metrical version of the Psalms for the hymns which were then becoming fashionable, steadfastly refused to do so, remarking to the advocates of hymns, "I want a name for that man who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost." Romaine published a very valuable treatise on the exclusive use of the Psalter; I advise any of you who have access to his works by all means to read it.

There are two points connected with our psalmody, points of minor importance, to which, before I close, I must ask for your attention.

(a) First, as to our metrical version of the Psalter. Fault is sometimes found with this version, on the score of its antique style and the alleged uncouthness of its rhythm. I suspect those who find fault with it are not seldom persons who do not venture to attack the Psalter itself, but think that they can perhaps successfully put it aside for an uninspired hymnal, by disparaging the version now in use in our Church. This version, made by an Englishman named Rouse, a learned member of the Westminster Assembly in 1645, and carefully revised by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1649, does not need an elaborate apology from me. It is, considering its metrical form, a remarkably faithful translation of the Hebrew original, and is by no means deficient in such poetical vigour and beauty as a translation can attain to. "It is," said R. M. M'Cheyne, who was himself a poet, "truly an admirable translation;" and Sir Walter Scott, surely no mean judge of poetry, gave his opinion to this effect when proposals were made from 1807 to 1822 to revise the version: "The expression of the old metrical translation, though homely, is plain, forcible, and intelligible, and very often possesses a rude sort of majesty, which would be ill exchanged for mere eloquence. I have an old-fashioned taste in sacred as well as profane poetry; I cannot help preferring even Sternhold and Hopkins to Tate and Brady, and our own metrical version of the Psalms to both. I hope, therefore, they will be touched with a lenient hand." Of course, this version is not perfect; there are inaccuracies in the translation; there are a few obsolete words; sometimes there is ruggedness in the rhythm. But, to use Romaine's words: "though not always smooth, it is generally — and this is a thousand times more valuable — the sentiment of the Holy Spirit. That is very rarely lost, and this should silence every objection — it is the Word of God." I should certainly welcome a revised edition of our version, if it were

cautiously undertaken and in a conservative spirit; a revised edition similar to that of the authorised version of the Bible which is now being executed. Many, I think even all, blemishes might be removed, and the metres might be more diversified to suit a larger variety of tunes. The private attempts at revision (the last one was published a year ago, and is due to the diligence of the Marquis of Lorne), though sometimes successful, are by no means so good throughout as to justify the Church in setting aside the received version for any one of them. But as long as the Psalter is exclusively used in our worship, the particular version, if it be faithful to the original, is of comparatively small importance.

(b) The second minor point is our posture during the service of song. So long ago as the middle of the 17th century, as appears from the records of the Synod of Aberdeen, dated 1662, sitting was the usual posture throughout Scotland, both in Presbyterian and Episcopal congregations. And this posture was retained almost universally, until the innovating movement of a few years ago. Almost universally, I say, because it has been, I believe, a local custom in the Orkney Islands (with the peculiar exception of the town of Stromness) to stand during the Psalms. Also the members of the General Assembly from time immemorial, have appropriately stood — as being on the point of leaving for their several parishes during the last Psalm sung at the close of the session. The question as to the posture during the singing of the Psalms is one of taste and expediency, and not of principle. To speak for myself, I prefer sitting, and for these reasons: It is an ancient and general usage in our Church, and such usages, I think, should be retained, unless there be any sound objection to them. It seems, moreover, to be almost necessary, at least for some of us who are not strong enough to stand during both the Psalms and the prayers. I infer this from the fact that in congregations where standing during praise has been adopted, sitting in prayer has been introduced, a posture not too strongly described in a pamphlet lately issued on Purity of Worship, as "most unseemly." Most unseemly indeed it is, and I marvel much how any Christian people can think it right to approach in such a posture — so ill beseeeming a humble suppliant, so unexampled in Holy Scripture — the throne of Almighty God. What would the sitting members of a congregation think of the behaviour of their minister, if he should imitate them in this irreverent posture, and lead their devotions sitting? The impropriety would be immediately obvious. I fear that some who sit must have forgotten that they are offering prayer, and must have adopted the Roman Catholic error, that the minister prays not with them as their mouthpiece and leader, but only for them as their intercessor. You probably do not know, brethren, how this sitting at prayer — this miserable novelty of the last score of years — disgusts devout members of the Church of England who happen to be present at our worship. Nor can I affect to be surprised at their disgust. However, to come back for a moment to the posture during praise, if you prefer to give up the old custom which has prevailed in our Church for 200 years, and to imitate the Church of England and the English Dissenters by standing during the Psalms, by all means stand, if only — and this is the one condition which I entreat you to regard — you preserve due reverence by standing at prayer. Of course, if it was physically possible, which it is not in most of our Churches, to kneel at prayer, this posture might be adopted as reverent and comely, though at the same time not so appropriate in public worship as the posture well nigh universal in the early Church, and still retained in the Eastern Churches, of standing — a posture directly sanctioned by the precept and example of the New Testament as well as the Old. (Neh. 9:2-4; Mark 11:25; Luke 18:13.)⁹

