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## THE PSALM-BOOK OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES.

BY PRINCIPAL ROBERT ELLIS THOMPSON, S.T.D.

The Four Walls of the City of God, the old theologians used to say, are Doctrine, Discipline, Government and Worship. The last of these we now discriminate into Prayer and Praise. But the line of separation is uncertain even now, and at first its existence was not recognized, as for instance in the Book of Psalms. While the whole collection is called "Praises" (*Tehillim*), yet at the close of the second of the five Books into which it is divided, we read "The Prayers of David, the Son of Jesse, are ended." And while something over a third of the Psalms are songs of praise, of which the CIII and the CXLV are the types, the element of prayer and supplication enters into the rest. But in Christian worship it is generally recognized that in prayer the varied wants of the congregation—some general and universal, others specific and individual—are laid before God by the spokesmen of the worshipers, while the praises of God for his unchanging mercies are uttered by the whole people in suitable forms, generally known and prepared beforehand, so that all can unite in them.

The Book of Psalms is the most wonderful body of praise-songs and prayer-songs in the world's literature. Antiquity has nothing to put beside it for a minute. It is unique because it is a poetic record of the unique history of the Jewish people under the leading of God. While all ancient peoples set out with a simple and ethical faith in God, the Jews, although equally with their neighbors exposed to the temptations which elsewhere reduced that faith to ghost-worship and mythology, and to a debased anthropomorphism which clothed the gods with all the cruelties and impurities of their worshipers, did, for some reason, overcome these temptations on the whole. Mr. Andrew Lang, in his valuable work on "The Making of Religion" (1898), traces this unique victory to the elevating influences of the Hebrew

Prophets upon their people. The Prophets themselves trace it to the direct influence of God on his elect people, the sending of the Prophets being one of his ways of doing this. The Psalms are, in their own way, the record of this battle and this victory. They tell of conflicts with the forces which made their kindred worshipers of brute and unholy power, and with the forces of despair and of fleshliness, and of victories won through the presence of a God of help and deliverance, who responds to every cry of his people. "The shout of a King is in them." Men speak in them out of a real experience of God, which finds an answer in the hearts of all ages.

The Jewish use of the Psalms in worship seems to have been confined to the Temple services. They were not even included in the Scriptures read in the Synagogue, nor do we hear of singing in any form in that service. Nor is it mentioned in the account of the first Church, in the period following Pentecost. It is said, indeed, that they "did eat their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God" (Acts 2:46-47). But this is a reference to the *Berachoth* ("Blessings"), which were uttered before and after meat, and to which there are frequent references in the Gospels, including, I think, the *humnēsan* ("sang a hymn") of Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26.

The first mention of Christian song is Luke's statement that Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi "at midnight sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them" (Acts 16:25). But in that apostle's first Epistle to the Corinthians (14:26), to the Ephesians (5:19), and to the Colossians (2:16), it appears that the singing of God's praises had enriched the worship of the Church beyond that of the Synagogue, and that the Book of Psalms was used in this devotion. On the thorny question whether the "hymns and spiritual songs," twice mentioned along with "psalms," are varieties of the psalms, or other than the psalms, I shall not enter here. But, as Dr. Doellinger well says, the contents of the Book of Psalms fitted well to the situation and experiences of the Church of those days, for it was a time

of fightings and of fears for others than the Apostle; and the book is a garland of war-songs for the war in which men battle, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

The use of the Psalms led to imitations of the Psalms, especially in that first age, when Greek influence had not imposed classic forms on Christian poetry. A large number of Christian psalms are found in the Syriac collection lately published by Prof. J. Rendall Harris, but these are probably of Gnostic origin. Very different are the three notable psalms of the Orthodox Church: (a) The Greek *Phōs hilaron*, or song for the lighting of the lamps; (b) The *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, based on the song of the angels at our Lord's Nativity, and existing in both Greek and Latin; and (c) The *Te Deum Laudamus*, found only in Latin, and probably composed in Africa before the end of the second century, as Cyprian certainly has it in mind in one of his tracts.<sup>1</sup> These probably are but a handful out of a great body of Christian psalms, composed in the free rhythmic form used in the Hebrew psalter. They probably are the best, and were saved from the general wreck of their kind by qualities which fixed them in the minds of the Christian people.

With the rise of Greek influences in the Church, Psalmody gave place to Hymnody, in the classic forms of verse, based on vowel quantities. This in turn, in the Latin West, gave way to verse based on accent and rhyme, which we find in the great hymns of the Middle Ages. But the

<sup>1</sup> Its early date has been obscured by some editor having tacked on eight verses from Jerome's Vulgate, at the end of the original hymn, which ends with "in glory everlasting." All the quotations from Scripture and allusions to it, in the hymn itself, are based on the old Itala version, made centuries before that of Jerome. I showed this in an article in *The Andover Review* for July, 1890; and since that time an Irish manuscript has been found, which contains the hymn without the added eight verses. See also *The Sunday-School Times* for March 4, 1899, where a letter from the late Professor F. J. A. Hort is given sustaining this view of the *Te Deum*.

Book of Psalms retained a high place in the worship of the Church, and holds it still in the service-books of both the Roman Catholic and the Greek Churches. The Roman Breviary requires the recitation or chanting of thirty-one Psalms every week day, and thirty-seven every Sunday, by the clergy and monks of that communion. While much might be said against the mechanical and monotonous use of the Psalms in this way, and against their being recited in the bad Latin of an inaccurate version—not that of Jerome's Vulgate—we surely must be glad that their unceasing witness to man's immediate access to God has been on the lips of the priesthood of this hierarchic Church.

