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LETTER FROM HINDOOSTAN.

It is with much pleasure that we lay before our readers the following highly instructive and important letter from our much esteemed brother, Rev. J. R. Campbell. It comes in reply to a letter we addressed to him, as chairman of the Board of Missions, with a view to obtain such information as might be desirable in reference to the work of Missions in Hindoostan. The information which Mr. Campbell communicates is very full, and just such as we need. We need scarcely say that we cordially reciprocate the friendly feelings it expresses.—We have left out two sentences which have merely a personal application. We would be happy to see this letter spread before the church, through the Presbyterian Witness and the Friend of Missions, should it be agreeable to the respective conductors of these papers.—ED.

Mission-house, Saharanpur, October 15, 1853.

Reverend and Dear Brother Cooper.—It was, I assure you, with very much pleasure that I received by last month's mail your highly interesting communication of the 29th June. There are few Christian friends, among those it was my happiness to meet during my late visit to the United States, of whom I have since thought more frequently than of yourself..... Often since that time has it been my desire to write you a letter of friendship, just with the desire of keeping up that acquaintance between us, which had been so warmly commenced; but, what with the numerous and varied missionary duties that have devolved upon me, since my return to Saháranpúr, and the fearful amount of strictly *business* letters which, as treasurer of the whole mission, *must* be written, to say nothing of a large correspondence in this country and at home, but little time is left for letters of mere friendship; so that this most pleasant of all employments is generally put off to a more convenient season, but which rarely or never comes. I am therefore glad that your *official* letter, as Chairman of the Board of Missions of the Associate Presbyterian Synod of North America, calls upon me to address you on a subject of so much interest and importance as the establishment of a mission by your highly-esteemed branch of the church, in North India.

Before I proceed further, you must allow me to say that I entertain the warmest regard for the Associate Church, as a pure and faithful

[From the Christian Instructor.]

REVIEW OF M'LAREN ON PSALMODY.

We present to our readers in this and the following numbers of the Repository, an extended review of a book lately published by Dr. M'Laren, of Pittsburgh, on the subject of psalmody, entitled "A Plea for Peace." We know of no work on that side of the question which is so well calculated to make an impression on the mind of the reader whose views have not become fully established on the subject as this book. It has called forth what we have considered satisfactory replies; but we have seen none that has more thoroughly examined the grounds upon which this Plea is based, and more clearly shown their utter inefficiency to sustain the superstructure which the author has erected upon them. We solicit for this review a careful and candid reading on the part of all who wish to arrive at correct conclusions on this very important subject. For this review we are indebted to the Christian Instructor, the organ of the Associate Reformed Synod of New York. A few paragraphs have been omitted for the sake of brevity. Their omission, however, does not, in our opinion, affect the author's arguments, as they do not bear directly upon the question discussed.—ED.

I begin with what occupies a most prominent place in the Plea, and is calculated more than any thing else in it, to produce an impression favourable to its views. It undertakes "to prove from the Scriptures that we have divine warrant for the use of other songs of praise beside those contained in the book of Psalms." This "positive argument" is set forth and elaborately illustrated in the seventh chapter. It is founded on a new and bold interpretation of Eph. v. 19, and Col. iii. 16. In these passages the terms "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs," in the Greek Testament, as in our English translation, are destitute of the article. From this it is argued, that the apostle, by omitting the article, showed that he intended to employ those terms in an indefinite and general sense; for, "had he meant to confine his reference to the Psalms of David, he would have said "in the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs." If the absence of the article before these words is of itself evidence that they are indefinite, then the argument advanced is a good one; and if this interpretation be correct, then here "we have the long-demanded Scripture warrant for the use of other songs of praise beside those contained in the book of Psalms." But if the omission of the article does not prove that the words are indefinite, if this interpretation be incorrect, if the apostle might mean to confine his reference to the Bible Psalms, and yet omit the article without violating any rule respecting it, then the argument is worthless, and the long-demanded Scripture warrant is still wanting.