I shall make only two practical remarks in conclusion:

(a) First, then, I observe that those who advocate the exclusive use of the Psalter and purely vocal music in worship are often accused of indifference to good singing. Whether such an accusation is in a few cases well founded, I cannot tell; but there is not, of course, the faintest connection between the exclusive singing of the Psalms without instrumental accompaniment, and carelessness about correct and good singing. By all means let us by practice and effort sing to God's praise as well as we possibly can. Do not for one moment cherish the most erroneous idea that the precentor and the choir are to sing by themselves. We are all very thankful for the efficient help of our precentor and choir, but every member of the congregation ought to join with them in the service of praise. Our Church has always urged and expected this — "That the whole congregation may join herein," — I am quoting from the last section of the Directory — "every one that can read is to have a Psalm Book," for "it is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly, by singing of Psalms

⁹Two postures only during prayer are acknowledged in Holy Scripture; standing and kneeling. Why should either be entirely disused? As kneeling is most appropriate and usual in family and private worship, so standing, besides having the support of ancient and long established custom, seems most appropriate in public worship. It is strange that members of the Church of Scotland should desire to imitate the less appropriate practice of the Church of England, whose members probably on no occasion stand in prayer, notwithstanding Christ's recommendation of this posture, and the example of the humble publican. But it is incomparably more strange that any Christians should adopt the posture which has only lately crept in among English Dissenters, of sitting or lounging at prayer. In defence of this irreverent custom not a word can be said. I know that some people tell us by way of apology that God looks only to the heart of the worshipper, but although it is most true that no acceptable worship can be rendered if the heart be not right with God, a humble and reverent heart will surely suggest an outward expression of humility and reverence, and will be mindful of God's regard for external decency and order in His worship.

together in the congregation." Our tunes are simple and easy. (I dislike elaborate pieces, so-called doxologies, and anthems, which congregations cannot sing, and barely understand). Dear brethren, join, I pray you, with one accord, sing aloud, as the Psalmist invites you, unto God our strength, make a joyful noise to the God of Jacob.

(b) My last observation is suggested by some important expressions in the text. Paul exhorts the Ephesians to sing and make melody in their hearts to the Lord, and in like manner he calls on the Colossians to sing with grace in their hearts to the Lord. Hearty singing in the truest sense, i.e., singing from the heart, this is what God looks for. "We must," says an old writer (Jerome), "sing Psalms as saints, praising God not only with a sweet voice, but with a melting heart." And another old writer (Bernard) says, "We must sing strenuously, not idly, not sleepily; but most heartily and energetically." Think of the meaning of the words you sing, and remember that you sing to God. He listens with delight to the praises which you render to His name. And that such praises may be acceptable, there must be grace in the heart. A graceless man cannot offer pleasant worship to the Holy One of Israel. Wherefore, dear brethren, you who desire to praise God acceptably, see that you receive not His grace in vain. Come before Him in earnest prayer, that you may obtain grace for your help. And if in some of you the root of the matter is not yet found, put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, repenting of your sins, and looking to Him for the pardon which He has purchased with His precious blood for sinners. Then you will be able, receiving the comfortable assurance of your forgiveness, to sing with God's people the new song which He will put into your mouths, even praise unto our God. The Lord teach us all to sing with the spirit and with the understanding in His Church on earth, and vouchsafe to grant us a place among the redeemed in heaven, who will praise Him day and night for ever and ever.

