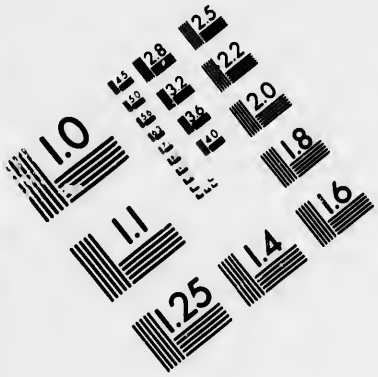

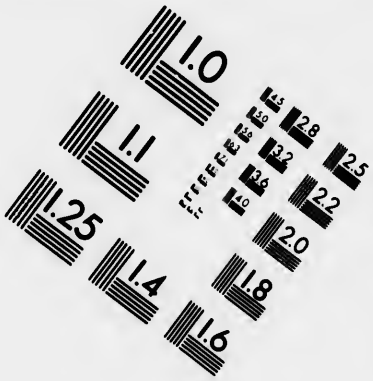

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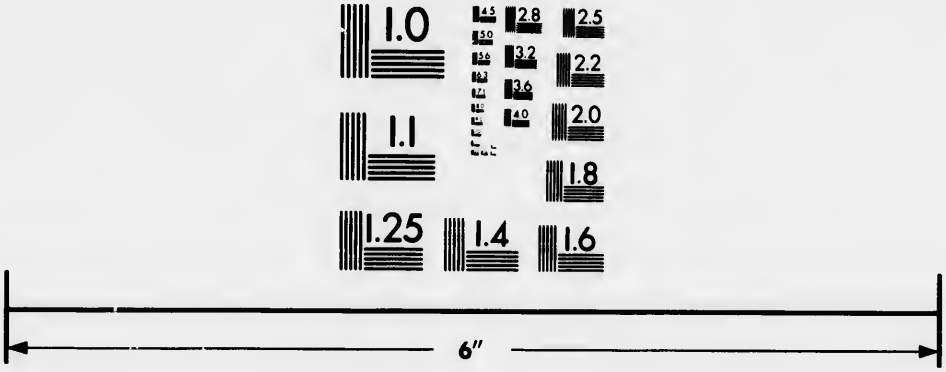

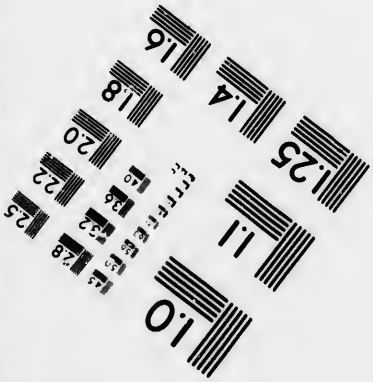

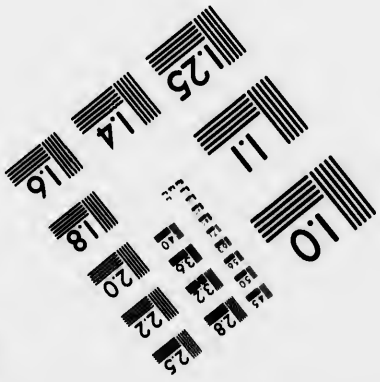

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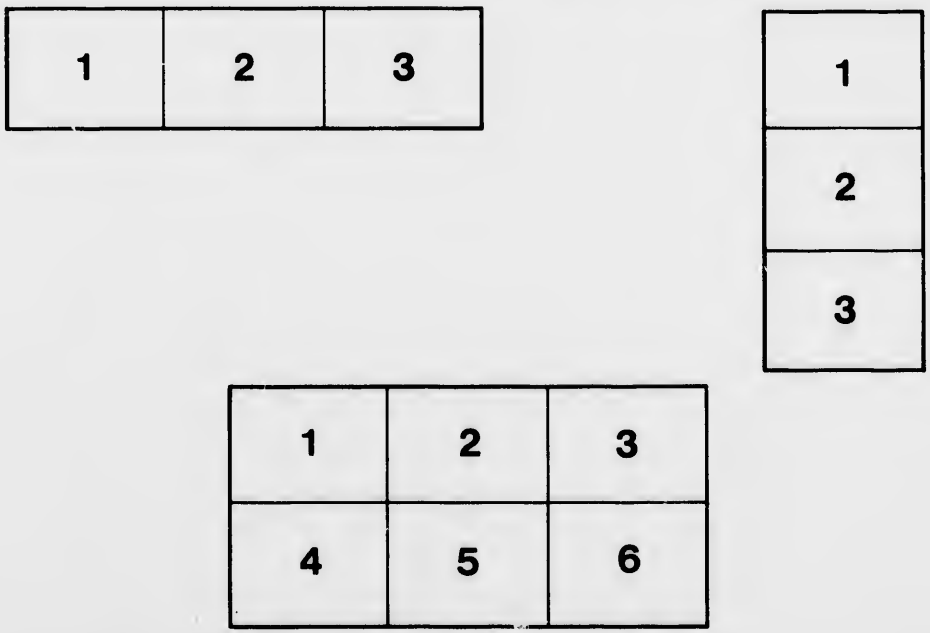

THE FRIENDS

OF

AN INSPIRED PSALMODY

DEFENDED.

From the Evangelical Repository.

PRAISE is one of the most interesting and important parts of public worship. That it may be pleasing to God and profitable to ourselves, it is necessary to employ a proper and suitable Psalmody. Who knows what is most suitable and proper better than the King and Head of the Church? Has He, then, supplied this want of his Church; or has He left her, in this matter, to be guided by expediency, her own wisdom or fancy? If He has given her a Psalmody to be permanently employed, is she at liberty to introduce, to its entire or even partial exclusion, what to her may seem right and proper? Does not the second command require the keeping pure and entire of all such religious worship as God has appointed in his Word, and forbid the worshiping of Him in any way not appointed in His Word? This question is one of great importance at the present time, when so many are disposed to introduce into God's worship what is pleasing to sense and gratifying to the flesh, rather than only what Christ has appointed. To those who desire information on this subject, this pamphlet cannot fail to be interesting, and should it prove useful to any, the publisher of the article in its present form will be more than gratified.—REV. A. WILSON.

KINGSTON:
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1867.

AN INSPIRED PSALMODY.

[From the Evangelical Repository.]

In a work lately published by Wm. S. Martien, and entitled, "A practical Exposition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, in a Series of Lectures adapted to be read in families and social meetings, by the Rev. Wm. Neill, D.D., author of the Biblical History, &c.," we find the following remarks on the 19th verse of the 5th chapter:

With a view to cherish the sacred influences of the Spirit, and give utterance to the religious pleasures with which he fills the soul, we are directed to use psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The heathen were in the habit of singing profane and impure songs in some of their idolatrous festivals. This was particularly the case in the worship of Bacchus, and of Diana of the Ephesians. Instead of these indecent and coarse odes, designed to gratify lust and honour idols, the apostle taught the Christians of those times to sing psalms and hymns, composed on evangelical subjects, and in honour of the true God. And this piece of advice, though drawn from the apostle by peculiar circumstances, is nevertheless of general use and application. What are called fashionable songs of our times, cannot, perhaps, be called idolatrous, excepting such as have been composed to celebrate the praises of angels or canonized saints; but really they are not generally favourable to moral and religious improvement. Most of them are senseless; and some, that are often sung, and, by a certain description of people, much admired, are immoral, and of bad tendency. Love songs are for the most part fulsome, and offensive to delicacy and true refinement. Even patriotic songs, which are usually the best, abound in the praises of fortune or the flattery of great men, to a degree which often borders very closely on a kind of modified and elegant idolatry. The singing of Jehovah's praise is a branch of his instituted worship; and we should be careful not to deprive him who made us of any part of the honour which is due to his holy name. For this delightful part of worship we are furnished in Scripture with ample and appropriate matter. The book of Psalms, chiefly written by David, is a rich and inestimable treasure. "Composed upon particular occasions," says the pious Bishop Horne, "yet designed for general use; delivered out as services for Israelites under the law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the gospel; they present religion to us in the most engaging dress; communicating truths which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of redemption. Calculated alike to profit and to please, they inform the unstanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited under the influence of Him to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations, grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrance; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who has once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best."—*Pref. to Com.*

"Hymns and spiritual Songs."—By these I understand short pieces, grounded on portions of Holy Scripture, adapted to particular occasions, and expressive of gratitude to God for his great mercies. How strange it is that some Christians object to the use of such compositions in religious worship! Can it be doubted, in the face of our text, that the Christians of Ephesus used hymns and spiritual songs? And did they not do so under the sanction and by the advice of Paul the apostle? That hymns or spiritual songs, bottomed on the word of God, whether a versified exposition of a particular passage or a condensed exhibition of gospel truth, taken from various passages, and clothed in decent and serious language, may be sung in divine worship, whether public or private, appears to me perfectly obvious and incontestable. Yet it is a curious fact that many Christian congregations, and some too, in our own connexion, have conscientious scruples on this subject. The chaste and evangelical compositions of Dr. Watts, as well his rich and

beautiful version of the Psalms, as his highly devotional hymns and spiritual songs, are denounced and excluded from the sanctuary, while the miserable doggerel of Rouse is sung, or attempted to be sung, to the no small annoyance of all correct taste for the harmony of numbers, or the charms of music. But happily for the Church, this prejudice is yielding by little and little to the force of evidence, and will ere long give place entirely to more rational and liberal views.