The first achievement of the Reformers in the field of worship was the restoration of the language of the people to its rightful place as the language of worship. As at Pentecost, it might now be said, "We all do hear in our own tongues" the wonderful works of God. The Bible was given to the people, and they were enabled to pray and praise as a Christian congregation, instead of watching a clerical service in Latin. In the reform of the Church's praise, as in other things, two ideals as to the method of reformation became manifest. The Evangelical Church, following Luther, aimed at the retention of whatever in previous usage was not open to objection as distinctly unscriptural, or as interfering with the edification of the people. On this conservative principle the Latin hymns of the Middle Ages were rendered into German, Scandinavian and English verse, and were supplemented by other hymns of the same general character and form. Sometimes these were suggested by the Psalms or other Scriptures, but they rarely aimed at an exact rendering of the inspired originals. Thus of Luther's thirty-six hymns, seven are free versions of Psalms, eleven are renderings of Latin hymns, and four are adaptations of old German hymns, while only five are original work. On this line the Lutherans have proceeded, until it is estimated that their store of German hymnody contains forty thousand hymns of merit.

The Reformed Church, on the other hand, proceeded upon

the conviction that the Reformation was a call from God to his people to return to his word as their guide in worship and doctrine, in government and discipline. "To the Law and to the testimonies! If they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them." So they passed by Breviary and Hymnary to find the substance of their praise in the Book of Psalms. They were fortunate in securing the services of the best musicians of that day, and some of the best poets also.

Clement Marot (1497-1544) was the best French poet of his time, and the first in the series of modern poets of his country. In his earlier years he was a child of the Renaissance merely, with a satiric attitude toward the abuses of the Church of Rome, and a scorn of its enactments. In 1526 he was imprisoned for eating flesh in Lent, and escaped only through the friendship of Francis I, in whose court he held a position. In 1532 he was prosecuted before the Parliament of Paris on the suspicion that he had had a share in preparing the violent "placards" against the Mass. Much of his earlier poetry is far from edifying, but in his later years he showed a more serious spirit. In 1539 he published at Paris his French version of thirty of the Psalms, in various well-known meters. To render any part of the Scriptures into French was regarded as showing a leaning toward Lutheranism. It implied the right of the people to have the Scriptures in their own tongue; and if the translator began with the Psalms, who knew where he would stop?

Marot was not a Hebrew scholar, but among his friends was Jean Vatable, Professor of Hebrew in the College Royale of Paris, who did much good work in the correction of the Latin version of the Bible according to "the Hebrew verity"; and it is believed that the poet was introduced by this friend to "the austere beauty" of the Psalms. This made his version doubly objectionable; and worse still was its immediate and general popularity. The king and his courtiers sang Marot's Psalms. The common people sang them in their evening walks on the *Pre aux Clercs*, and in their homes. Jean Bouchard, the Inquisitor of Heretical Pravity, smelled

heresy in anything that could so quickly displace the ribald songs in which Paris delighted; and the doctors of the Sorbonne agreed with him. The King was obliged to forbid Marot to proceed farther with his translation, and the poet found it convenient to leave his country. He had met Calvin at the court of the Duke of Ferrara in 1536, and to Geneva Marot proceeded, and found a hearty welcome. The great reformer had already published a collection of metrical Psalms at Strassburg in 1538, with twelve Psalms by Marot and five by himself. He now invited Marot to make a complete version, and in 1542 appeared a psalter with forty-eight psalms by Marot, five by Calvin, and four by other translators, with music from German sources. But the climate of Geneva was morally too bracing for the pet poet of the French court. His enemies said he was expelled from the city for grave moral offences. The records show that he merely was censured by the Presbytery for forming one of a card-party. At any rate he left Geneva for Turin, then in the hands of the French, and died there in poverty in 1544.

Calvin now devolved upon his eminent associate and successor, Theodore Beza, the duty of completing the psalm-book of the church of Geneva. In 1551 thirty-four more psalm-versions were published by Beza, and in 1562 the entire Psalter. Beza had been a distinguished Latin poet before his adherence to the Reformation; and while he lacked the felicity of Marot in handling the French language and its rhythms, he did his work well. The literary quality of this old version has been much and unduly depreciated by modern critics, and especially by those who are either hostile or indifferent to the cause of the Reformation. Its authors were not men of genius, but they were among the best poets of their age, and Marot the very best. After long neglect his poetry is coming to its rights, and his superiority to the stiff and artificial poets of the next age is recognized. Nor, say the juster critics, was it the least of his merits that he turned the mind of the French muse to the great fountain of sublime inspiration in the psalmists of Judæa. Both his

versions and those of Beza are somewhat paraphrastic, aiming at literary expression rather than at reproducing the simplicity of the original. But the idea of each psalm is fully grasped, and the connections of the parts more fully shown than could be done in a more literal version.

The clearest proof of the merits of their work is found in the extraordinary hold it took upon the mind of the French people, not only of the Reformed Church, but even its enemies. It was a bulwark of the Huguenot cause. To use the language with which Father Faber looked back to his Protestant Bible, it became one of the strongholds of what the Romanists called heresy. It lived upon the ear like the sound of church bells which the pervert hardly knew how he could forego—a music never to be forgotten. The memory of the dead passed into it; the potent traditions of childhood were stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man were hidden beneath its words.<sup>2</sup> More than one Romanist version was made, to break its hold on the public ear, but in vain. The converts to Rome elung to it in spite of their confessors. Mme. de Maintenon, wife of Louis XIV, authenticated her Huguenot descent and education by her love of psalm-singing, and by her reluctance to go to Mass. Charlotte-Elizabeth, the German wife of the king's brother, delighted a Protestant painter by singing the Huguenot psalms under the shade of the garden trees at Versailles.

Some individual psalms were especially dear through their associations. The LXVIIIth was the Huguenot battle hymn on many a hard-fought field. In later days it was the rallying song of the Camisards. The LXXIXth was the first martyr-psalm, sung at the stake by the fourteen burnt at Meaux in 1523, and so loudly that the chanting of the priests could not drown their voices. Seven others—the IXth, the XVIIIth, the XXXIst, the LIst, the LXXIXth, the LXXXVIth and the CXIVth—share with it this sad but glorious association, as being the last words on the lips of

<sup>2</sup> Preface to "The Life of St. Francis of Assisi," London, 1853.

those who perished at the stake or on the wheel for the crime of rejecting the traditions of men and holding fast to the word of God. The effect produced by the psalms of the Huguenot martyrs, sung on their way to execution, was so great that the magistrates of Paris ordered that their tongues should be cut out before they appeared in public. Many a French family still preserves as a precious heirloom the little psalter possessed and used by a martyr ancestor.<sup>3</sup> The Huguenots sang the LXXIIith as they bore Coligny from the disastrous field of Montcontour, seemingly wounded to death. It was the singing of the LXXXVIIIth which recalled Henry IV to the faith of his heroic mother, after his forced recantation at St. Bartholomew, The XXVIth was sung by the refugees of 1685, when they reached Geneva and safety. With every generation the book grew fuller of the sacred associations of a glorious but suffering past of the Church.