APPENDIX.

THE USE OF THE PSALTER

The following remarks on the place which the Psalms should occupy in Public Worship are taken from the Bampton Lectures, preached before the University of Oxford in 1876, by the Bishop of Derry and Raphoe. There are, no doubt, some sentiments in these eloquent lectures which a Presbyterian cannot approve, but no true Christian, to whatever branch of the Catholic Church he may belong, can read them without much profit and pleasure. I am especially thankful for the Bishop's earnest appeal on behalf of the supremacy of the Psalter in the service of praise: —

"Hymns cannot really and adequately replace the Psalter. To Psalms, as compared with Hymns, we may apply the analogy of the inspired Apostolic writings compared with those which follow them. As we enter upon them, we feel that we breathe a different air. A creative epoch has passed away. The flood-tide of Divine life has fallen. No new thought is expressed. There is, indeed, sometimes a more exciting and heated air, more that is momentarily striking and impressive, in the Apostolic Fathers than in the Apostolic writings themselves. The inspired is often compressed, constrained, obscure. The soul is on fire, but the flame is silent. The language is calm as eternity, of a deep august simplicity. An omniscient Wisdom is sphered in it. There is as strange a contrast between many modern Hymns and the Psalms, as between many modern preachers and the Epistles of St John and St James. Who can measure the distance between the vapid moralising of many Funeral and New Year hymns and the 90th Psalm, "that Psalm of eternity;" between the 22nd and 23rd Psalms, and certain Revival hymns.... There used to exist in our Church an old-fashioned jealousy about supplanting Psalms by Hymns, which has been somewhat too much ridiculed. I, for one, sometimes fear, lest in our desire for variety and warmth in hymns, we may be piling the Church with combustibles which will explode in different directions. Hymns are not necessarily Catholic, or tending to a piety which is manly, rational, according to the analogy of faith, because they are heated, sensational, exciting. St Augustine tells us that the African Docetists mocked at the Catholic Christians, because the Catholics chanted nothing in their Churches but the Divine songs of Prophets and Psalmists, whilst the sectarians intoned, with voices that swelled and rang like trumpets, human compositions which were flushed with the strong wine of their fierce fanaticism.... There are hymns which are beautiful, Scriptural, and Catholic — others are luscious and hysterical.... They breathe the atmosphere of sectarian souls, without breadth of horizon or nobility of devotion. I believe it to be high time to face this phenomenon of contented acquiescence in the practical deposition of the Psalter from its place.... Let us recall the glowing words of Christians of former ages. St. Jerome tells us that the Psalms were to be heard in the fields and vineyards of Palestine. The ploughman, as he held his plough, chanted the Hallelujah; and the reaper, the vine-dresser, and the shepherd sang the songs of David.... Sidonius Apollinaris represents boatmen, as they worked their heavy barges up the water, singing Psalms till the banks echoed with Hallelujah, and applies it to the voyage of the Christian life.... Our object is not to repeat such testimonies again and again with unprofitable wonder. It is to ask ourselves how the Psalter was so loved and popular then, how it is listened to so coldly now.... Can the old affection and enthusiasm be revived, and how? I believe that it can.... We must teach our people, after teaching ourselves, something of the Christian meaning and spirituality of the Psalter. It must form a part of our catechising.... Our clergy must propose to themselves two means by which to compass the great end of restoring the Psalter to its proper place in the affections of the English people. (1.) They must aim at educating and catechising the young into something like intelligent knowledge of the Psalms.... It seems to be assumed that enough is done in the Sunday school and elsewhere, when the young are provided with a summary of Bible history. Our schools, are, as it were, "in the midst of a valley full of bones, and, lo! they are very dry." Yet surely the Psalms, livingly taught, are well fitted to interest the young. To take one point alone, the references which they contain to the beauty and grandeur of nature may colour many pages of geography and natural history. (2.) Above all, and without this every thing else will be in vain, our people must be taught habitually to see Christ in the Psalter, His Church, the worship of that Church, the outlines of their creed, the way of acceptance with God, the thought that should mould a Christian's life, the words that they may use upon a bed of death. There blows round the Psalms a breath of heaven; they must be made to feel it play upon their cheeks. As our pious peasants read the Psalter at home, or follow the chant in the village church, they must be able to say almost instinctively: In this Psalm is the voice of the sorrow and the love of Jesus. This Psalm speaks of His Passion. His are the pierced hands and feet. He is the Divine Shepherd. Here I find Him reigning in glory. This is He who comes to judgment. The Sion and Jerusalem which is spoken of is the Church." — (*Bishop Alexander's Bampton Lectures*, pp. 233-239).