It is with no small degree of reluctance that we call the attention of the Christian community to the foregoing extract from this excellent work. For its author we entertain a feeling of profound respect, and in this feeling we are sure we have the sympathies of the Christian public. He has spent years of active service in the cause of the Divine Master, and we trust that in that service he has been instrumental in doing much good. Sorrow indeed would we be to say or do any thing that would have a tendency to detract in the least from the fair reputation of this venerable servant of God, or awaken in his own breast one unpleasant emotion. We feel, however, impelled by a sense of duty, even at the risk of doing this, to say something in defence of views which the author has seen proper to oppose in his exposition of this passage of the divine word. It becomes us to vindicate what we believe to be the truth, when that truth is opposed, however highly we may esteem the person opposing it. It cannot be denied that the subject is one which in its own nature, possesses no small degree of importance. It relates to the worship of Almighty God. The ordinances of this worship we both have, by our profession, solemnly promised to "observe, keep pure and entire." In regulating our worship, the authority of God has the first claim to our consideration. The distinguished reformer, John Calvin, says in his "reply to Cardinal Sadolet's letter," "The primary rudiments by which we are wont to train to piety those whom we wish to gain as disciples of Christ, are these, namely, not to frame any new worship of God for themselves at random, and after their own pleasure, but to know that the only legitimate worship is that which he himself approved from the beginning, for we maintain that the oracle declared that obedience is more excellent than sacrifice. (1 Sam. xv. 22.) In short, we train them by every means to be content with the one rule of worship which they have received from His mouth, and bid adieu to all fictitious worship." The question, therefore, involved in this discussion, according to this author, relates to a "primary rudiment of piety." Of all the parts of divine worship, there is none which has stronger claims upon our attention than that of praise, it being an exercise in which we address ourselves directly to the great God, and in which we are associated with the pure and bright spirits above, that "stand and praise God day and night in his temple." The difference, therefore, between our worthy father and those whom he opposes, is no small matter; it involves the most important interests.

In addition to the intrinsic character of the subject; the manner in which the author has seen proper to express himself in opposition to the views of the friends of an inspired psalmody, would seem to call for some notice. According to him his own views are "rational and liberal," and their correctness "perfectly obvious and incontestable," while those on the other side are a "prejudice" which "is yielding by little and little to the force of evidence," "Conscientious scruples" on this subject are spoken of as "a curious fact." Nor is this all; the very version in which they are accustomed to celebrate the praises of Jehovah, and around which the associations of two hundred years have clustered, is pronounced "the miserable doggerel of Rouse," which "is sung, or attempted to be sung, to the no small annoyance of all correct taste for the harmony of numbers or the charms of music." Such is the

manner in which this aged minister of the Old School Presbyterian Church has seen proper to express himself in relation to this subject. It will not surely, therefore, be considered presumption in one among the many whom he has been pleased thus to hold up to ridicule, to attempt to say a few words in defence of a principle and practice which are thus unceremoniously assailed. To him, therefore, and to those who sympathize with him in the views he has seen proper to express, we would make our appeal in the words of the Latin proverb; "Audi alteram partem."

THE FRIENDS OF AN INSPIRED PSALMODY.

Before entering upon the examination of the exposition which the Dr. has given us of this passage, and which he has made the foundation of the charge which he has brought against the friends of an inspired psalmody, we must be permitted to make a few remarks in relation to the manner in which he has been pleased to speak of what he calls their "conscientious scruples," and to direct the attention of the reader to the class of persons upon whom his reflections must fall. Those "scruples" are with him a "prejudice," a prejudice opposed to what is "perfectly obvious and incontestable." Now we would submit whether it would not have become the Dr. to have spoken more respectfully of the opinions of those to whom he refers. He knows or ought to know that there are in this country not less than four or five hundred ministers of the gospel of the Presbyterian family, (to say nothing of those over the Atlantic,) and he knows or ought to know that there are from fifteen to twenty congregations, even in this city, to whom these remarks must be regarded as applicable, and to whom they must have been designed to apply. It is true that those churches who hold forth in their profession the views opposed by the Dr. are not so large, and consequently do not occupy so conspicuous a position in the world as the General Assembly Presbyterian Church. Yet he will surely not despise them on this account! These churches are sister churches of his own, possessing in many respects a common faith with hers, and labouring with her to advance the cause of a pure Christianity. We trust it is his desire to see the members of the Presbyterian family united in one organization, and "striving together for the faith of the gospel," and we would submit to him whether such remarks as those which he has seen proper to make, are not calculated to widen the breaches already existing? "Families and social meetings" are here called on to read, "in the absence of their pastors," that the opposition of the friends of inspired psalmody to the use of hymns," whose form," says Dr. Watts," is mere human composure," is a mere "prejudice," a prejudice opposed to what is "perfectly obvious and incontestable," and that this opposition is a "curious fact," so curious as to call fourth the exclamation, "How strange!" Nor does he stop here; the very version endeared to their hearts by so many interesting and affecting associations, he stigmatizes as a "miserable doggerel." Such language we regard as unworth of Dr. Neill.

Not only do these remarks hold up to contempt hundreds of evangelical ministers and churches in this country and Europe, but also some of the brightest ornaments of the church in past days. It will not be denied, we presume, that the principle of an inspired psalmody was the principle recognised by the Westminster Assembly. One of the first resolutions of this Assembly was to dismiss from Rouse's version every extraneous composition—such as hymns and doxologies, which were sometimes affixed to the psalms, and occasionally sung at the close of praise. Having excluded all human composition, they adopted the principle of a metrical translation. Should there be

any doubt entertained on these points the reader has only to consult the twelfth chapter of the "History of the Westminister Assembly of Divines, compiled by the board of Publication from the best authorites," and these doubts will be removed. According to this history, the principal they then adopted and acted upon, was, "that in using the book of psalms in the praise of God, we should not only keep to the sense, but to the *words* of the Scripture text." This is also evident from the Confession itself, which authorizes only "singing of psalms." To this expression the General Assembly Presbyterian Church added the words "or hymns;" thereby clearly showing that they regarded the old Confession as not authorizing the use of any other. Our author, therefore, in the remarks made by him on this subject, has represented the Westminister Assembly, perhaps the most distinguished for learning and piety of any which has set since the days of the Apostles, and to which he is indebted for his Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as opposing a principle, "perfectly obvious and incontestable," and that, too, after having had the subject for years under consideration.

But we have not only a recognition of this principle by this venerable Assembly, but we have in our possession an express declaration, over their signatures, of some of the men who composed this Assembly, and of others who occupied the highest rank in theological literature, and whose writings constitute an imperishable monument of their talent and learning. Let it be remembered, too, that these were English divines, and some of them favorable to the independent or congregational form of church government, and who therefore cannot be supposed to have been influenced by Scottish preferences. In an addition of the Westminster version of the Psalms, published in 1673, the reader will find the following preface and the following names affixed to it.

"Surely, singing of Psalms is a duty of such comfort and profit, that it needeth not our recommendation; the new nature is instead of all arguments, which cannot be without this scriptural solace. Our devotion is best secured, where the matter and the words are of immediately divine inspiration; and to us, David's Psalms seem plainly intended by those terms of *psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, which the apostle useth. Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 16. But it is meet that these divine compositions should be represented to us in a fit translation, lest we want David in David; while his holy ecstasies are delivered in a flat and bauld expression. The translation which is now put in thy hand, cometh nearest to the original of any that we have seen, and runneth with such a fluent sweetness that we thought it fit to recommend it for thy Christian acceptance; some of us having used it already, with great comfort and satisfaction.

"This recommendation is subscribed by John Owen, D.D., Thomas Manton, D.D. Henry Langley, D.D., William Jenkyns, James Kines, Thomas Watson, Thomas Lye, Matthew Poole, John Millward, John Chester, George Cokayn, Matt. Mead, Robert Franklin, Thomas Doolittle, Thomas Vincent, Nathaniel Vincent, John Rythac, Wm. Thompson, Nicholas Blaikie, Charles Morton, Edmund Calamy, Wm. Carslake, James Janeway, John Hicks, John Baker, Richard Mayo."

Here we have a host of theological giants at whose head stands the prince of English divines, the celebrated Dr. Owen, declaring that "David's psalms seem to them to be plainly intended by the terms, *psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, which the Apostle uses, Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 16." The friends of an inspired psalmody can bear to be represented as adhering to a "prejudice" in company with such men.

"Ridgely's Body of Divinity" is regarded as a very superior work, and the author occupies deservedly a high place as a standard writer on theology. He discusses at considerable length the propriety of using the psalms of David, and vindicates it by a number of cogent arguments. He expresses himself on the subject with great candor, and while he does not decidedly condemn the uses of hymns or human composition on very special occasions,

the language which he employs indicates no small degree of doubt in relation to the lawfulness of their use, and he acknowledges that "some of much superior learning" to himself "have maintained their unlawfulness." He, however, declares it to be his opinion, that the "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," mentioned by the Apostle, refer to the psalms of David. "It cannot be denied," says he, "that the psalms of David are called indifferently by these three names." In this opinion he is clearly opposed to the exposition of our author, on the ground of which he brings the charge of "prejudice" against the friends of an inspired psalmody.

Dr. Gill, the learned Calvinistic divine of the Baptist school, interprets this passage in the same way, both in his "Body of Divinity," and Commentary. In his introductory remarks to the first psalm, he says, after mentioning the different titles of the psalms, "To these several names of this book, the Apostle manifestly refers in Eph. v. 19., Col iii. 16." In his exposition of Eph. v. 19, he says, "The hymns are only another name for the book of psalms," and that by "spiritual songs are meant the same psalms of David, Asaph, &c." From this he infers that it is "the intention of the Apostle that David's psalms should be sung in gospel churches."