The only question to be answered here is, Does the absence of the article before nouns situated as these are, prove that they are devoid of definiteness? To this there can be but one answer given, and that is utterly subversive of the argument, as every one must know who is competent, in a moderate acquaintance with the Greek article, to form a judgment on the question. Whoever has studied into the na-

ture and uses of the article, as exhibited in the famous work of Dr. Middleton, "*On the Doctrine of the Greek Article applied to Criticism and the Illustration of the New Testament*," must have met with the following statement fully substantiated by quotations from the Greek classics:—

"1. It has been shown that the article is commonly prefixed to nouns, which are employed distinctively, and in some similar cases noticed above: but I am not aware that any philologist has observed how frequently such nouns become anarthrous (without the article) after prepositions." After giving examples, he adds—"Hence it is evident that the absence of the article in such instances affords no presumption that the nouns are used indefinitely. Their definiteness or indefiniteness, when they are governed by prepositions, must be determined on other grounds.

"2. Another irregularity may be observed, where several nouns are coupled together by conjunctions. Though the nouns would, if they stood singly, require the article, yet when thus brought together, they very frequently reject it. This anomaly I shall hereafter speak of by the name, enumeration."

Dr. Middleton further gives numerous exemplifications of this twofold anomalous usage in his Notes on the New Testament, in the second part of his work. Now, let us examine how this usage is followed in the passages where the word psalm occurs. "And David saith in the book of Psalms." Luke xx. 42. Here the article is not inserted before book, although the word is evidently definite in its import. Now it was not the custom of Greek writers, nor a rule of the language, to omit the article before a noun, whenever its definiteness could be discerned without it. The article was as necessary in such cases as in those in which the definiteness was less perceptible. According to the first usage mentioned above, the article is omitted before book; and that being without the article, its correlative, psalms, is consequently without it. Again, in Acts i. 20—"In the book of Psalms." Here, also, the article is absent, and for the same reason; yet the article might have been prefixed both to book and Psalms.

Let us inspect another passage. "In the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms." Luke xxiv. 44. The article is inserted before law, but not before prophets or Psalms; yet both these terms have here a specific meaning and definite reference. The latter designates the Psalms of David exclusively. Why, then, is not that definiteness marked by the article? The omission is accounted for by the second rule or usage mentioned by Dr. Middleton, that where two or more nouns are connected by conjunctions, expressed or understood, they very frequently omit the article, though if they stood singly, they would require it. We refer to the following instances of this:—"Heaven and earth, Acts xvii. 24, both definite, yet without the article:—"The just and unjust," xxiv. 15; "The dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9; "Soul and spirit," Heb. iv. 12; "The elements, and the earth also," 2 Pet. iii. 10.

Enough has now been advanced to demonstrate, beyond the reach of rational controversy, that the omission of the article before the words

"Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," is no proof or indication that these are used indefinitely without special reference to the Psalms of the Bible where they occur in Paul's epistles. There never was good reason why brethren should shrink away from this argument; but there is good reason why it should shrink away from itself, and show its face no more. There was much skill shown in the weaving of this argument, but no discretion exercised in the way of first trying the strength of the material of which it is made. I regret the necessity which constrains me thus to characterize the reasoning of one who is justly held in high repute as a cautious and sound reasoner. The best of men, however, and men of the strongest intellect, will sometimes act strangely, and say and see strange things, under the flush, and amid the heat and smoke of controversy. I need to take heed to myself. Before taking leave of this argument, I will venture to advise the author, should another edition of the Plea be issued, to leave out the whole seventh chapter; and if he should not have any thing better at hand, he may insert in its place the foregoing.

Having thus, by proof which cannot be ruled out, annulled the only "positive argument from Scripture," which the Plea could urge in favour of its doctrine; having shown that the argument rests on a false assumption, on a mistaken and erroneous view of the Greek article, I may add, that all other assumptions in the Plea, every conclusion and affirmation, to which the primary mistake gave rise, is vitiated by it. For instance, it is not true on the ground of the reason assigned in the Plea, that the terms used in the verses under consideration are "general and unqualified;" consequently, it is not true, on the ground, and the only ground, on which the author makes the allegation, "that these verses enjoin the use of any religious, scriptural songs of praise, without specifying, and of course without excluding inspired or uninspired productions."

To the completeness of this reply, it is not essential for me to adduce proof that those terms, as used and intended by the apostle, have direct reference to the book of Psalms. It is proving what the Plea admits; "for it is not denied by any good interpreter, that the terms of this passage include the Psalms of David. We admit, before our brethren laboriously reason the case, that the Psalms of David are included." Good interpreters must have good reasons for this opinion. If, then, there are reasons sufficient to convince all good interpreters that these terms, according to the design of the apostle, are applicable to the inspired Psalms, then, in the absence of all evidence that they refer to any thing else, and especially in the insufficiency and failure of the proof of this offered in the Plea, we must consider that the reference in these terms to the inspired Psalms is definite and restricted.