A large part of the charm of the French psalter was due to the Huguenot musicians, who wedded its verses to inspiring tunes. These ranked among the best tone-masters of their age, and nobly they served the Reformed Churches. First among them comes Louis Bourgeois, who had followed Calvin to Geneva, and was made the Precentor of the cathedral church of St. Peter, in which the Reformer preached. Before 1557, when he returned to Paris, he furnished eighty-eight of the psalms with appropriate tunes. In this he used popular airs, fragments of earlier melody, and even German chorales; but he used all these with the skill of a master. In the editions of the psalter for use in the church only the melody was given, as Calvin approved of no harmonization of tunes. But Bourgeois also published, for private use, an edition with the music in four parts. The Council of Geneva evidently regarded his work as public property as soon as it was used in the church. In 1551 he was thrown into prison for having altered some of the tunes "without

<sup>3</sup> A psalter, two inches long, and containing their Confession of Faith as well as the psalms, was made for the Huguenot ladies, who could hide it in their glove. Hence its name, *gantier-psautier*.

leave''; but Calvin had him out next day, and the alterations were adopted. By some critics the music of Bourgeois is ranked so high as to place him in this art alongside Calvin among the theologians. A clergyman of the Church of England has announced (and possibly published) a hymn-book, to which no other music than the eighty-eight tunes of this composer are admitted. In the new English Wesleyan Hymn-Book all the psalm-tunes are taken from the Huguenot Psalter.

Claude Goudimel is the second of the Huguenot composers who exerted a great influence on psalmody. A native of France, he proceeded early to Rome, became a singer in the Pope's chapel, and opened a school for music, in which the great Palestrina was trained. Returning to France, he became a Protestant about 1560, and in 1564 published an edition of the psalter of Marot and Beza, in which the airs of Bourgeois are given with emendations, and the music is harmonized in four parts. This, like the similar work of Bourgeois, was not meant for use in churches, but it was very important in its way. The French psalter was not merely a church-book, and the Protestants did not confine their psalm-singing to their public worship. It was their book of home and social praise, and the harmonized settings filled a great need. Goudimel's work differs in character from that of Bourgeois in greater floridity, but it also is the work of a master. Goudimel was one of the victims of St. Bartholomew.

But it was to Claude Le Jeune that the Huguenot psalter owed its final musical form. He began with ten psalms, with the music harmonized, in 1564; but his complete work did not appear until 1601, after his death. The beauty of its execution at once gave it suffrages of the Reformed Churches outside of Switzerland, where Bourgeois held the field. Later critics recognize in Le Jeune a great master of harmony, and a finer musician than Goudimel. His treatment of the melodies of the psalter is not revolutionary. He builds upon the work of Bourgeois, but he brings his peculiar gifts to bear in adapting his work to the popular

taste. It was *his* music which made its way into Germany and other countries, despite local traditions, and gave the Reformed Psalter a common character throughout Europe. It is said to have gone through more editions than any other musical work ever printed.

The work of the Huguenot musicians was of a higher order than was that of the Huguenot psalmists, and gave to that psalter its commanding place as the type and norm of the praise of the Reformed Churches. Their "grave, solemn measures and their strong sustained harmonies" caught the ear and won the hearts of Europe, even Roman Catholics and Lutherans confessing the charm they exercised. In 1573 Ambrosius Lobwasser, of Koenigsberg, rendered the French psalter into German verse, for the sake of introducing the French music to Germans. In 1637 the eminent poet Martin Opitz, and in 1713 the pious hymn-writer Ernest Lange, translated the Book of Psalms into German of the French meters, that they might be sung to that music. All three were Lutherans, and were censured by zealots of their own Church for this approximation to the Reformed. The version of Lobwasser, a translation of a translation, was adopted by the Reformed Churches of Germany, and was published in editions past enumeration, until it was superseded by that of Matthias Jorissen in 1798.

What was thus done in Germany, was typical of the acceptance of the Huguenot example throughout Europe. The Psalm-books of the Reformed Churches of Italy, Spain, Holland, Bohemia, Poland and the Romanisch-speaking Grisons in Switzerland were prepared on the French scheme of meters, and with the musical setting furnished by the Huguenot musicians. From Locarno to Edinburgh, and from Rochelle to Warsaw, throughout the great sisterhood of the Reformed Churches, on the firing line of the battle for Protestantism, the Christian people sang David's Psalms to the French tunes.

But every living language changes from age to age, and by the second half of the seventeenth century the vocabulary and phrasing of the psalms of Marot and Beza had be-

come to some extent antiquated. For the psalm-book was not, like our English Bible, the common possession of a whole people. It was the book of a minority—an heroic and intelligent minority, but still a minority—and therefore unable to fix the forms of speech for a whole country. Valentine Conrart, who undertook its revision, was a very notable French scholar. It was at his house that those meetings of men of letters were held, which, under the patronage of Richelieu, grew into the French Academy; and he was its first Perpetual Secretary. One Sunday he was too unwell to attend the church at Charenton outside Paris, where the Reformed worship was tolerated. He kept his room, read his Bible and sang the psalms of Marot and Beza. Some of his scholarly friends dropped in on him while he was thus employed, and found the vocabulary and phrasing of the old French psalms very laughable. As he had a Frenchman's keen sense of ridicule, he was moved to attempt something more accordant with the usage of his own time. His modernization of the old psalms, finished by his friend La Bastide after his death, was published in 1679. It retained carefully the meters of the early text, so as to maintain their adaptation to the old music; but the alterations in many cases were made with very slight regard to the sense of the original. This led to a farther revision by the pastors of the church of Geneva, in 1695, which became the standard psalm-book of the French-speaking Protestants, although some of the churches went on using the unrevised text until far into the eighteenth century, and a few used a revision of Conrart and La Bastide made by Pastor Beausobre, of Berlin.