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in Africa, who was ordained to the ministry about the year 371, had been gained over from heathenism through the instrumentality of his mother, who, having embraced Christianity before him, was earnest and unceasing in prayer for the conversion of her son; and before her death had the joy of seeing him casting in his lot with the people of God. Referring to that eventful period of his life, Augustine thus wrote, "What words did I utter to Thee, O my God, when I read the Psalms of David, those

faithful songs, those pious breathings, which suffer no swelling spirit of pride, when I was as yet uninstructed in all the truth and faithfulness of thy love, a catechumen in that country-house, keeping holiday with the catechumen Alypius, whilst my mother remained with us, in the garb of a woman, but with the faith of a man — with the calmness of an aged woman — with the affection of a mother — with the piety of a Christian. What words did I utter to Thee in those Psalms! How was my love to Thee inflamed thereby! How did I burn to recite them, were it possible, throughout the whole world, against the proud swelling of men! How vehement and how sharp was my grief and indignation against the Manichæans, [because, as rejecting the Old Testament, they robbed themselves of the Psalms]; and yet again how I pitied them, because they knew not these sacraments, these medicines, and showed their insanity in rejecting the antidote which might have restored them to sanity. How I wish they could have been somewhere near me, and, without my knowing that they were there, could have seen my face and heard my words when I read the Fourth Psalm in that retirement in which I was, and could have known all that that Psalm was to me!"

"The tide of Christian hymnology, that has been running with ever-increasing volume and strength in the Reformed Churches during the past century, threatens in many quarters to displace the Psalms (though it can be only for a season) from their place of unrivalled prominence and authority in public worship. This I cannot help regarding as a great evil.... Wherever the prayers are free, it is of incalculable importance that the other half of the devotional service should be moulded in forms of ancient authority; and surely the best possible mould is that which the Holy Spirit himself gave by the Psalmists, and which has left its divinely traced lines on the general Church for these three thousand years." — *Binnie on the Psalms*, p. 391.

"There is not a page in this Book of Psalms in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding him; and it was but a just encomium of it that came from the pen of one of the early Fathers, that it is a complete system of Divinity for the use and edification of the common people of the Christian Church. In deriving this edification from it, which it is calculated to convey, they may receive much assistance from a work which the ignorance of modern refinement would take out of their hands. I speak of the old singing Psalms, the metrical version of Sternhold and Hopkins. This is not, what I believe it is now generally supposed to be, nothing better than an awkward versification of a former English translation: it was an original translation from the Hebrew text, earlier, by many years, than the prose translation in the Bible; and of all that are in any degree paraphrastic, as all verse in some degree must be, it is the best and most exact we have to put into the hands of the common people. The authors of this version considered the verse merely as a contrivance to assist the memory. They were little studious of the harmony of their numbers, or the elegance of their diction: but they were solicitous to give the full and precise sense of the sacred text according to the best of their judgment; and their judgment, with the exception of some few passages, was very good; and at the same time that they adhered scrupulously to the letter, they contrived to express it in such terms as, like the original, might point clearly to the spiritual meaning. It was a change much for the worse, when the pedantry of pretenders to taste in literary composition thrst out this excellent translation from many of our churches, to make room for what still goes by the name of the New Version, that of Tate and Brady, which, in many places where the Old Version is just, accurate, and dignified by its simplicity, is careless and inadequate, and, in the poverty and littleness of its style, is contemptible. The innovation, when it was first attempted, was opposed, though in the end unsuccessfully, by the soundest divines, the most accomplished scholars, and the men of the truest taste at that time in the seat of authority in the Church of England. It will be an alteration still more for the worse, if both these versions should be made to give place to another of later date, departing still further from the strict letter of the text, and compensating its want of accuracy by nothing better than the meretricious ornaments of modern poetry." — Extract from a Sermon by Bishop Horsley on Psalm 2:1, preached in 1798, prefixed to his translation of the Psalter with critical notes.