It is not, however, by any means superfluous to prove that the inspired Psalms are expressly referred to in these two passages. For some persons, among whom the author of the Plea may be numbered, not only refuse to bring proof of what they admit on this point, but are ill pleased with the proof which we bring in confirmation of the truth of what they themselves profess to believe. Ask the well-instructed and able pleader for peace, if there is any reason, even for the opinion that the Bible Psalms are referred to at all in these verses,

and you will ask in vain. So, also, he maintains for himself, and in behalf of those whom he so faithfully represents, that the Psalms of the Bible ought to be sung. But there is not a reason, nor half a reason, nor a word of argument for this in the whole Plea. There have been, and there still are, many who deny that the Psalms of the Old Testament should be sung. To one of this opinion this Plea on Psalmody would be of no more use than the Christian Almanac to convince him of his error. Indeed, it would tend rather to confirm him in his error than to convince him of it. This omission, this lack of service on the part of the author, with respect to the passages under consideration, I will try to supply; although he could have done it far better himself, and only with a small part of the labour which it cost him to build up that air-castle of an argument, which a little true light from the Greek article, that bright jewelled point, has turned to nothing.

The apostle makes mention of "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," as then extant and common, and also well known and accessible to all those whom he addressed. So were the Holy Scriptures, and the Psalms therein. Christians, by opening the sacred volume, could find psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, which, being given by inspiration, were known to be as superior to all other lyrical poems as the entire Scriptures are to all human writings. When there was nothing in the words of the apostle to direct attention away from the Scriptural Psalter, could those to whom he wrote judiciously come to any other conclusion than that the Psalter contained the psalms, hymns, and songs, which they were required to sing?

The main duty laid upon the Colossians, was—"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." Those who had the word of Christ contained in the Holy Scriptures in them, would teach and admonish one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, thus using for mutual edification a particular portion of the word of Christ, singing the same with grace in their hearts to the Lord.

Whenever psalms are mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament, the psalms of the Old Testament are meant. There was only one book of Psalms. There was only one second Psalm, Acts xiii. 38; and when the apostle speaks of "another," (ver. 35,) it is in the same collection. As there was but one book of Psalms, the word book, in that connexion, is always used definitely; and when two nouns, as in the expression, book of Psalms, have a mutual reference, the first relating to the second, and the second to the first, the second noun must be definite if the first is so. See Middleton on the Article, chap. iii. 7. So, then, instead of the book of Psalms, it should be, according to this rule, the book of the Psalms. This shows that there were no other psalms than those to which the apostle could refer.

When we turn to that book in Hebrew, we find its title to be, The Book of Hymns or Praises. In the title prefixed to them particularly, many of them are styled songs. Frequently in the body of the psalm they are so called. The ninety-eighth is a psalm, and in the first verse it is called a song. So, also, xl. 3. They are named psalms specifically, because they were given by divine inspiration, to be sung with music in worship. They are called songs, because they are to be sung. They are hymns, because in them the praises of God

are celebrated. The thirtieth is a psalm,—a song of dedication; forty-eighth, sixty-fifth, sixty-seventh, sixty-eighth, seventy-fifth, seventy-sixth, eighty-seventh, ninety-second, psalm songs; forty-eighth, sixty-sixth, eighty-third, eighty-eighth, ninety-second, song psalms. It appears, then, the psalms, hymns, and songs referred to by the apostle, and those contained in the inspired Psalter, are identical.

These titles do correspond very closely with the titles prefixed to the Old Testament Psalms in the Septuagint version, in which very few of them are without titles. Between fifty and sixty are called psalms; from twenty to thirty, songs; several, song of psalm, or psalm of song; a number simply have the name of David, as their author, prefixed; Alleluia is a part of the psalm in Hebrew; three or four are called prayers, with special reference to their included petitions; one is called a writing or inscription. This does not in the least degree invalidate or obscure the evidence furnished even in the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, that the book of Psalms contains what the apostle enjoined Christians to sing.

There is no reason to believe that the apostle's injunction would suggest to believers at Ephesus, Colosse, or in any other place where the Greek language was spoken, an idea of any other than the Scripture Psalms. They would, of course, understand the meaning of the word hymn, for there was abundance of them to the praise of false gods; but the patrons of modern hymns cannot show that there were any similar hymns in the days of the apostles. Where is the proof that a psalm was ever composed by a Greek Christian or heathen? Where, indeed, in the Greek classics, was the word ever used as significant of a composition?