Dodrige, although different from him in his opinion, says, in his note to Col. iii. 16, that Calvin "thinks all these words refered to David's poetical pieces." We have here, then, according to Dr. Dodridge, the opinion of Calvin, in opposition to that of our author, and when we consider the vast erudition of this distinguished individual, we will know how to appreciate it.

Macknight limits the "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," mentioned by the Apostle, to those which were "recorded in the scripture," and to such as were "dictated by the Spirit." He also tells us that "Beza thinks *psalms* in this passage denote those poetical compositions in which David uttered his complaints and prayers: also those historical narrations by which he instructed the people: and *hymns* are his other compositions in which he celebrated the praises of God." Surely the opinion of this learned professor and accomplished scholar is worthy something.

The continuators of Henry's Commentary explain "the psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," mentioned in Col. iii. 16, to be "the psalms of David, and spiritual hymns and odes, collected out of the Scriptures, and suited to special occasions."

Bloomfield, while he extends the injunctions of the Apostle to the use of those psalms that were composed by the direct and extraordinary influences of the Spirit in the days of the Apostle, as well as the psalms of David, says that "the psalms differ in no material respect from the hymns," which they certainly do, if, as our author intimates, the former refers to the psalms of David, and the other to those which were composed by men.

Brown, in his Bible Dictionary, seems to take it for granted that these three are all the same. He says, "When psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs are mentioned together, psalms may denote such as were sung on instruments; hymns, such as contain only matter of praise; and spiritual songs such as contain doctrine, history, and prophecy, for men's instruction. Eph. v. 19."

Horne, in his "Introduction to the Critical Study of the Holy Scriptures," interprets, in the same way, this passage; for he quotes it along with others to prove that "the continuance of this branch of divine worship is confirmed by the practice of our Lord and the instructions of Paul." He is here speaking of the use of the psalms of David

Durham says, "Psalms, in Scripture, are such parts of books as were

specially intended to be made use of for the praising of God, and for the edifying and comforting of his people in singing of them. Three sorts of them were in use among the Hebrews, (as the titles of our psalms declare, and as they are mentioned by the Apostle, Eph. v. 19.")

We have thus presented to the reader, as briefly as we have been able to do, the opinions of some of the most learned and respectable commentators on the reference of the Apostle in the use of those terms in this passage, which our worthy father regards as so condemnatory of the conduct of those who confine the matter of their praise to the songs of divine inspiration. It will not be denied that if the exposition given by these authorities be correct, there is no warrant in the word of God for the use of any other than those "psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs," which have been dictated by the Spirit. As the Dr. has seen proper to give an exposition in opposition to that of these authorities, and from this exposition to take occasion to hold up the advocates of an inspired psalmody as the victims of a "prejudice, which is yielding by little and little to the force of evidence," the reader may see with whom it is they have the honour of being associated.

The quotations given above are in relation to the exposition of the passage. We shall now quote some of the remarks of distinguished divines, either in relation to the impropriety of making use of any other songs than those of divine inspiration in the worship of God, or in relation to the sufficiency and suitableness of those for this purpose.

Calvin, among other things in praise of the book of psalms, says in his preface to his commentary on this book," I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not improperly, 'An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul, for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious, that is not here represented, as in a mirror Or rather the Holy Spirit has drawn to the life all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated." Now if this be really true of the psalms of David, may we not say with the pious Henry, "Further than these psalms we need not go for hymns and spiritual songs."

Luther, in his preface to the Psalter, thus remarks:

"Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look all the saints in the heart, as in a beautiful garden, as into heaven itself; whose delicate, sweet, and lovely flowers are springing up there, of all manner of beautiful, joyous thoughts towards God and his goodness! And again, where do you find deeper, more mournful and weeping words of sorrow, than the plaintive Psalms contain? There again you look all the saints in the heart; but as into death, yea, as into hell, where it is all dark and gloomy, from " manner of melancholy apprehensions of God's displeasure? I hold that there never has appeared on earth, and never can appear, a more precious book of examples and legends of saints, than the Psalter is. For here we find not merely what one or two holy men have done, but what the Head himself of all saints has done, and what all the saints do still. How they feel towards God, towards friends and enemies; how they behave and sustain themselvs in all dangers and sufferings. Besides, all manner of divine and statutory instructions and commands are contained therein. Hence, too, it comes, that the Psalter forms, as it were, *a little book of all saints*, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find Psalms and sentiments, which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake, so expressed, that he could not improve them himself, nor even wish them better than they are."

Now we ask, with all respect, if the psalms of David be such as they are here declared by this distinguished German Reformer to be, did it become Dr. Neill to speak as he has done of those who are unwilling to exchange them for hymns of human composition?

Hooker, the author of "The Ecclesiastical Polity," thus comments on the psalms:

"What is there necessary for man to know," says this pious and judicious divine, 'which the Psalms are not able to teach? They are to beginners an easy and familiar introduction, a mighty augmentation of all virtue and knowledge in such as are entered before, a strong confirmation to the most perfect among others. Heroical magnanimity, exquisite justice, grave moderation, exact wisdom, repentance unfeigned, unwearied patience, the mysteries of God, the sufferings of Christ, the terrors of wrath, the comforts of grace, the works of Providence over this world, and the promised joys of that world which is to come, all good necessarily to be either known, or done, or had, this one celestial fountain yieldeth. Let there be any grief or disease incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named for which there is not, in this treasure-house, a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."

In the preface to the commentary on the book of Psalms by Patrick, Lowth, Arnold, Whitby, and Lowman, the following remarks occur:

"It is called, in their language, *Sepher Tehillim, the book of praises or hymns, the praises of the Lord*, because, though there are many complaints and imprecations, and prayers in it, yet the greatest part are praises and thanksgivings unto God; and in those others there are many mixtures of acknowledgments of what God had formerly done for him, or of confidence what he would still do, or of resolutions how thankful he would be when God granted him deliverance. Which gave them such a strange power to cure heaviness, to wipe away sorrow, and to lay asleep troublesome thoughts and passions, to ease us of our cares, to recreate those who are oppressed with any sort of pains (they are the words of Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople,) as well as to move compunction for sin, and to stimulate unto piety, that no book in the world is to be compared with it for these purposes."

"After stating that "the churches of Africa sang *divina cantica prophetarum*, (the divine songs of the prophets,) while the drunken Donatists sang the composures of human wit," these commentators add; "By which means the people came to be so well acquainted with them, that (as the same Theodoret tells us in his preface to this book of psalms,) both in the city and country this was the employment of Christian people. They that minded no other book of the Scriptures, yet had this so by heart, that both in their houses, and in the streets, and in the highways, they are wont to recreate themselves by the singing of these holy songs."

"But I must not enlarge on this subject, nor fill this preface with the high commendations which the ancients give both of psalmody and of this book of psalms, which St. Basil (who alone would furnish me with a sense of all the rest, if it were fit to transcribe his preface to it,) calls the 'common treasure of all good precepts' (containing the perfection of all the rest of the Scriptures,) the voice of the church, in which may be found a complete body of theology.'" There is much more in this preface, equally pointed and expressive.

Horne, in his "Introduction," a work of high authority, quotes with approbation the following remark of "the editor of the 4to Bible, of 1810, with the notes of several of the venerable reformers." "The language in which Moses, and David, and Solomon, Heman, Asaph, and Jeduthun worshipped God, is applicable to Christian believers. They worship the same God, through the same adorable Redeemer, they give thanks for similar mercies, and mourn under similar trials; they are looking for the same blessed hope of their calling, even everlasting life and salvation, through the prevailing intercession of the Messiah."

This author himself says, (after giving an account of the book of Psalms and the observance of it in the worship of God by divine authority under the former dispensation,) "the continuance of this branch of divine worship is confirmed by the practice of our Lord, and the instructions of St. Paul,

(Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26; Eph. v. 19; Col. iii. 16. compared with Rev. v. 9, xiv. 1, 2, 3), and the practice of divine psalmody has subsisted through every succeeding age to our own time, not more to the delight than to the edification of the church of Christ." "He who had not the Spirit by measure, in whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who spake as never man spake, yet chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest agony, and at last to breathe out his soul in the psalmist's form of words rather than his own. No tongue of man or angel, as Dr. Hammond justly observes, can convey a higher idea of any book, and of their felicity who use it aright."

Mastricht, in his Latin System of Divinity, a work of a most learned and elaborate character, and not less distinguished for its orthodoxy and piety, says as follows, as his first remark under the head of psalmody: "Hic observandum: ut ecclesia, publice cantanda non permittat, nisi quæ præstant in Scripturis." Here it is to be observed that the church may not permit to be publicly sung any but such as stand in the Scriptures.)

Rev. Wm. Romane, of the church of England, and author of the "Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith," a work breathing a soul imbued with the spirit of the gospel, makes use of the following remarks in addition to much more of the same purport, which, for the sake of brevity, we omit:

"We know from very clear testimony that the Psalms were sung in the Temple until its final destruction. We are certain that Christ made use of the Psalms. His apostles followed his example. The churches of Corinth, and Ephesus, and Colossa, made the singing of psalms part of their publick worship. Such of the twelve tribes as were scattered abroad, being persecuted for Christ's sake, did sing psalms when they were in a happy frame; for they were commanded to do it by the apostle James. The church's history affords abundant evidence of the use of psalms in every country converted to the faith, and of their being sung in the church as a part of public worship. This has been the case in every age, without any interruption. The primitive Christian sung in all their church meetings. Eusebius says, in the second century they sung psalms in praise of Christ and his deity. In the time of Justin Martyr, instrumental music was abolished, and he highly commends singing with the voice, because, says he, psalms, with organs and cymbals, are fitter to please children, than to instruct the church. In the third century, we read much of psalm singing. Arius was complained of as a perverter of this ordinance. St. Augustine makes it a high crime, in certain hereties, that they sung hymns composed by human wit. The sense in which the church of Christ understood this subject, has been, till of late years, always one and uniform. Now we leave the ancient beaten path. But why? Have we found a better? How came we to be wiser than the prophets, than Christ, than his apostles, and the primitive Christians, yea, the whole church of God? They, with one consent, have sung psalms in every age. Here I leave the reader to his own reflections. There is one plain inference to be made from hence; none can easily mistake it. May he see it in his judgment, and follow it in his practice.