In evidence of what is mentioned in the Preface as to the introduction of uninspired hymns, the two following extracts are quoted from the Ecclesiastical Histories of Socrates and Sozomen, who lived and wrote in the earlier part of the fifth century.

Socrates VI. 8. "The Arians, as we have said, held their meetings without the city. As often, therefore, as the festal days occurred, that is to say, the Sabbath and the Lord's Day of each week, on which days assemblies are usually held in the churches, they congregated within the city gates about the public piazzas, and sang responsive verses adapted to the Arian heresy. This they did during the greater part of the night; and again in the morning, chanting the same responsive compositions, they paraded through the midst of the city, and so passed out at the gates to go to their places of assembly. But since they incessantly made use of insulting expressions with reference to the Homoousians, often singing such words as these, 'Where are they that say three things are but one power?' John [Chrysostom], fearing lest any of the more simple should be drawn away from the church by such kind of hymns, opposed to them some which had been composed by his own people, that they also, employing themselves in chanting nocturnal hymns, might obscure the efforts of the Arians, and confirm his own party in the profession of their faith."

Sozomen VIII. 8. "The Arians having been deprived of their churches in Constantinople during the reign of Theodosius, held their assemblies without the walls of the city. They assembled by night in the public porticoes, and sang in parts certain hymns which they had composed in vindication of their own tenets; and at the break of day, they marched in procession, singing these hymns, to the places in which they held their assemblies. They proceeded in this manner on all solemn festivals, and on the first and last days of the week. The sentiments propounded in these hymns were such as were likely to engender disputes, as, for instance, the following — 'Where are those who say that the Three Persons constitute one Power?' Other similarly bitter observations were interspersed throughout their compositions. John was afraid lest any of his own people should be led astray by witnessing these exhibitions; and he therefore commanded them to sing hymns in the same manner. The orthodox, being more numerous and more wealthy than the Arians, soon surpassed them in the pomp and splendour of their processions; for they had silver crosses and lighted torches borne before them. The eunuch of the Empress was appointed to regulate these processions, to pay the cost of whatever might be required, and to prepare hymns adapted to be sung on these occasions.... Having commenced the custom of singing hymns, in the manner and from the cause above stated, the members of the Catholic Church did not discontinue the practice, but have retained it to the present day."

"Whether the hymns were good or bad," says the writer of the article on Hymns in *Smith's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, "the midnight processions popularised their use; and from the night offices of the Church, they seem to have passed into other hours."

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

"In the ancient law, God was praised with musical instruments, according to Psalm 33:2,3: 'Confess ye to the Lord with the harp: with the ten stringed Psaltery praise ye Him: sing to him a new song.' But musical instruments, as Harps and Psalteries, the church does not admit into the praise of God, lest she should seem to Judaize. Neither may the pipe be brought into use, nor any other artificial instrument as the harp and such like, but those things which benefit the hearers. For such musical instruments incite the mind rather to pleasure than to the forming of a good disposition within. Howbeit in the Old Testament such instruments were used, partly because the people were more hard and carnal, whence they had to be stimulated by such instruments, as also by earthly promises — partly also because such corporeal instruments typified something." — *Thomas Aquinas*.

"Psalm 33:2. Here we have the first mention of musical instruments in the Psalms. It is to be observed that the early Fathers almost with one accord protest against their use in Churches; as they are forbidden in the Eastern Church to this day; where yet, by the consent of all, the singing is infinitely superior to anything that can be heard in the West. It is not easy to determine when they were first introduced into the West. S. Gregory the Great speaks of organs; but Amalarius in the eighth century (*de officiis ecclesiae* c.3) describing the use of the Church of France, says that no instruments were employed. S. Thomas Aquinas seems to disapprove them, or at least barely tolerates them; and the Church of Lyons, which held more faithfully to primitive practice than any other in France, admitted them only in the sixteenth century." — *Neale's Commentary on the Psalms*.