Unable to prove from Scripture that there were any other songs of praise than those in the Bible Psalm-book to be included in the terms used by the apostle, or that any others were sung by the churches in those early times, the author of the Plea is constrained to resort to history and tradition, that he may gather up, if possible, some fragmentary proof of the existence of human hymns, and of their use in the worship of God. I attach little value to any thing of this kind that may be raked up from the ruins and darkness of the second or third century, and did not intend to notice the author's doings in this department; but as he has collected an amount sufficient in quantity or quality for a short chapter, with the dignified title of "Positive Argument from the History of the Ancient Church," I will examine the mouldy, moth-eaten material of which it is composed, and in doing so will handle it as lightly as its frailty deserves.

A sentence from Pliny's letter to Trajan describes a part of the worship performed by Christians. "They are accustomed among themselves alternately to rehearse a song to Christ as a god." So they might, and sing nothing but a psalm out of the Bible; so do we in singing the Psalms. Is there nothing "written in the Psalms" concerning Christ? Did he not prove his divinity from the Psalms? Did not the apostles do the same? Is there more of Christ in hymns made by man than in those made by holy men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?

According to the historian Eusebius, Justin Martyr wrote a work called the Psalmist. What if he did? What do you know about it?

It is more likely to have been a version of the Psalms than any thing else—something like Rouse's version. But if it were a real hymn book, like Watts',—what then? There was no temptation to book-making in the middle of the second century. The business was not so easy, cheap, or profitable then as now. He would not have made a hymn book had there not been some urgent necessity for it. But if there had been a book of that kind prepared under the supervision of the apostles, it would of course have been a good one, and one not likely to become so unpopular and obsolete in the course of three or four score years as to render the making of a new one necessary; so that if Martyr made a set of hymns, it would indicate that there was none before it.

Eusebius also, in his history of the first three centuries, quotes from a certain writer who wrote "against the Arians," as follows: "Whatever psalms and hymns were written by the brethren from the beginning, celebrate Christ, the Word of God, by asserting his divinity." Whoever is determined to hang an argument or opinion somewhere, and has nothing better to hang it upon, may, if he choose, without any hinderance from me, hang it for show, as Pharaoh did the chief baker, on what Eusebius wrote, of what a nameless controversial writer had written, of what the brethren before him had written from the beginning. Controversial writers are too liable to mistakes and exaggeration to be good historians. The statement attributed to this ancient controversialist is in itself altogether improbable, that "whatever psalms or hymns might have been written up to that time asserted the divinity of Christ." It is not true of any one hymn book which you may pick up: it is not true, even of all the Bible Psalms, that every one asserts this doctrine. After all, these psalms and hymns may have been versions of the psalms and hymns in the Bible. We may observe that no writer could have written against the Arians before the rise of the Arian heresy in the fourth century.

Paul, of Samosata, an ecclesiastical tyrant at Antioch, "stopped the psalms that were sung in honour of our Lord Jesus, as the late compositions of modern men." He did a very wicked thing in putting a stop to psalm-singing in his diocess. The reason given for it was either a pretence or a fact. If the former, then the psalms might have been the old psalms. But if they were in reality man-made and modern, they must have been made after the days of the apostles.

The only remaining prop to support this historical argument is made of a substance lately discovered by the author in one of the auriferous sand-banks of Pool's Synopsis Criticorum, sec. on Matt. xxvi. 30. Its original bed, however, is a little higher up in the stream of time; for it may be found in the Commentary of Hugo Grotius, where it was deposited, with many other various old things jumbled together, by a flood that wore and washed away a great quantity of one thing and another from the mountains and marshes of antiquity. Whether this is gold, wood, or stone, it matters not. It is fitted to fill a place which would be vacant without it, and it has the stamp and mould of antiquity upon it; so it answers the purpose to which it is here applied;—for it is nothing more or less than a quotation from some unmentioned work of old Tertullian, who, as stated in the Plea, "wrote as follows in reference to the custom of singing in the church:—