In the nineteenth century, largely through German, English and Moravian influences, Psalmody gave way to Hymnody in the French churches; and the hymns of Pictet, Cesar Malan, Alexander Vinet, Theodore Monod and Eugene Bersier are among the best. In 1881 the General Synod of the Reformed Church of France appointed a Commission on Sacred Song, and in 1893 the result of its labors—a collection of Psalms and Hymns (*Psaumes et Cantiques*)—was

adopted. In this book there is a partial return to the early Psalter of the Reformation. Fifty-two of its Psalms, in a revised form, are prefixed, with the old music; and fifteen of the two hundred and forty-seven Hymns are set to the music of the Psalter.

The story of the Huguenot Psalter has an especial interest for us through its influence on the early psalm-books of England and Scotland. At one time it seemed probable that both countries would become Lutheran, and adapt Hymnody rather than Psalmody in their worship. The first books of sacred song—the “Ghostly Psalms and Spiritual Songs” of Miles Coverdale, and the “Good and Godly Ballads” of the Wederburns of Dundee—are Lutheran in character. It was due to Wishart and Knox in Scotland, and to Ridley and Cranmer in England that both countries became Reformed about the time of Luther’s death, and therefore were psalm-singing communities. And the leaders of the reformatory movement in both were driven to Geneva seven years after that change by persecution at home, and there learned the new music of the Reformation.

The beginnings of a popular English psalm-book were made as early as the reign of Edward VI, by Thomas Sternhold, Groom of the Robes to that king and to his father. He tried to displace the obscene songs of the courtiers by rendering the psalms into popular verse, in the meter of such ballads as Chevy Chase, now called Common Meter. At times he rises into poetry, as in two stanzas of the XVIIIth psalm:

The Lord descended from above,  
and bowed the heauens hye:  
And vnderneath his foote he cast  
the darknes of the skye.  
On Cherubs and on Cherubins  
ful royally he rode:  
And on the wings of al the windes,  
came flying al abroad.

But his forty renderings are mostly homely, and lacking in the dignity of the Psalms. His chief associate was John

Hopkins, whom Antony Wood classes as the worst (*infirmus*) English poet of his day. Metrically his sixty psalms differ from Sternhold's in having four rhymes to a stanza instead of two. His versions appeared mostly in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, 1551-1562. From these two writers the English psalm-book has been popularly called "Sternhold and Hopkins."

There were still fifty psalms to render, and half of these were Englished in meter, in 1562, by Thomas Norton, the first translator of Calvin's "Institutes." He also clung to Common Meter, giving this version a metrical monotony without a parallel. The rest were rendered by William Whittingham, John Pullain, Robert Wisdom, and the Scotchmen John Kethe and John Craig. All of these were among the refugees at Geneva; and Whittingham was the pastor of the church of the exiles in that city, and had much to do with the preparation and publication of the Genevan Bible, the first satisfactory English rendering. Both in their versions of the remaining psalms, and in alternate versions of psalms already translated, they show the influence of the meters and music of the French Psalter. They break very happily the Common Meter monotony of Sternhold, Hopkins and Norton, with lively and vigorous renderings, all of which found welcome in the Scottish psalm-book.

In Scotland the General Assembly of 1561 ordered the completion of the psalm-book published at Geneva by the exiles in 1558. The compilers of this Scottish psalm-book (Edinburgh: 1564) cut down Sternhold and Hopkins each to thirty-seven versions, and Norton to eight, with two by Marckant, also of the Sternhold school. For these they substituted versions by exiles of Geneva—sixteen by Whittingham, two by John Pullain, twenty-five by Kethe, fifteen by Craig, and six by Robert Pont, another Scotchman. This gave eighty-seven psalms composed mostly in the meters of the French psalter, and adapted to its music. Of the one hundred and eighteen tunes given, eighty-three are French or Genevan. Thus the psalm-book of the Kirk was in line

with that of the Reformed Churches generally, and escaped that monotony which made the psalm-singing a by-word in England. As a consequence it took hold of the Scottish people much as the French Psalter had on the people of France.

They sang the psalms in unison, the Tenor, not the Soprano, taking the Melody, and the Basses holding their breath at the high notes, or coming in an octave lower. It is said by Dr. William H. Stone (in Grove's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians") that this sort of singing in unison is still to be heard in England "in a few village churches, and in many Scotch kirks."

The psalm-singing of that day was different in other respects from what became usual in later times. It was not the singing of a few verses interspersed with other parts of the worship. The people gathered into the parish churches an hour or more before the minister made his appearance in the pulpit, and spent the time in listening to the Scriptures and in singing psalms under the direction of the precentor, who was generally the schoolmaster of the parish. They thus acquired a strength of voice and length of wind, which had no equal even in their descendants of a later time, as we may see from one of Dean Ramsay's delightful Scotch stories. He says that a parish minister of the nineteenth century, after the preliminary exercises of worship, discovered that he had left his sermon in his study. He leaned over the pulpit board and told the precentor to give out the CXIXth Psalm, and sing until he got back from the manse, which was close by the church. When he reached his study he thought he might as well have "a draw of the pipe," as the Psalm was a long one. But tobacco makes its devotees oblivious of the lapse of time, and before he was done the "betherill" rushed in, crying: "Come awa, minister; come awa! They hae wrastled on to the ninety-second verse, an' they're cheep, cheepin' like birds." That Psalm would have been but a mouthful to the Scotchman of the seventeenth century.