"What, say some, is it unlawful to sing human compositions in the church? How can that be? Why, they sing them at such a place, and such a place: great men, and good men, ay, and lively minsters too, sing them: will you set up your judgment against theirs?

"It is an odious thing to speak of one's self, except it be to magnify the grace of God. What is my private judgment? I set it up against nobody in indifferent things; I wish to yield to every man's infirmity: for I want the same indulgence myself. But, in the present case, the Scripture, which is our only rule of judgement, has not left the matter indifferent. God has given us a large collection of hymns, and has commanded them to be sung in the church, and has promised his blessing to the singing of them. No respect here must be paid to names or authorities, though they be the greatest on earth; because no one can dispense with the command of God, and no one by his wit can compose hymns to be compared with the Psalms of God. *I want a name for that man who should pretend that he could make better hymns than the Holy Ghost.* His collection is large enough; it wants no addition. It is as perfect as its Author, and not capable of any improvement. Why, in such a case would any man in the world take it into his head to sit down and write hymns for the use of the church? It is just the same as if he were to write a new Bible, not only better than the old, but so much better than the old may be thrown aside.

What a blasphemous attempt! And yet our hymn-mongers, inadvertantly, I hope, have come very near to this blasphemy; for they shut out the Psalms, introduce their own verses into the church, sing them with great delight, and, as they fancy, with great profit; although the whole practice be in direct opposition to the command of God, and therefore, cannot possibly be accompanied with the blessing of God."

"The words of God are pure words." Ps. xii. 6.

Let us hear what the celebrated Jonathan Edwards says on this subject. In the 5th volume of his Works, page 20, we find the following language employed by him:

"Those holy songs are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and holy *affections;* such as an humble and fervent *love* to God, *admiration* of his glorious perfections and wonderful works, earnest *desires*, thirstings, and pantings of soul after him; *delight* and *joy* in God, a sweet and melting *gratitude* for his great goodness, a holy *exultation* and triumph of soul in his favour, sufficiency and faithfulness; his *love* to, and *delight* in, the saints, the excellent of the earth, his great *delight* in the world and ordinances of God, his *grief* for his own and others' sins, and his fervent *zeal* for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection of which the Psalms of David are every where full, are the more to our present purpose, because those psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint, but were also, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the *Psalmist of Israel*, as the subordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worship and praises; and in many of the psalms he speaks in the name of Christ, as personating him in these breathings forth of holy affections; and in many others he speaks in the name of the church."

Such is the testimony which may be adduced in favour of an interpretation directly opposed to that of the Dr., by which he has attempted to represent the advocates of an inspired psalmody as refusing to comply with the solemn command of the Apostle, and such is the testimony which may be adduced in favour of the Scripture psalms, as every way suited to the Christian church, and those to which the church is bound to adhere in the praise of God. We have adduced this testimony, not because we think the Christian should submit his faith to the authority or teachings of any man or sect of men, but simply for the purpose of showing that the views of those opposed by Dr. Neill, are not those of a few bigoted, and narrow-minded, old-fashioned Scotch Presbyterians, but that they are the views of persons of different denominations of Christians, and renowned for their learning and piety.

To this it may be objected, that there is no evidence that all these persons did not make use of human composition, and there is evidence that some of them did use such hymns. In regard to this it may be observed that we are not to infer from the fact that hymns have been used by persons on certain occasions, for their religious recreation, that they regarded themselves in the use of them as performing an act of formal worship to Almighty God. Uninspired songs were doubtless used by the Hebrews on special occasions, but would they have thought of bringing them into the temple of God, or into their synagogues, when engaged in His solemn worship, after receiving from God the command to praise him in the words of David and Asaph the seer? But admitting that such hymns were used by these persons in the formal worship of God, it remains to be proved that in doing so they pretended to assert a divine warrant for what they did. They perhaps entertained views somewhat loose in regard to Christians regulating their worship by the will and word of Christ. We know that there is not that regard paid to this matter by many professing Protestants, which one would reasonably expect. But we must also take into consideration the in-

fluences to which they may have been subjected by their associations, and the peculiar circumstances in which they may have been placed. We all know that persons do, under the force of circumstances, and in compliance with the customs existing in the society to which they belong, what, were they left to their free choice, they would not do. They think it better to comply, than produce excitement and division in the church of God. Calvin, in his tract on "The necessity of reforming the church," makes these remarks; "We are not so unacquainted with ordinary life as not to know that the church always has been and always will be liable to some defects which the pious are indeed bound to disapprove, but which are to be borne rather than to be made a cause of fierce contention." How far those who have thus expressed themselves were influenced by this consideration, we do not pretend to say, nor is it for us to account for their conduct. It is with their sentiments as expressed and delivered by themselves in the sober and calm moments of thought and study that we have to do. These we have laid before the reader, and it is for him to judge what they teach. What, for instance, does the very extract from Horne, given by Dr. Neill in his exposition teach us? We presume the sentiment expressed by Horne met with his approbation. Now let the reader reperuse the quotation, and then ask himself, in all candour, to what conclusion the remarks of the bishop must necessarily lead him. If these psalms be "designed for general use," if they are adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the gospel, no less than of the Israelites under the law," if "they suit mankind in all situations," if "the fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrance; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful," then, I ask, why make use of the "productions of human wit," when you have the songs of the Spirit, and why throw contempt upon those who are unwilling to make the exchange? It is a mere "prejudice" to refuse to serve God with any thing but the *best* we have, especially when he himself has made provision for this service? Will the Dr. answer this question?

We shall now give the reader a few reasons for the purpose of showing him that the Dr.'s exposition of the passage is not more "rational" than the one advocated by the friends of an inspired psalmody.

One would suppose that the author, knowing as he must certainly have known that an interpretation, different from the one he has given, has been put on the passage, would have presented some reasons for this "more rational" view. But the reader will look in vain throughout this exposition for an argument. All he will find is, "By these (hymns and spiritual songs) I understand short pieces grounded on parts of the Holy Scriptures, adapted to particular occasions, and expressive of gratitude to God for his great mercies," and then we have the exclamation, "How strange is it that some Christians object to the use of such compositions in religious worship!" We shall only remark, that if the Dr. had given us an argument instead of this exclamation, it would have been rather more in place. At least it would have prevented the suspicion that he found it no easy matter to find one that would satisfy a rational and inquiring mind. The importance of the subject, and the manner in which it has agitated, and still continues to agitate the Christian community, rendered it highly proper for him to give at least one reason for this "more rational view," especially as those who oppose it are refusing to comply with an Apostolic injunction.

We wish the reader to notice that the Dr. takes it for granted that the "hymns and spiritual songs," here mentioned by the Apostle, were such as

he has in his hymn-book. This he has assumed, and on this assumption he presents those whose views he opposes in a false light before his reader. He asks, "Can it be doubted, in the face of our text, that the Christians of Ephesus used hymns and spiritual songs?" Who doubts this? Did the Dr. ever hear a doubt expressed on this point? The doubt, Dr., is not that they used "hymns and spiritual songs," but the doubt is that they used such hymns and spiritual songs as those for the use of which you contend. This is the "fact," however "curious" it may appear, and the removal of this doubt requires something more than a mere assertion that the point which we call in question is "perfectly obvious and incontestable." That it is not so self-evident, we shall now proceed to show.

Let it be borne in mind that the Dr. admits that the psalms of David, or at least those songs which are contained in the Scriptures, are intended by the Apostle in the use of the term "psalms," which he here employs. He does not, it is true, assert this in so many words, yet it is obvious that this is the way in which he would have his reader to interpret his remarks; for after speaking of the psalms of David in the language of eulogy, he dismisses the discussion of this term, and then quotes simply the words "hymns and spiritual songs," and then proceeds to explain what he understands them to be. If this be not the distinction which he makes between these terms, he has failed altogether to distinguish them, for he represents the hymns and spiritual songs as being "bottomed on the word of God." Whether this, however, be the Dr.'s view of the import of the word psalms, employed by the Apostle, nothing can be more certain than that it is the prevailing view of those who advocate the use of uninspired compositions. The very first question which the friends of an inspired psalmody will be likely to hear, is, Are we not commanded to sing hymns and spiritual songs as well as psalms? Besides, we have the highest authority for regarding it as an admitted fact that the psalms here referred to are the psalms of David. We have the authority of the editors of the Princeton Repertory, a work published under the auspices and sustained by the patronage of the same church as the one to which our worthy father belongs, and edited by men of superior learning and talent. In the vol. for 1829, the editors say, in an article entitled, "The sacred poetry of the early Christians," "We can hardly conceive it possible that the psalms of David could have been so generally adopted in the churches, and so highly esteemed by the best of the fathers, unless they had been introduced and sanctioned by the Apostles and inspired teachers." Again, they say, "It seems more correspondent to scripture usage to consider the term psalms here as meaning the book of psalms, as used in Luke xxiv, 44, to which the New Testament writers so frequently refer for prophecies, proofs and illustrations of their facts and doctrines." In another part of the same article, the reader will find the following remark, which will, no doubt, commend itself to his good sense: "As the first Christians were drawn from the synagogue, they naturally brought with them those songs of Zion which were associated with all their earliest recollections and best feelings, and appropriated them to the services of the New Dispensation." In addition to this we may adduce the fact that the book of Dr. Watts is professedly made upon an admission that the psalms here mentioned by the Apostle are somehow or other the psalms of David, for we have in this collection one hundred and fifty psalms which our worthy father calls a "version of the psalms." We then, surely, have the very best of reasons for coming to the conclusion that all parties are agreed that the Apostle here refers to the psalms of David.