'Each one is called out into the midst, to sing unto God, either from the Scriptures, or *from his own mind*, as he is able.'" Short as this extract is in Pool, the author of the Plea has seen fit to abbreviate it, and thus make it like a lamp-post in a dark night, in a narrow street, without the lamp. I confess I should be rather working in the dark, in trying to construe the passage as the Plea has done, without the illustrative exordium, which it has unwarrantably suppressed. When the lamp, however, is restored to its own place, and lighted, we can, without difficulty, interpret the whole, as follows:—"Post aquam manulem et lumina ut quisque de Scripturis, vel de proprio ingenio, potest, provocatur in medium Deo canere." "*After washing the hands and lighting the lamps, as each one, from the Scriptures, or from memory, is able, he is called forth into the midst to sing to God.*" (*Ingenium, memory.* See Ainsworth's Dictionary.) Some sang from the book, and some without it. From what does it appear that this refers to the custom of singing in the church? In the understanding I have of it, it rather describes a practice observed in cleanly religious families after the labour of the day was finished. Were the author's translation of the phrase, "*proprio ingenio*," correct—and I will not strive with him about it—what then? Would the whole passage, *unmutilated*, have in it the argument which he tries to draw out of it? Certainly not. It has evident respect to worship in private households; and there it would not permit any one who lays aside the Scripture Psalms to sing any thing else in their stead but a song of his own making. If every one in the family, in the church, in the ministry, or even in the Western Theological Seminary, were to be called forth into the midst to sing at the time of worship, either one of the old psalms or a hymn of his own composition, few hymns would under these circumstances be sung, and there would be fewer still worth hearing. Now, will any one seriously affirm that such a custom ever prevailed in the Christian church, or in well-ordered families? If "*proprio ingenio*" would demand the meaning which the Plea puts upon it, I would be inclined to conjecture that this piece of ancient history must have been taken from some work of Tertullian descriptive of the religious practices observed by the followers of the austere and heretical Montanus, to whom it is well known Tertullian was favourable.

(To be continued.)

PRAYER MEETINGS.—It is very important that a prayer meeting should not be wearisome. Such prayer meetings will not merely be uninviting but repulsive; and what is worse, in those who attend it may destroy the spirit of prayer and induce a habit of contented mockery.

A prayer meeting should be conducted with spirit. A dull and heavy mode of conducting a meeting will make it dull and heavy. The person conducting the meeting should be prepared. No time should be lost in turning over leaves. A passage of Scripture, short, and selected for point and impressiveness, should be read; and a few verses, selected in like manner, should be sung. Any remarks should be pertinent and brief. On this point every one should examine himself carefully and unsparingly; for we do not tell each other our faults, and we shall not without pains-taking and impartiality, suspect our own faults. A prayer meeting should be confined carefully within its limited time. It is far better that people leave a meeting remarking that it has broken up too soon, than that it has held too long. In case different members of a meeting conduct it in turns, the member should be named at the preceding meeting, that he may be present and prepared. Variety may thus be given. These are small matters, but small things do not always produce small consequences.—*Watchman and Observer.*

THE

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[For the Evangelical Repository.]

REMARKS ON AN AMENDED VERSION OF THE PSALMS IN METRE.

The Associate synod, in May, 1850, appointed a committee to report respecting an improvement of our present metrical version of the Psalms. As one of the committee, and at the request of some of my brethren, I undertook the work of preparing some amendments, chiefly verbal, which were published in the Evangelical Repository of April, 1851. It was my wish to have published a small edition of the Psalms, as amended, but for this there was not time before the ensuing meeting of the synod in May. The proposed amendments were, therefore, published in a detached form. It was evident that in this form they would neither receive a thorough examination, nor be properly understood; and I am not at all surprised that some false impressions have been made respecting them. The chief object of this communication is to correct some of these impressions. One of them is in regard to the number of the alterations proposed. It would seem as if not a few regarded these amendments almost in the light of a new version. This is so far from being the case, that had the Psalms been published entire as amended, in many of them the reader would hardly have perceived any change. In some, the original versification is very far inferior to that of others; as, for example—Ps. 1, 3, 17, 18, &c. In these, the changes proposed are more numerous; yet even where the changes extend to almost every verse, the language will be found very much the same as before. Various things have concurred to swell the apparent amount of the alterations. In many instances whole verses were published where but one word, or the order of some words, was slightly changed. The verse was published entire, that it might the more readily appear how it would read when altered. Now this very much increased the apparent amount of the amendments. As examples of this, may be cited such verses as the following:—

Ps. xxii. 26—The meek shall eat, and shall be filled;
those also praise shall give
Unto the Lord who do him seek;
your heart shall ever live.