A knowledge of music was general at that time in Scot-

land, as it came down by popular tradition from an earlier day, and was cherished in the parish schools. No one could obtain an appointment as schoolmaster unless he could instruct the children in Psalmody, as well as in other elements of a sound education. As the Scottish delegates to the Westminster Assembly told the English members, everybody in Scotland could read for himself, which was far from being true of the common people of England. And with this was associated an extraordinary intensity of spiritual devotion, not, of course, in the whole body of the people, but in a much larger proportion of them than Scotland ever knew before or after. Welsh, Bruce, Rutherford, the Guthries, Livingston, Frazer of Brea were the mountain-peaks, which rose above the general high level, and made possible such an army as twice marched into England in defense of the National Covenant—an army in which plunder and outrage, blasphemy and indecency were unknown, and in which the rough songs of the camp were replaced by the sounds of Psalm-singing from almost every tent, ere they settled into quiet for the night. The Scottish Psalter was one of mainstays of that national gravity and sobriety, into which the nation had been lifted out of the recklessness and lawlessness of its earlier time.

Here also individual psalms grew dearer through their associations. James Melville tells us that the XLIVth and the LXXIXth were sung in that dreadful year of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, when Knox was taken away from the head of his nation. But they sang the LXXVIth when they got news of the defeat and wreck of the Armada. The CXXIVth came to be called "Durie's Psalm," because the people of Edinburgh sang it when they met their banished pastor at the Nether-Bow in 1582, and escorted him back to his home with bare heads and loud singing. The saintly John Welsh, Knox's son-in-law, sang the XIth, on his way to the unjust tribunal at Linlithgow; and on his banishment in 1606 to France, sang the XXIIIrd on the shore at Leith, as a parting song of courage and comfort. The LIst became the chosen psalm for Fast-Days; the CIIId

and the CXVIth for Communion; and the XCth for Burials.

But the old version of the sixteenth century was not constructed to last forever. Its faults grew more glaring with the lapse of time, with the change of modes of speech, and especially with the growing distaste for its colloquialisms. When the middle of the seventeenth century was reached, there had already been several other versions proposed for use, or actually in use. The Pilgrim Fathers sang that of the Brownist leader, Henry Ainsworth, published with music in 1612. The Puritans of Massachusetts used the Bay State Psalm-Book, first published in 1640, and probably the most clumsy version that ever came into church use. The first Stuart king of England, who thought equally well of himself as a statesman and as a poet, had his name affixed to "The Psalms of King David, Translated by King James" (1631); but the critics said that it was mostly the work of Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling. King Charles I tried to force it upon the Scotch, and forbade the printing or importation of any other Psalms. David Calderwood gave expression to the general opposition to this loose and highly artificial version in his "Reasons against the Reception of King James's Metaphrase of the Psalms" (1635), which compelled its real author to revise it, and in great measure to rewrite it, for a second edition (London: 1636). It was bound up with The Scottish Service-Book of 1637, popularly called "Laud's Liturgy," and shared in the utter overthrow of that insolent performance.

Besides these, editions of much merit had been published by Sir Philip Sidney and his sister (1587), George Wither (1632), George Sandys (1637), Francis Rous (1641) and Rev. William Barton (1644). The last two excited most attention; and when it was agreed that a new Psalm-Book should be part of that scheme of religious uniformity for the three Kingdoms, which was contemplated by the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, there was something of a struggle between the friends of the two versions. The House of Lords favored Mr. Barton's version and the House of

Commons that by Francis Rous.<sup>4</sup> The Westminster Assembly sided with the Commons, made a revision of Rous's version, and in 1646 had it printed and sent it down to the Scottish General Assembly.

The Assembly of 1647 was not so much in love with uniformity as to adopt it as it stood. It was much inferior in its musical possibilities to the Psalm-Book of 1564, as it represented the metrical monotony of the English Psalm-Book of Sternhold and Hopkins. Almost all the Psalms were versified in Common Meter; and while a few were in Long and Short Meter, hardly any showed the lively and vigorous construction peculiar to the Genevan and the Scotch psalters, and thus were adapted to the music of Bourgeois, Goudimel and Le Jeune.

The Assembly divided this "Paraphrase of the Psalms," as they called it, among a committee of revision, each of five members to revise thirty psalms, and to "set down his own essay for correcting thereof." It directed them to make use of the versions by Sir Robert Muir, of Rowallan, and by Master Zachary Boyd of the University of Glasgow. The former is still unprinted; the latter went through three editions in 1646-1648. This Assembly of 1647 also recommended that "Master Zachary Boyd be at the pains to translate the other Scriptural Songs in meter, and report his

<sup>4</sup> Francis Rous is a more notable figure than is generally supposed. His prose writings give him a place among the notable mystics of the Puritan period, and were republished on the continent in a Latin version (*Interiora Regni Dei*, Amsterdam, 1665) and commended by Pierre Poirer, the authority on mystical literature. He was one of the lay members of the Westminster Assembly. He sat in almost every Parliament from 1625 until 1636, and in Cromwell's House of Lords in 1657. He also was a member of the Protector's Privy Council, and had a great admiration for him, as the new Joshua, who was to purge the land of its idolatrous tribes, and lead the godly into triumphant and quiet possession. He was made Provost of Eton College in 1643, and Anthony Wood says he "was usually styled by the loyal party 'the old illiterate Jew of Eton.'" Illiterate he certainly was not, as is evident from his "Mella Patrum" (1650). His memory was revived a decade ago, when a high windstorm blew down a number of the old oaks he had planted on the grounds of Eton.

travails to the Commission of Assembly," that these might be sent to the Presbyteries.

The Assembly of 1648 sent down to the Presbyteries "Rouse Paraphraize of the Psalms, with the corrections given in by the Persons appointed by the last Assembly," and appointed a committee to revise "the labors of Master Zachary Boyd upon the other Scripturall songs," and report to the next Assembly. The new Psalm-Book was approved finally by the Commission of Assembly on November 23, 1649, and by the Committee of Estates on January 8, 1650, and went into use on May 1, 1650. Its revision had been so thorough as to make it entirely improper to call it "Rous's Version." Much of it was a cento from various versions, notably the XXIII<sup>d</sup> Psalm, the most felicitous in the book. In one respect it was a distinct retrogression from the Psalm-Book of 1564. Much more than two thirds of the Psalms are rendered in Common Meter, instead of the variety of meters and consequent adaptation to the Genevan music, which had distinguished the Scottish from the English psalm-book. To obviate this somewhat, a number of the old versions were retained as alternates, and these have been most popular with the people who have used the book. Such were the massive Cth by William Kethe, the tender, pleading CIId by John Craig, the impressive CXLVth and the spirited CXLVIIIth, both by John Pullain. But in spite of this, the psalm-book of 1650 suffers from the metrical monotony, which the editors of that of 1564 had tried to avoid, and in so far it was a departure from the psalmody of the Reformation.