The true question, then, before us is, Have we any reason for supposing that the hymns and spiritual songs here mentioned are any thing different from the psalms? If not, then there is no "evidence," to the "force" of which the prejudice referred to by Dr. Neill can be supposed to "yield." The Dr. himself has given us no evidence, and here we might leave the matter.

But have the friends of an inspired psalmody nothing to support their position, that the Apostle, by these three terms, refers to the same thing, or at least that he does not, by hymns and spiritual songs, mean those which are not inspired? In order that the reader may judge of this, we shall submit to his candid attention the following considerations:

(1.) The difference contended for by the advocates of human psalmody is not practically observed by themselves. The very church to which the Dr. belongs has taken a metrical translation of the 23d psalm and of the hundreth psalm, and placed them among their hymns. Let the reader compare these psalms with the prose translation, and we are satisfied that he will at once acknowledge that if there can be such a thing as a metrical translation of the psalms, they may with the greatest propriety be so called. Surely if there be one among the one hundred and fifty of Dr. Watts that may be called a psalm, these two deserve the name of "psalms." Let me ask, then, Are these two metrical translations of the psalms of David hymns? So have the General Assembly declared. Why may not the rest be called by the same name?

(2.) If there be a distinction between the psalms and hymns, we are bound by the same mode of interpretation to suppose a distinction between the hymns and spiritual songs. But can the Dr. tell us what this distinction is? Let a hymn or spiritual song be read from their collection, and who can tell to which class they belong. Has not the Dr. himself confounded them in the exposition which he has given of this passage? In this he has violated the very rule of interpretation by which alone he can establish such a distinction between the first and second as the one for which he contends.

(3.) There are strong presumptions against recognising such a distinction as the one contended for by Dr. Neill, and those who sympathize with him. Either these hymns or spiritual songs were written by divine inspiration, or they were not. If they were thus written, then we have in this command a direction to sing an inspired psalmody, and, of course, the Dr. must give up his position, for this is the very thing for which we contend. But what is the conclusion to which this admission brings us, on the supposition that these hymns and spiritual songs are not found in the Scriptures? The necessary conclusion is, that a part of the inspired writings have been lost, a conclusion to which we are sure our friend would be unwilling to come. The pious feelings of his heart would revolt against it. He will no doubt be ready to say, with the editors of the Repertory, that "It is not probable that any were written under the influence of inspiration, or they would have been preserved with other inspired writings." Suppose, however, we take the other position, and say, with these editors, "That men of education, genius and piety, employed their talents in the compositions of hymns and spiritual odes, which, being approved by the Apostle, were introduced into the services of the church." Then leaving altogether out of view the important fact that we have not now the Apostles, to whose judgment we can submit our uninspired hymns, and that those which our worthy father has so highly praised, do not profess to have the *imprimatur* of these holy men—four difficulties present themselves to the mind: (*a.*) Why is it that we have not,

in any of the Scriptures, the least allusion to the *making* of hymns and spiritual odes, by these men "of education, genius and piety?" On this subject there reigns throughout the Scriptures the stillness of the grave. Is not this strange, especially when we consider the importance of praise as a part of Divine worship, and the agitation which "the introduction of hymns into the services of the church," often produces at the present time? (*b.*) Is it reasonable to suppose that there would be found in the very infancy of the New Testament church a sufficient number of such men qualified to supply the church with these hymns and spiritual odes? Take these Ephesians, for instance. We know what they were before converted to Christianity. They were sunk in all the ignorance and pollution of idolatry, having been from their childhood worshippers of the great goddess Diana. Without at all presuming to call in question the existence among them of education, genius and piety, we think it is by no means an unreasonable supposition, that it would not have been safe to commit to men just converted from their idolatrous worship, and consequently but partially enlightened and established in the truth, the making of "hymns and spiritual songs," in which to celebrate the praises of Jehovah. To our mind it would seem to be a dangerous experiment. (*c.*) The making of hymns by uninspired men, would, in all probability, produce difficulties between the Hebrew and Gentile Christians. In the language of the editors of the Repertory, "The Hebrew Christians had probably been accustomed from childhood to consider inspired psalms alone admissable in the worship of the sanctuary, and cherished a holy and even superstitious dread of every thing like innovation or departure from the good old customs of their fathers." Is it probable that under these circumstances the apostle would direct to the use of uninspired hymns, when they had "those songs of Zion which were associated with all their earliest recollections and best feelings?" And if the direction in regard to hymns and spiritual songs were only designed for the Gentile Christians, would not their introduction be calculated to keep up a bad state of feeling between these two classes of Christians, who were so disposed to cherish unfriendly feelings towards each other? (*d.*) The strongest presumption, however, that presents itself to our mind against this interpretation is, that it places uninspired compositions upon a par with those which are inspired. Here we have, according to our author, the apostle associating, in the most intimate connexion, that which is confessedly the word of God, with the word of man; and not only so, but directing it to be used for the same end. Now we would address ourselves to that reverence which we know our pious father cherishes for the word of God, and ask him whether an interpretation involving such a presumption as this, is reasonable? Were we to hear him giving an affirmative answer to this question, we must say we would receive it with no little surprise.

(4.) Another evidence in favour of supposing the apostle by these three terms to mean the same thing, is the fact that they are so employed by English, Greek and Hebrew writers who are not inspired, and also by the inspired writers. A multitude of instances might be given, but we shall confine ourselves to a few. In the preface to a late work, entitled "The Psalms of David, translated by J. A. Alexander, Professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton," the reader will find the following remarks: "A still more marked resemblance is, that they (the Psalms), are all not only poetical but lyrical, i. e. songs, poems, intended to be sung, and with a musical accompaniment. Thirdly, they are all religious lyrics, even those which seem at first sight the most secular in theme and spirit, but which are

all found on inquiry to be strongly expressive of religious feeling. In the fourth place, they are all ecclesiastical lyrics, psalms or hymns, intended to be permanently used in the worship of God, not excepting those which bear the clearest impress of original connexion with the social, domestic or personal relations and experience of the writers." Now we have this learned and highly esteemed Professor, in the same church as the one to which our worthy father belongs, declaring not only that the Psalms of David are *all intended to be permanently used in the public worship of God*, (a remark worthy the attention of his brethren,) but also that they are all songs and hymns. Will this language be justified? Then why suppose that the apostle means any thing else by these terms, but the same Psalms of David, and why represent those who confine the matter of their praise to these psalms, as opposing the use of hymns and spiritual songs? Josephus refers to the Psalms of David under the name of songs and hymns. The Apostolic Canons contain this injunction: "Let another sing the hymns of David, and let the people repeat the concluding lines." Here we have not only a proof of the very great antiquity of the use of David's Psalms in the Christian church, but also a proof that they were known by the name of hymns—the very same name in the original which the apostle employs in the text. Dr. Gill tells us that they are spoken of in the Talmud by the name of "songs and praises, or hymns." Let us now open the sacred Scriptures, and here we shall find proof to the same effect. We find the Psalms called "Sepher Tehillim," (the Hymn Book,) in the very title of the Hebrew copy of the Psalms. The 145th Psalm is called Tehilla l' David, which Gesenius translates, "a hymn of David." The same term is frequently introduced into the body of the Psalm. Let the reader compare Psalm 22d and verse 23d of the Hebrew, with the Greek of Hebrews ii, 12, and he will find the declaration of the Psalmist, "In the midst of the congregation I will praise thee," [ahalleka] rendered by the apostle, "I will sing a hymn to thee." The word Halleluja, which so frequently occurs in the Psalms, is just a call to sing a hymn to the Lord. Other illustrations of this might be given, but let these suffice. Now when we find the sacred writers, and among these the apostle himself, using this very term "hymn" in application to the songs of inspiration, is it not fair to infer that he used it with the same application in the passage before us? But this is not all. It is generally supposed that the apostle made use of the Septuagint version of the Scriptures. With this version the Ephesians and Collossians, being Greeks, were no doubt familiar. Let us open then this version of the Psalms, and we will find some of them bearing the title of a psalm, others of a hymn, and others of a song exactly corresponding to the three Hebrew titles, Mizmar, Tehilla and Shir. These words in the Septuagint are the very same as those which are employed by the apostle when he directs the Ephesians and Collossians to "sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." Will the reader then look at this, and ask himself whether it is so "perfectly obvious and incontestable," after all, that the apostle intended such "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," as those contended for by Dr. Neill? We may just remark, that the editors of the Repertory say, vol. 7, page 76, "External evidence places the titles of the Psalms precisely on the same foundation with the Psalms themselves." Professor Alexander, of Princeton, says, "They are found in the Hebrew text as far as we can trace its history, not as *addenda*, but as integral parts of the composition."