The alteration here consists in changing *they*, in the beginning of the second line, to *those*. The reason for this is, that, as it now reads, the reference of *they* would at first appear to be to *the meek*, mentioned in the first line; and it is not without some study, and a parti-

The terms, *shebah* and *alah*, in this narrative, do not signify different things—the one an oath, and the other a penalty. They are used as *convertible* terms, both signifying the *same thing*—an oath proper, *including* its sanctions, or *penalties*.

The criticism of our correspondent, we fear, is too thin to be strong. We have not the leisure to follow his quotations farther, at present. With a very brief remark or two, we will be done.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, and other patriarchal saints, took or imposed solemn oaths, even the *shebah*, in other cases besides strife and covenanting; and our correspondent wishes to know, “Where, in all the Scripture, these oaths are recognised as right?” If they were all wrong, these good old men were grievously addicted to deliberate, formal, profane swearing. The character of the men, in connexion with the calm, serious, reverential manner in which they engaged in these oaths, and the absence of any hint of disapprobation, is so strongly presumptive of their being right, that our correspondent must prove them wrong, before we can unite in their condemnation. If one of these oaths is approved, there is no reason to believe that the rest were wrong. But by reference to Heb. xi. 22, we find that the oath which Joseph took of the children of Israel—similar to that imposed on him by his father Jacob—is referred to as not simply lawful, but an illustration of the highest Christian principle, faith. Compare Heb. xi. 22, with Gen. l. 25, and Exod. xiii. 19. By faith, Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones, says the apostle; and the historian twice tells us that the commandment was imposed in the form of a *shebah*.

[From the Christian Instructor.]

REVIEW OF M'LAREN ON PSALMODY.

(Continued from page 474.)

The testimony of Neander, “that the hymns used in the worship of God were appealed to, in the second and third centuries, in proof of the incarnation and divinity of Christ,” is important; for it attests that what was sung in worship, in those early ages, was regarded by those who held the truth to be of valid authority for deciding a doctrine and question of faith. The psalms and hymns then sung being those of the Bible, they might with propriety be appealed to. But is it at all likely that in a period so near to that of Christ and the apostles, those sound in the faith, and the very defenders of the faith, would, in defence, or in proof of a fundamental doctrine of the Bible, appeal to the poetical compositions of uninspired men, and of men then living, or living not long before? Had the church and the ministry in those centuries lost sight of the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice? If so, the next step, natural for them to take, would be to multiply and magnify devotional hymns, and substitute them in the place of God's Word. But their example would be no safe precedent for us.

It is my object to convince the judgment of the beloved author of this Plea, and of all who may read it, that thus far it is egregiously erroneous, not only in its interpretation of Scripture, but in the arbitrary rule of criticism followed in arriving at that interpretation, not only in its understanding of some, but in its very statement of other historical parts. I avoid, therefore, all side issues and irrelevant questions.

I cannot, however, overlook the imposing official certificate prefixed to this work as a sealed sanction in its favour, and an authoritative veto, in anticipation, on all that may be said against it. I have felt no timidity or embarrassment on this account in examining the intrinsic properties of the Plea. Still, just and unanswerable as this reply may be from the errors and inward weakness of what it answers, in offering it to ministers and churches with a view to obtain-