As to the labors of Master Zachary Boyd on the other Scriptural Songs, we hear no more of them in the Assembly, although we know that he did not intermit his labors. This silence may have been due to the outbreak of the unhappy quarrel between the Engagers and the Protesters in 1649, which absorbed the attention of the Church to the exclusion of almost everything else. After 1649 no Assembly met for forty-one years. Partly also it may have been due to the unsatisfactory character of Master Zachary's work. He had

more zeal and fluency than poetic power or taste. He might be said to have been the forerunner of the Realistic school of poetry. In his paraphrase of the Book of Jonah, he makes the prophet say, on arriving in the whale's belly:

What house is this, where's neither fire nor candle,  
Where I do no thing but guts of fishes handle? . . .  
Among such grease as would a thousand smother.

Dying childless in 1653, he left all his property to the University of Glasgow, with the condition attached that it should publish his poetical works. It also has been said that the University complied with the terms of the will by printing a single copy, which they kept under lock and key. But this is incorrect, as it did not print any of his works, but kept his manuscripts locked up.

It is fitting here to observe that the Assemblies of 1647 and 1648 did not depart from the Reformed tradition in desiring to add other scriptural songs to the Book of Psalms. John Calvin, in the little Strassburg psalter of 1638, included versions of the Song of Simeon and of the Commandments, by himself. The first Genevan psalter (1542) retains these, and adds metrical versions of the Lord's Prayer and of the Creed by Clement Marot. In the complete psalter (1562) are given Marot's version of the Commandments, the Song of Simeon, the Ave, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and Graces before and after Meat, all by Marot. The English Psalter, called after Sternhold and Hopkins (1560), include Robert Wisdome's version of Luther's "*Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*" ("Preserve us, Lord, by thy dear Word"); a version of the "*Gib Fried zu unser Zeit, O Herr*" ("Give peace in these our days, O Lord"); of Wolfgang Klöpfel, by E. G. (possibly Abp. Edmund Grindal); a version of the Athanasian Creed by Thomas Norton; a version of the Lord's Prayer, somewhat after Luther, probably by Bp. Richard Cox; and "The Humble Suit of a Sinner" by John Marckant. The Scottish psalter of 1564 contains nothing but the Psalms; but that of 1575 has five other songs; that of 1595 has ten; and that of 1634 has

fourteen. In this last were added doxologies or "conclusions," in the meter of each psalm. To this innovation objection was made by some west-country ministers in such terms as brought down upon them the censure of the General Assembly as favorers of Brownism. For this reason Robert Baillie watched the representatives of the Brownist or Independent party in the Westminster Assembly, and records that they sang the doxology along with the rest of the members.

The purpose expressed in the designation of Zachary Boyd to furnish metrical versions of other scriptural songs, was not carried out until 1781, when the "Paraphrases" were added to the psalm-book of the Church of Scotland, after a series of efforts at collection and revision, which extended over forty years. Some of these are adaptations of English hymns based on passages of the Bible; others are original work of Scottish authors, those of Michael Bruce being the best. It is said that Robert Burns assisted in the final revision, but the tradition is doubtful. It is certain that it was the work of the dominant party of Moderates, with whom Burns sympathized; and because it was in the tone and spirit of that party, it was unacceptable to many of the rising Evangelical party.

The Psalter of 1650, whatever its defects, won its way into the affections of the people of Scotland, as completely as did the Huguenot Psalter into those of the French Protestants. It began to gather its wealth of associations in the forty years which followed its publication, and which embrace the "killing time" of Scottish Church history. The restoration of diocesan episcopacy did not prevent its general use, for the Stuart kings took warning by the uprising of 1637 against Laud's Liturgy, and did not meddle with the worship of the Kirk. So it remained the psalm-book of all Scotland until the secession of the Episcopalian party after the Revolution.

Its verses were the relief of many a weary hour to the prisoners in the Bass or in Dunotter Castle, as they pleaded with God in its words for his speedy help to Zion, and for

patience to endure until his day came. It was sung by the martyrs of the Covenant as they mounted the ladder in the Grassmarket to seal their testimony with their lives. Alexander Hume, of Hume, thus sang the XVIIth; Andrew Sword and John Clyde the XXXIVth; Hugh McKail the XXXIst; Marion Harvey and Isobel Allison the XXIIId; James Renwick the CIIId; Donald Cargill the CXVIIIth. Margaret Wilson and Mary Lacklan, tied to stakes on the seashore at Wigton, sang the XXVth as the waters of the Solway rushed upon them to their death. Daniel McMichael sang the XLIIId at the Entrekinn, while he faced the muskets of the troopers, who shot him down with the sacred words on his lips. The outworn and hungry company at Rullion Green, surrounded by Dalzell's desperadoes, lifted up their voices in the LXXIVth:

O God why hast Thou cast us off?  
Is it forever more?

Peden, flying from one hiding place to another, found comfort in the XXXIIId:

Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt  
From trouble keep me free.

While preaching in a wood, during one of his flying visits to Ireland, he read the XLIXth, but forbade any to sing it who did not share the faith it expresses in the sheltering care of God and his just judgments. "Few at first took part," we are told; "but soon many broke out and sang with such force and feeling, that the like was seldom witnessed." The psalms broke the silence of the solitudes, where he and others like him dispensed word and sacrament to the persecuted people of God on the hillsides, and where at other times were heard only the wild notes of the curlew and the plover. At Drumclog, on that memorable Sabbath, the first of June, 1679, Claverhouse were seen by the sentinels to approach Loudon Hill, where such a pastor was preaching to a faithful people. As the notice reached them, they parted into two companies. The old men, the women

and the children proceeded up the hill to a place of greater safety, while the men of fighting age marched down the hill to encounter the merciless enemy. Both sang the LXXVith Psalm to the plaintive tune of *Martyrs*:

There arrows of the bow He brake  
The shield, the sword, the war.  
More glorious Thou than hills of prey,  
More excellent art far.