(5.) Another consideration which makes it highly probable that the book of Psalms is intended by the Apostle, is the fact that the same language is

employed by the evangelist in Matthew xxvi, 30, where he tells us that the Saviour and his disciples at the celebration of the passover sang a hymn; [*they having hymned.*] That a portion of the Psalms of David was used, is almost universally admitted. Indeed there is hardly anything upon which commentators seem to be more generally agreed than this. The evidence in its behalf is as strong as it well could be without being positively asserted by the historian. The writings of the Jews abound with testimony to prove that it was their custom during that solemnity to sing the six Psalms of David, beginning with the 113th, and ending with the 118th. There is no evidence that a hymn was made for the occasion, and we know that it was his custom to comply with the observances of the Jews, of which this was one part, and certainly a most appropriate part. Now if it be admitted that the hymn sung by our Saviour and his disciples on this most affecting occasion was an inspired hymn, we argue, from this admission, that the hymns referred to by the apostle in this passage belonged to the same inspired collection. If this inspired collection was used by our Lord and his disciples, the presumption is, in absence of all proof to the contrary, that they would still continue to be used by the disciples. That this admission is made by those who use uninspired compositions, we have only to refer to Mr. Barnes. He says on this passage: "The passover was observed by the Jews by singing, or chanting, the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th and 118th Psalms. There can be no doubt that our Saviour and the apostles also used the same Psalms in their observances of the passover." Why then doubt that the apostle referred to the same collection when he told the Ephesians to "sing hymns?" Surely if any argument can be drawn from the *usus loquendi* of the sacred writers, it is on the side of those who maintain that the reference in this passage is to the Psalms of divine inspiration.

(6.) In the preceding remarks we have looked simply at the names employed by the apostle in designating that which he would have these Ephesians to sing. We now request the reader to give us his attention while we present to his consideration some additional evidence, drawn from the language employed by the apostle in connexion with the use of these three terms. (*a.*) These songs are called "*spiritual* songs." The heathen made use of odes. In order to distinguish those which the apostle would have them to use, he calls them "spiritual." Now we apprehend that there is, in the use of this term, a proof that the songs referred to by the apostle were those contained in the Scriptures. If the reader will take the pains, as we have done, to examine those places in the New Testament Scriptures where this word occurs, he will find that in every instance where the reference is not to created spirits, there is a distinct reference to the Spirit of God as the author of that to which the term is applied; unless, indeed, 1 Pet. ii. 5, and Rev. xi. 8, should be regarded as exceptions, which we think is questionable. Thus "spiritual gifts" are such as are communicated directly by the Spirit. We shall here quote the words of Mr. Barnes on the word "spiritual" as it occurs in 1 Cor. x. 3, 4, "And did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink of the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them." "The word spiritual here," says Mr. Barnes, "is evidently used to denote that which was given by the Spirit, or by God; that which was the result of his miraculous gift, and which was not produced by the ordinary way, and which was not the gross food on which men are usually supported. It had an excellency and value from the fact that it was the immediate gift of God, and thus called angels' food, Ps. lxxvii. 25. It is called by Josephus 'divine and extraordinary food.' [Ant. 3, 1.] In the

language of the Scriptures, that which is distinguished for excellence, which is the immediate gift of God, which is unlike that which is gross, and of earthly origin, is called *spiritual*, to denote its purity, value, and excellence; compare Rom. vii. 14, 1 Cor. iii. 1; xv. 44, 46; Eph. i. 3. The idea of Paul here is, that all the Israelites were nourished and supported in this remarkable manner by food given directly by God." Again he says, "The word spiritual must be used in the sense of supernatural, or that which is immediately given by God." In addition to the passages to which Mr. Barnes refers, let the reader consult Rom. i. 11; xv. 27; 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14, 15; ix. 11; xii. 1; xiv. 1, 37; Gal. vi. 1; Col. i. 9. Now let this meaning be attached to the word in the passage before us, and we are brought to the conclusion that the songs here referred to by the apostle, are those which were "given by the Spirit or by God," which were "not produced in the ordinary way," but which were "bestowed in a miraculous and supernatural manner," and where will we find such songs but those which are contained in the Scriptures? In singing the Psalms of David, we know that we are singing such songs, for he himself tells us, that "the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and his word was on his tongue." That this is the import of the word *spiritual*, as here used, is rendered highly probable from the circumstance that the apostle has expressly mentioned the Holy Spirit in the same sentence. (*b.*) Another reason for this interpretation is, that the apostle directs to the use of these "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs," as the means of being "filled with the Spirit." Now is not the word of God, the very word of God, the means which he makes use of in filling the hearts of his people? When the Saviour prayed that the Father would sanctify his disciples through his truth, he adds, "The word is truth." There we must go, if we would be filled with the Spirit. Out of these living wells we must draw water, with which to refresh our souls. (*c.*) By referring to the parallel passage in Col. iii. 16, we find that the apostle directs to the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, as the means of letting "the word of Christ dwell in them richly, in all wisdom." Guyse has a sermon on this text, entitled "The Scriptures the word of Christ." This he shows from three considerations. "He is its author;" "He is its great subject;" and "He works and carries on his interest by it." "The Spirit of Christ," we are told, "was in the prophets, when they testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow," and it is said, "He went and preached to the spirits in prison;" so that the Psalms of David may, with the greatest propriety, be called "the word of Christ." "There is not," says Bishop Horsely, "a page of this book of Psalms in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding him." "We are in these Psalms," (says Dr. Russell, in his admirable Letters,) "brought, as it were, into his closet, are made the witnesses of his secret devotions, and are enabled to see even the inward workings of his heart." Guyse, in the sermon before referred to, infers that the "word of Christ," as here mentioned by the apostle, includes not only the New, but also the Old Testament Scriptures. He remarks, "It is in this most extensive view, that our apostle seems to take it, by his speaking, in the remainder of the verse, of teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, which look with a very strong aspect toward the Old Testament writings, some of which are set forth under these titles." Add to this the consideration that but a part of the New Testament Scriptures was written at this time, so that we may readily suppose that the reference of the apostle is to the "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," of the Old Testament Scriptures. At all events they

must be such as belonged to the Scriptures, and this is all for which we are now contending. Now the reader will observe that it is this "word," (not simply the principles of this word, but the word itself,) which the apostle would have these Ephesians to let dwell in them, by singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Is not this more likely to be done by singing the sacred songs of this word, than by singing those which have been composed by erring man, whatever may be his piety and learning? Is it not more likely that we shall in this way attain to that "wisdom" of which the apostle speaks in the same passage? We know how it was with David "I have more understanding," he could say, "than all my teachers, for *thy testimonies* are my meditation."

We have thus laid before the reader the reasons which have led us, in common with the other friends of an inspired psalmody, to believe that there is, in this passage, no warrant for the making and singing of human hymns; and if such a warrant cannot be found here, we think our worthy father, and those who sympathize with him in his views, will search the Scriptures in vain for it. We hope these reasons will receive a fair and impartial consideration—that our position on this subject will not be pronounced a "prejudice," before we have the benefit of a hearing. We open our bibles, and there we find a divine psalter—one which the great God himself has prepared for us, and one, too, which he commanded his people to use in the celebration of his praises. We do not read, in all the volume of inspiration, of any thing being made use of which was not indited by his Spirit. We find, too, in this same blessed book, that he who has provided us with this book of Psalms, has given us the most explicit directions to adhere to his own institutions, and by the awful manifestations of his wrath on various occasions, taught us that it is highly provoking to the eyes of his glory to depart from them. We there learn that it is not enough for us to abstain from what he has forbidden, but that we should have nothing to do with any thing as a means of worship, which he has *not commanded*. We have solemnly professed, too, that it is a violation of the second commandment, to "worship God in any way *not appointed in his word*," and that this command requires us to "*observe and keep pure and entire all such ordinances as God hath appointed in his word*." We unroll the records of ecclesiastical history, and there we find the most abundant and satisfactory evidence that this divine Psalter has been in use in the church from the days of the apostles to the present time. It is true that we find plain intimation of hymns of human composition having been introduced into the church at a very early period of her existence. But we know that they had no more authority to do it than we have. We know also, from these records, that the introduction of such hymns was made instrumental "in invading the purity of the church," and poisoning her with the most deadly heresies. We know, too, that there were "many voices raised against" the use of any other but those of divine inspiration; that their use was condemned by the first Council at Braga, and also by the Council of Ephesus,* the very place in which the Christians resided to whom the words that we have been considering were addressed. We consult the experience of those Christians of different denominations, who have been most eminent for their piety, learning and soundness in the faith, and we hear them speaking in the most explicit manner of the sufficiency and suitableness of the songs of divine inspiration to the purposes of

*See Biblical Repertory, vol. 1. pp. 530-1-2, and the Rites and Worship of the early Christian Churches, from the German of Neander, as translated in the Biblical Repertory of volume fourth.

Christian worship. We remember that our divine Master, himself, "chose to conclude his life, to solace himself in his greatest agony, and at last to breathe out his soul, in the Psalmist's form of words, rather than in his own." We call to mind, too, the fact that the reformers of blessed memory, "taught and admonished one another" in these psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, and that not a few of the martyrs of Jesus have by them been "filled with the Spirit," while sealing their testimony with their blood. We are sure that in singing these songs we have something upon which our souls may rest with that confidence, joy and hope, which the very word of God alone can inspire. Such are our views, and such our feelings. We would now submit it to our worthy father, and the Christian community, whether the friends of an inspired psalmody should be regarded as the victims of "prejudice?"