Those that were stout of heart were spoiled,  
They slept their sleep outright;  
And none of those their hands did find,  
That were the men of might.

So they sang, in stout response to each other, their defiance of God's foes, who broke and fled before a company they far outnumbered, and the archenemy, Graham of Claverhouse, barely escaped with his life. Ten years later, at the market-cross of Douglas, Alexander Shields gave out the same psalm; and then and there was formed the Cameronian regiment under the command of William Cleland, the poet-soldier, who had fought at Drumelg, and who was to fall in the heroic defense of Dunkeld by those stout fighters. About six months before this, William of Orange had landed at Torbay with his army of liberation, and had asked William Carstairs, the Scotch minister who had more influence with him (Macaulay says) than any other adviser, to lead the soldiers in worship. Carstairs gave out part of the CXVIIth Psalm, "in which the troops all along the beach joined, and this act of devotion produced a sensible effect." It was Donald Cargill's martyr psalm, and Carstairs may have chosen it for that very reason:

The Lord Himself is on my side;  
I will not be afraid;  
For anything that man can do  
I shall not be dismayed. . . .

In dwellings of the just the voice  
Of joy and health shall be;  
The right hand of the mighty Lord  
Doth ever valiantly.

Nor did these gracious associations end with that time of trouble. When Ebenezer Erskine must leave his church in Stirling in 1740, he gathered the multitude of those who went out with him into the Secession movement, under the battlements of the Castle, and sang the LXth Psalm. When Chalmers, with more than four hundred ministers of the Established Kirk, marched out of St. Andrew's Church to the great hall at Cannonmills, in 1843, leaving behind them their positions, their incomes, their homes, he called upon them to sing the XLIIIrd Psalm:

O send Thy light forth and Thy truth;  
 Let them be guides to,  
 And bring me to Thy holy hill,  
 Even where Thy dwellings be. . . .

Why art thou then cast down, my soul?  
 What should discourage thee?  
 And why with vexing thoughts art thou  
 Disquieted in me?

Still trust in God; for Him to praise  
 Good causes I yet shall have.

So the psalm-book made its way into the affections of a devout, strenuous and spirited people, and took its place between the Bible and Burns as a household book of a nation. The Scottish settlers of Ulster carried it thither with them; and when the tyrannies and vexations of the prelates drove most of them over seas to America, they brought the psalm-book as well as the Bible. It was one of the ties which bound them to the land of their forefathers, and helped them to endure the perils and toils, the isolations and deprivations of their frontier life. Quite natural, then, was their indignation when they heard that Dr. Isaac Watts, in his "Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament" (1713), had declared the Bible Psalms, which were associated in their minds with many a communion season, and many a dying bed, were unfit for Christian use as they stood. They had learned, as Dr. Watts never did or

could, the fitness of even the stern words of the Psalmists for actual human life. Their long endurance of the insolence and the caprices of prelatie tyranny on one side of the Atlantic, and their perpetual peril from the merciless red men on the other, had made such words intelligible and comfortable to them.

The controversy, which Dr. Watts unwittingly began, had effects which are still felt in the divisions of our Presbyterian Israel. The smaller and more conservative branches of the Church asserted not only the fitness of the Psalms, but their exclusive fitness for the worship of God's people. In both New York and Philadelphia, and in the Presbyterian Synod of New England, congregations were agitated and sometimes divided by the introduction of those Christianized Psalms, whose popularity was due partly to the influence of the Great Awakening, and partly to their adaptation to the poetic taste of the eighteenth century.

It certainly is true that the educated man, who opens the old psalm-book for the first time, and has with it no associations, national or personal, will be struck by its offenses against grammar, meter and pronounciation, although he will be much less so if he be familiar with the English pronounciation of the sixteenth century. Yet it has enjoyed the admiration of a larger number of men of literary eminence and cultivated taste than has any other body of praise songs in our literature. We all recall the fine use made of it, and of the music to which the Scottish people sang it, in Robert Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night":

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,  
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;  
 The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,  
 The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;  
 His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,  
 His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;  
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,  
 He wales a portion with judicious care;  
 And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;  
 They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim;  
 Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,  
 Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;  
 Or noble "Elgin" beets the heavenward flame,  
 The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:  
 Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;  
 The tickled ear no heartfelt raptures raise;  
 Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

Thomas Campbell protested publicly against the proposal to modernize it. Sir Walter Scott, on the same occasion, wrote to the chairman of the General Assembly's Committee on Psalmody, hoping that "whatever change might be made, it would be with a lenient hand. Its expression, though homely, is plain, forcible and intelligible, and very often possesses a rude sort of majesty which would be ill exchanged for mere elegance." Its strong and familiar verses were Sir Walter's comfort on his deathbed. Archdeacon Hare was so much impressed by hearing Edward Irving read it to his London congregation, that he published a selection from it for use in the Church of England. Thomas Carlyle knew it by heart, and whenever in his histories anyone quotes a psalm, he gives his readers the metrical version, adding "as the Northern kirks still sing." The reviewer of Mr. Marsham's "Life of Sir Henry Havelock," in *Blackwood's Magazine*, expresses his regret that that brave and devout soldier, in worshiping with his men in India, had nothing better to sing from than a Baptist Hymn-Book—that he had not the Scottish psalm-book with its admirable adaptation to such situations as theirs and his. Mrs. Gaskell and Mrs. Oliphant, two women of genius but of very different theological training and convictions, both refer to the old psalms with praise in their novels.

Such praise as this could not be elicited by mere doggerel or clumsy versification. The Psalm-Book of 1650 must possess sterling merits, to lead such judges of literary quality to overlook its palpable faults. I rejoice in these testimonies, because for myself I must say that the psalms my mother required me to commit to memory have been to me a

*es ætæ*, a perpetual possession. Many a long ride over our American hills and prairies have I shortened by repeating them, while Dr. Watt's "Divine and Moral Songs," which she also had me memorize, have left no impression but that of their priggishness and their eighteenth-century mannerism.