There is one respect in which it must be admitted that we have the advantage of all others, and that is in the catholicity of our hymns. By the use of this term we mean the opposite of sectarianism. From the necessities of the case, the hymns of all churches must bear, to a greater or less degree, a denominational impress. Hence we have Methodist hymns, Baptist hymns, Presbyterian hymns, and even Universalist hymns, and we may reasonably expect that these various hymns will exhibit the peculiarities of the churches by which they have been respectively adopted. Lest it might be thought that we are biased by "prejudice" on this subject, we shall quote the words of the editors of the Biblical Repertory, or Princeton Review,' a work of high authority in the church to which Dr. Neill, our author, belongs, and edited by men who have doubtless had the best opportunities of observation, and who no doubt make use of an uninspired psalmody. On page 505 of vol. 18, may be found the following remarks: "The psalmody of the Christian assembly has generally partaken largely of those characteristics of thought and expression, which arise from the circumstances of the people. In a divided state of the church, when the different denominations are zealous for their respective forms of doctrine and worship, the lyric poetry becomes strongly argumentive and polemical; addresses men, rather than God; and is employed to defend and inculcate theology, and to confirm the attachment of the people to their peculiar articles of faith. Hence each sect has its psalmody. Both policy and conscience are deemed to require the hymns to coincide in sentiment throughout with the creed of the sect. And the doctrines are not only stated in poetical language, or language professedly poetical, and dwelt upon in a strain of devout meditation, but are frequently inculcated in a sort of metrical argument, and appeal to persons not supposed to believe them." Whatever objections, then, may be brought against the "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" with which God by the inspiration of his Spirit has provided his church, it must be admitted that they are not liable to this objection; they are as catholic as the word of God itself.

Our worthy father intimates that the views maintained by us are not only less "rational," but less "liberal" than those which he advocates. The charge of illiberality is so often and so easily made, that it is but little regarded by serious people. One thing is certain, we ask no one to sing sectarian hymns, hymns "employed to confirm the attachment of the people to our peculiar articles of faith," and to proselyte others to these articles, unless, indeed, such be the character of God's word.

THE FRIENDS OF AN INSPIRED PSALMODY AND WATTS' PSALMS.

A few words in vindication of the treatment which the "version," as it is called, of Dr. Watts has received from the friends of an inspired psalmody, and we shall bring this defence to a close.

The Doctor speaks of this "rich and beautiful version," as being "denounced." It is quite probable that much has been said in relation to it that should not have been said, but we would respectfully submit it to our friend, whether he can find any thing more harsh and offensive among the opponents of this "version," than he has employed in speaking of the one which has been displaced by it, and that, too, in the very same sentence in which he complains of denunciation? Did he think, when saying that "the miserable doggerel of Rouse is sung, or attempted to be sung, to the no small annoyance of all correct taste for the harmony of numbers or the charms of music," that he was himself using the language of denunciation? Let the reader bear in mind, too, that the friends of this version have never "excluded" Dr. Watts' hymn book "from the sanctuary." They have only said that the one which they have, and which they have received from the Westminster General Assembly, and from the General Assembly of the church of Scotland, shall not be excluded by it from the sanctuary. If the simple fact of exclusion is to constitute a ground of charge, we think our friend and those who sympathize with him are liable to it. It is *they* who have excluded a version from the sanctuary, not we. If the claims of these respective versions are to be decided by a referance to the authority with which they come to us, the decision must be given in favour of the one which has been excluded from the sanctuary, to make room for that of Dr. Watts. Suppose we view it simply as "Rouse's version," (which by the way it is not, as it underwent material alterations after it came from his hands,) is it to be despised on this account? He was according to "The History of the Westminster Assembly," before referred to, "a highly esteemed member of Parliament," and was also a member of the Westminster Assembly. He was also provost of Eton college; and any one who has read his "Academia Cœlestis," cannot but be impressed with the conviction that he was a man of vast erudition, as well as deep and fervent piety. The "version" of Dr. Watts has the authority of the General Assembly of the United States in this country, and has not the version of Rouse the same authority? The History before referred to, tells us that it is "still authorized" by this body. But in addition to this, this version was adopted by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and afterwards by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, after a careful revision, in which they were for at least three years employed. This is the version which Dr. Neill speaks of as a "miserable doggerel." By way of an offset to the remark of Dr. Neill, the reader may call to mind the recommendation of it by Dr. Owen, &c., to which we have already directed his attention. Dr. Ridgely also gives it the preference to any which he had seen. The same preference for it is expressed by Rev. William Romaine of the Episcopal Church. Here let me also quote the remark of the pious and amiable M'Cheyne in relation to it. All who know any thing of this devoted servant of God, know that he was not only as free from prejudice as is common to mortals, but possessed a highly cultivated and poetic taste. In an excellent treatise, entitled "Daily Bread," under the head of "Directions," he gives the following. "The metrical version of the Psalms should be read or sung through at least once in the year. It is truly an admirable translation from the Hebrew, and is frequently more correct than the prose version. If three verses be sung at each diet of family worship, the whole psalms will be sung

through in the year." We think, too, the great length of time in which it has been in use, and the strong attachment with which it is cherished, are pretty conclusive evidences that, whatever may be its defects, it is not destitute of poetic taste. It has at least the poetry of thought, if there is any of it in the Psalms of David, for we think it would be hard to discover a thought there which is not brought out in this version, and that, too, almost in the very words of the prose; and where there are variations between them, there is sometimes a greater conformity to the spirit of the original. We shall here give a scale, (for this we are indebted to the 6th volume of the Religious Monitor,) which exhibits all the variations of any consequence in the first two Psalms, from which the reader may form an idea of its faithfulness as a metrical translation.

	Prose Translation.	*Verse Translation.*	*Signification of the word in the original.*
Psalm i. 1.	Blessed is the man.	That man hath perfect blessedness.	O the blessedness of the man, or most blessed is the man.
do	Walketh not.	Walketh not astray.	Departs, walks away.
do	Seat.	Chair.	Latin, Cathedra, the chair occupied by one teaching or presiding.
4.	Driveth away.	Drives to and fro.	Scattereth, disperseth.
6.	Perish.	Quite overthrown.	Destroyed, lost.
Psalm ii. 1.	Imagine.	Mind.	Meditate.
2.	Rulers.	Princes.	Princes, counsellors, those next the king.
2.	Take counsel together	Combined to plot.	Consulted together, conspired.
5.	Sore displeasure.	Rage.	Rage, fury.
6.	Set.	Anointed.	Anointed.
7.	My son.	Mine only son.	My son.
8.	Uttermost parts.	Utmost line.	The borders or utmost lines of the earth.

The Dr. seems to insinuate that this version cannot be sung. He speaks of it as being "attempted to be sung." We presume the remark was not designed to apply to the two which have been selected by his own church and placed among their hymns; or perhaps they have changed their character since they have received the *imprimatur* of the "General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States." If he will favour any of the psalm-singing churches with his presence, he will find that those who use this version have no difficulty in singing it. There is one thing of which we can assure him, he will not see what he acknowledges to be the case with the congregations of his own church, the singing "confined to perhaps less than half our congregations." As a specimen of the way in which Rouse's version is "attempted to be sung," we may take the following account of the meeting of the last General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, given by a correspondent of the Presbyterian, and one whom we take to be a member of the Presbyterian Church in this country:

MESSRS. EDITORS;—While here, I spent one evening in the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, in Canon Mills' Hall. This is a singular building, covering a great surface, and capable of seating three thousand people; with a low roof, through which it is lighted by means of sky lights. The seats gradually rise from the center to the outside walls. It was literally crammed—every seat being occupied; I was glad to get standing room. As that great concourse of people united in singing the ninety-sixth Psalm, with that enthusiasm and earnestness so peculiar to Scotchmen, every one joining, it formed a noble chorus, the mighty swell of which seemed almost sufficient to raise the roof from off the walls. No organ or other kind of instrumental music was needed there. Every one sung as best he could, and truly it was a glorious concert. * * * * *

We would not have said so much in defence of this version, had it not been for the Dr.'s remarks, and did we not know that false impressions exist among our brethren of other denominations in relation to it. That it has serious defects, as might readily be presumed, considering the great length of time since it was made, we freely admit. We think that either a new version, or an improvement of our present version is greatly needed; and if

the Dr., or the church to which he belongs, can present us with one, (and we believe this quite possible,) having the same claims as a metrical translation as our present version, and free from it defects, we shall most cordially receive it, and we think we can make this remark in behalf of all its friends. If our brethren will continue to express their surprise that we use this version, we can only reply to them as Romaine did to those who thought it so strange that he should use the version of Sternhold and Hopkins:

> They wonder I would make use of this version, which they think is poor, flat stuff, the poetry is miserable, and the language low and base. To which I answer, they had a scrupulous regard for the very words of Scripture, and to these they adhered closely and strictly; so much as to render the versification not equal to Mr. Pope. I grant it is not always smooth; it is only here and there brilliant. But what is a thousand times more valuable, it is generally the sentiment of the Holy Spirit. That is very rarely lost. And this should silence every objection — *it is the word of God.* Moreover the version comes nearer to the original than any I have ever seen, except the Scotch, of which I have made use, when it appeared to me better expressed than the English. You may find fault with the manner of ekeing out a verse for the sake of the rhyme, but what of that? Here is every thing great and noble, although not in Dr. Watts' way or style. It is not like his fine sound and florid verse; as good old Mr. Hall used to call it, *Watts' jingle.* I do not match those psalms with what is now admired in poetry; although time was when no less a man than the Rev. T. Bradbury, in his sober judgment, thought so meanly of Watts' hymns as commonly to term them *Watts' whymns.* And indeed compared to the Scripture, they are like a little taper to the sun; as for his psalms, these are so far from the mind of the Spirit, that I am sure if David was to read them, he would not know any one of them to be his.