The music of the psalm-book of 1650 was much less varied than that of the psalm-book of 1564, because of the much smaller variety of meters. Almost all but the short-meter tunes of the older work were condemned to oblivion. There was no authoritative setting of the psalms of the second book, as of the first; but the traditions of the Reformation psalmody were retained as far as possible. So in later psalm-books furnished with tunes, we find a considerable group of these, which go back to Bourgeois, Goudimel and Le Jeune. Some of these advertise their origin by their very names: Old XXIXth, Old XLIVth, Old LXXXIst, Old Cth, Old CIId, Old CXIIIth, Old CXXIVth, Old CXXXIVth, and Old CXXXVIIth. Besides these we meet with tunes ascribed to the Genevan Psalter or its composers: Commandments, Greenland, Mayenne, Rutherford, Toulon, St. Catherine; and to the early Scotch Psalters: Abbey, Aberfeldy, Bon Accord, Caithness, Culross, Dumferline, Dundee, Elgin, French, New London, Martyrs, Melrose, Wigton, Old Winchester, Windsor and York.

Popular affection clung to the old Tunes, as to the Psalms which were sung to them; and many no doubt would have approved of the act of the Council of Geneva in sending Louis Bourgeois to jail for altering tunes which had come into use. It was a jest at such conservatism, that the Mothers in Israel were said to believe there were "Twelve Inspired Tunes," which David "composed when he put the Psalms into meter." These, if my memory serves me right, were Abbey, Dundee, French (which in America passes for Dundee), New London, Martyrs, Melrose, Old Hundred, Old Hundred-and-Second, Wigton, Old Winchester, Windsor and York.

Another point of excessive conservatism was the retention of the practice of "lining out" the Psalms by the pre-

centor, two lines at a time before singing. The Scotch members of the Westminster Assembly protested against the approval of such a practice in the Assembly's "Directory for Worship," on the ground that it was needless in Scotland, where the excellent parish schools had made reading universal. But the English members said it was necessary in England, and thus it came to be used in Scotland and Ulster, and even in America. I remember seeing, as a child, two good women who walked miles across the country to our Donacloney "meeting-house," past that at Tullylish, because our precentor still "lined the psalm," while that at Tullylish had ceased the usage. An Indiana pastor told me that on the day when the "lining out" was given up in his church, one good elder rose and left the church, and sat down under a tree within sight of the pulpit, where he "lined out" the psalm for himself, and sung it. Such facts are a warning on the line of Oliver Cromwell's famous admonition to the Scottish General Assembly: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, to think it possible that you may be mistaken."

Two of the Presbyterian Churches have effected revisions of the Psalter of 1650. The Established Church of Scotland toiled over the matter through nearly the first half of the nineteenth century, without reaching any result, so that the unaltered psalm-book of 1650 is still used along with the Scottish Hymnal of 1870. The Presbyterian Church of Ireland has made a good but cautious revision, chiefly by adding new versions, some of which are quite good, although none are superlatively so. The United Presbyterian Church of America adopted a thorough but rather tame revision in 1870, which failed to give satisfaction, and a new psalm-book comes before their Assembly this year. It aims at a greater variety of meters than in the old book, and in this coincides with the taste of its western churches, and may be said to return to the practice of the Reformation period.

We all would gain much and lose nothing by a return to the type of psalm-book used in all the Reformed Churches of that heroic age, of which the French Psalter was the first great example. This would involve (1) the restoration of

the Book of Psalms, either in its entirety—which I should prefer—or in an ample selection, to the foremost place in our book of praise. Julian's "Dictionary of Hymnology" (London: 1892) enumerates over three hundred and fifty partial or complete metrical versions of the Book of Psalms in the English language. A good number of these are the work of our finest devotional poets—of John Milton, George Herbert, John Keble, Henry Francis Lyte, Harriet Auber, James Montgomery, Sir Henry Baker, Benjamin Hall Kennedy, Horatius Bonar, and others. From such an array it surely is possible to collect versions of poetic merit, faithful to the text, and capable of being sung to the best music. (2) The addition of other songs of praise, strictly scriptural in character, in accordance with the tradition of the Reformed Churches of every land, from Calvin's Strassburg Psalter of 1538, down to our own times. It is my conviction that the departure from this tradition by conservative Presbyterians has been the outcome of a controversy provoked by the denial of the fitness of the Psalms of the Bible for Christian worship; and that the feeling on this point has been intensified by the dropping of the Psalms from their old place of honor in our modern hymnaries. As the fathers used to say, we need to be on our guard against both "right-hand and left-hand defections" here. Dr. William Sanday says that history is the dove with the olive branch in her beak, showing us the wrongfulness of the extremes which sunder us into parties. (3) A return to the grand music of the Reformed Church in its heroic days, which never has been surpassed in either solid merit or popular quality. The work of Bourgeois, Goudimel and Le Jeune was a gift of God to the Reformed Churches. They were raised up for a divine service, and we are despising our birthright when we turn our backs upon them to find a substitute in German or Anglican compositions, which are essentially alien to our Reformed spirit.

What has induced me to undertake this paper is the hope that it may be a contribution to Presbyterian reunion, by showing on what ground our fathers stood, and on what we

also may take our stand in the united maintenance of the great truths, which to-day are so widely, vehemently and fundamentally disputed. Even if there are points on which we shall be unable to "see eye to eye," can we not be content with the old Scottish practice of "declaring our separation from" the things to which we cannot agree, without severing from the communion of our brethren? When Dr. Henry Cook objected to the use of the Paraphrases in the churches of the Irish General Assembly, he cut them out of his own copy of the psalm-book and sewed them to the binding of every copy in his pulpit, to make sure they would not be given out in his absence. But he did not leave the Church on that account, while he thus "declared his separation" from current usage. So may we take away the reproach of Presbyterianism, as capable of division rather than of unity, as is shown by the existence, first and last, of twenty-eight separate Churches of our name in this country.