But here the inquiry may be made, why not use the version of Dr. Watts? The friends of an inspired psalmody are often met with this inquiry. To us it seems strange indeed, that any one acquainted with the psalms of Dr. Watts should make such an inquiry; but as it is made, and doubtless sometimes made in all sincerity, it deserves an answer. We cannot think that our worthy father, when he complains of the treatment which these psalms have received, designed to create a false issue between himself and those whose views he condemns; although, beyond all question, his remarks have this tendency. We would therefore respectfully submit to his consideration the following reasons for the opposition which we manifest to the use of these psalms.

1. We do not regard them as a "version" of the Psalms of David, in any proper sense of that term. What is a version? Webster defines "version" to be "the act of translating; the rendering of thoughts or ideas expressed in any language into words of like signification in another language." A version is according to him a "translation, that which is rendered from another language." The correctness of this definition we presume will not be questioned. Now, Dr. Watts expressly says, in a note to the preface, "Since the sixth edition of this book, (meaning his hymns,) the author has finished what he had so long promised, namely, the Psalms of David, imitated in the language of the New Testament." We would then submit it to the candour of Dr. Neill, whether Dr. Watts being judge of the character of his own production, we can attach to this production the character of *a version?* Are the Psalms of David, "imitated in the language of the New Testament, a version?" This is the question. If it be not, why call it by this name? Who thinks of imitations when they hear of versions of the Scriptures? Dr. Neill may prefer an imitation, but what we want is the *thing itself.* This we have not in the songs of Dr. Watts. Give us a faithful version containing this, and we promise you not to "exclude it from the sanctuary."

But, moreover, we deny that it even deserves the name of an imitation. We shall here again make our appeal to Dr. Watts himself. He expressly says, in his preface, "It must be acknowledged that there are a thousand lines in it, (the psalms of David,) which were not made for the church in our days to assume as its own." Of course they have been omitted. Where, then, is the imitation of these thousand lines? He further tells us that he "has entirely omitted several whole psalms, and large pieces of many others;" where is an imitation of these psalms? But has he left them out as unfit to be used in the worship of God? No; had he merely done this, our feelings would have been far less shocked. He has given the whole one hundred and fifty "Psalms of David, in metre," though several whole psalms, and large pieces of many others have been entirely omitted, according to his express declaration. Let us look, for instance, at the 109th psalm. The original, as we have it in our prose and in our metrical translation, contains thirty-six verses; that of Dr. Watts contains six verses, and there is not an idea in the one to be found in the other, unless it be the address in the first line, "God of my praise." The psalm, as it comes from God, is taken up with a fearful description of the awful doom of his implacable enemies, and is applied in the New Testament to Judas. The subject of Dr. Watts' imitation—of Dr. Watts' "*version*," is "Love to enemies from the example of Christ." Can there possible be a greater perversion of language than to call this a version of the 109th psalm? and yet Dr. Neill charges the friends of an inspired psalmody with excluding Dr. Watts' "rich and beautiful version of the Psalms from the sanctuary." What would he think if the Apocryphal psalm, in the Septuagint version of the psalms of David, were published to the world, and used in the worship of God as one of the psalms of David, and shall he think it "strange" that we are unwilling to admit into the sanctuary, as a version of the psalms of David, psalms which, in the language of the pious Romaine, "are so far from the mind of the Spirit, that I am sure if David were to read them, he would not know any one of them to be his?" How could we regard with feelings of complacency their introduction into the sanctuary, as a version, believing, as we do, with Professor Alexander of Princeton, that they are "*all* intended to be used in public worship;" and believing, also, with the same author, that "the arrangement of the Psalms was the work of Ezra, the inspired collector and *redacteur* of the canon?" No, we cannot so regard their introduction. We must continue to protest against it however strange our opposition may appear to the admirers of what they call "Dr. Watts' rich and beautiful version of the psalms." We shall bring our remarks on this point to a conclusion, by calling the attention of the reader to the sentiments expressed by George Junkin, D.D., a learned and highly esteemed divine of the Old School General Assembly Presbyterian Church, and who therefore cannot be supposed to be influenced by sectarian "prejudice." In his work "on the prophecies," page 231, he thus remarks: "Dr. Watts has attempted, professedly, to *improve* upon the sentiment, the very matter, and the order, by various omissions and additions, to fit the psalms for Christian worship. This is unfair. If Pope had taken the same license with the Poems of Homer, all the amateurs of Greek poetry in the world would have cried, Shame on the presumptuous intruder. But it is a pious and zealous Christian divine who has taken this liberty with the songs of Zion, and almost the whole Church acquiesce in it. What would we think of the French poet, who, proposing to enrich French literature with a versification of the masterpiece of the English muse, should mangle and transpose the torn limbs of the Paradise Lost, until Milton himself might meet his first-

born on the highway and not recognise it? And must this literary butchery be tolerated, because, forsooth, the victim is the inspired psalmist? Why should the heaven-taught bard be misrepresented thus? Let us rather have the songs of inspiration as God inspired them, and as nearly as is possible, and consistent with the laws of English versification. God's *order* of thought is doubtless best for his Church. If any one thinks he can write better spiritual songs than the sweet singer of Israel, let him do it; but let him not dress the savoury meat which God has prepared, until all it substance and savour are gone, and then present it to us as an imitation of David's psalms!"

2. We cannot give our consent to the introduction of these songs of Dr. Watts into the sanctuary, not only because, in receiving them, we would have only the name without the reality, but because they have been prepared upon a principle which we regard as exceedingly objectionable. It is surely but fair to go to an author's preface to ascertain the principle upon which he has composed his work. Now by reference to the preface of a copy which we have in our possession, we find the Dr. declaring his own design to be "to accommodate the Book of Psalms to Christian worship." To this principle we can by no means give our consent. We believe, with the pious Bishop Horne, as quoted by Dr. Neill himself, that the psalms are "no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the gospel than they were to God's people under the law." Again, Dr. Watts says, after lamenting the "indifference" with which the ordinance of praise is regarded, "I have long been convinced that one great occasion of this evil arises from the matter and words to which we confine all our songs." This involves in it a serious reflection upon the character of the Divine Psalter which we cannot but contemplate with grief and pain. Again, after quoting a portion of the 69th psalm, (a psalm applied by the apostle to the crucifiers of our Lord,) he adds, "which is so contrary to the *new commandment*, Love your enemies." He also speaks of "the powers of our souls being shocked on a sudden, and our spirits ruffled," by the singing of certain portions of the psalms. He therefore informs us that, "Where the psalmist uses sharp invectives against his personal enemies, I have endeavoured to turn the edge of them against our spiritual adversaries, sin, Satan, and temptation." These quotations are only specimens of much more of the same character which might be adduced to show the principle upon which these songs were prepared by Dr. Watts. We have quoted the Dr.'s own words, and there is no mistaking their meaning or import. We feel it to be altogether unnecessary to make any remarks with the view of showing the impropriety of this principle, and the irreverence which it manifests for those psalms which were given "by inspiration of God." We know of no language employed, by the Rationalists of the present day, that can be more objectionable. We can contemplate it with no other feeling than that of grief and sorrow. We bring no charge against Dr. Watts. We have no disposition to detract from the high character which he sustains as a learned and pious divine. Many of his works we have read with profit and comfort. We can say, as Toplady, his ardent admirer, has said of him in his "Outlines of the Life of Dr. Watts," in relation to what he calls "Dr. Watts' scheme of one Divine person, and two Divine powers," that we are "happy in believing that the grace and faithfulness of the Holy Ghost did not permit him to die under the delusions of so horrible and pernicious a heresy." It is not with Dr. Watts' talents, learning or piety, that we have to do in this controversy, but with the principle, as expressly declared by himself, and as is obvious from his psalms, upon which he has prepared this "rich and beautiful version." It is a prin-

ciple, dishonouring to that blessed book which has emanated from the "Father of lights," and which as it comes from this Fountain of purity is the source of our dearest hopes and highest joys, and therefore we cannot, by the introduction of this "version" into the sanctuary, give it our countenance.

We have thus, we think, in a very plain and unambignous manner, laid before such of our brethren as may have thought it worth while to give us their attention, some arguments in defence of a position which a venerable father of the Old School Presbyterian church has seen proper to pronounce a "prejudice." It is for the reader to judge whether we have not been able to give a reason for this position. It is a position to which we have but little inducement to adhere, apart from a conviction of duty, as it subjects us to a separation from beloved brethren, whose society and regards we would esteem it a privilege to enjoy. This privilege, however, "we feel it to be a duty to forego, rather than worship God in a manner not appointed in his word."

The author of this book congratulates his readers that this prejudice is "yielding by little and little to the force of evidence, and will ere long give place to more rational and liberal views." We know not on what grounds the Dr. has made this statement, but we think that facts do not warrant the conclusion to which he has come, or the expectation in which he is disposed to indulge. Those branches of the church that adhere to a Scripture psalmody have never, so far as we are aware, manifested any disposition to change their position on this subject, and we are very sure that they have been increasing more rapidly within the last ten years than at any former period of their history. We think it highly probable that the number of students at their respective seminaries has doubled within that time, and we doubt not that there are now in circulation four copies of Bibles with psalms, and of psalm-books, for every one that was then to be found. We know that several large editions have lately been published. But however few and feeble the friends of an inspired psalmody may be (and our worthy father is too well acquainted with the history of the church to judge of the merits of a cause by the number of its advocates,) if our principles on this subject be correct, He, whose eyes are upon the truth, will not suffer them to perish. To Him would we commit them, in the words of the sweet psalmist of Israel:

"Do thou, O Lord, arise, and plead
The cause that is thine own,"