ing their unbiassed consideration of it, I am sensibly aware that I labour under one peculiar disadvantage from the indirect, yet heavy and unfavourable bearing which this reply has, in its being true, on the literary good name of the two distinguished Professors in the Western Theological Seminary, whose high recommendations of the book ushered it into public notice, and have done more than any thing else to procure for it public acceptance. The treatise was in its manuscript state submitted, with unreserved confidence, to their critical inspection. Dr. M'Gill had "the pleasure of reading" it, and had the whole of it under review, and he found no fault in it at all. "As far as Dr. Elliott could judge from hearing portions of it read, he heartily" concurred in the opinion expressed by his learned associate. Thus the book was published in the light of their favour, and sent forth under the wings of their protection, beautified with their praise. This advantage it still has to sustain its credit, and to extend its furtherance. But this is an impediment which a reply to it must encounter. The character of Dr. M'Gill, and partially of Dr. Elliott, is identified with the character of the book. An exposé of its literary errors—and it is only of such that I now write—is an impeachment of the soundness of their joint expressed judgment. The former professor is the principal surety to the Presbyterian family in behalf "of this little work." He, more than even the author, is responsible for its truth and accuracy. From this responsibility he cannot release himself. I know him not personally, or by sight. His reputation may be far higher than I can see. Nothing that I might say can have reach or power to lower it. I would not do so if I could. But what I neither could nor would do he has himself done in the unqualified commendation which he has given to this work, and which must have been given, either in honesty and zeal without knowledge, or with knowledge without sincerity. Of the latter I have no suspicion. Far be it from me to charge him with dissimulation and intrigue. He may be one of the "confused," but not one of the "designing" men. The commendation, then, must have been in harmony with the persuasion of his own mind in reading the book, that the things contained therein were all true and correct, as stated in it. The doctor may be a very learned man in many things; but if this commendatory certificate be a proper measure or standard by which to estimate his qualifications, his knowledge must be deficient in some things usually deemed essential in a theological professor, and especially in an exegetical lecturer. He is, with all his learning and ability, imperfectly acquainted with the doctrine of the Greek article, else he never would have sanctioned the argument contained and elucidated in the seventh chapter—an argument which, with its illustrative amplifications, is founded on two rules arbitrarily assumed. The first is, that when a definite noun is encompassed in its connexions and immediate vicinity with evidences of its definiteness, the article is omitted. The other is, that where the circumjacent indications of definiteness are wanting, the omission of the article proves that the noun is indefinite. The argument itself rests on the latter, but the illustrative preparations for it embrace the former. Dr. M'Laren builds up the argument. Dr. M'Gill boldly exclaims, "Well done!—that will answer." The meek and cautious Dr. Elliott says, "As far

as I can judge, I concur." Before this triumvirate of doctors I may lift up my face and voice, and simply say, I appeal to Dr. Middleton, whose opinion on this subject is law in the supreme court of literature, and whose authority is yet imperial.

Dr. McGill pronounces it a special excellency in this Plea, that "it quotes historical facts not generally known, nor hitherto adduced in the discussion; and which, if I mistake not, must prove embarrassing to the advocates of exclusive use," &c. The historical facts must be those included in the eighth chapter, just reviewed. The only one of them, which the Plea itself pronounces to be new, is "the case from Tertullian," which he thinks "has never before been cited in the discussion of this subject." This is one of the facts not generally known. The reader may see that the doctor was mistaken in his conjectural expectation that this would prove "embarrassing to the advocates of exclusive use," &c. But I am sure that when the case from Tertullian, as it is, and in its connexion with his premature praise, is understood, it will be extremely embarrassing to himself. Did the reverend and learned professor know all about this "historical fact?" Did he know what Tertullian actually wrote? Did he know that Tertullian meant to describe "the custom of singing in the church?" Did he know that the translation of the extract in the Plea is correct? Or did he know that the translator had, for some reason or other, cut off from the words of Tertullian the very words which are necessary to an understanding of the whole? Whether the doctor knew all this, or did not know it, he is, with his introductory commendation in hand, and before the eyes of the public, the last man that should be looking or pointing away from himself for an exhibition of embarrassment with cause. The reverend professors in the Western Theological Seminary, I doubt not, are good men, able theologians, and popular preachers, and in many respects qualified for the high and responsible position which they occupy. It would, however, if they were diligent, add to their qualifications, their usefulness and celebrity, to study Greek and practise exegesis with a little attention to ancient ecclesiastical history, for a few weeks, at Princeton. Then "plain Christian people" will not again, with their sanction and concurrence, be imposed upon by such arguments as are contained in the seventh and eighth chapters of this Plea.

All proof, whatever it may be in kind or amount, in clearness and force, having respect to the Bible Psalms alone, and showing a divine appointment to sing them in divine worship, the Plea pronounces irrelevant, as not touching the question at issue, and objects to, not on the ground of any discernible insufficiency in it to prove that those Psalms should be sung, but solely on the ground of a defectiveness or failing attributed to it, in its not proving, as is alleged, that they should be sung exclusively. This imaginary defectiveness is the boundless void space in which the doctrine of the Plea is found entrenched behind the broken down walls of the positive argument raised in front for its defence. This objection to all scriptural proof in favour of singing the Psalms, in view of that proof restricting worshippers at all times to use them in offering praise, is the common and oft-repeated negative argument urged in favour of singing, at the option of worshippers, any thing that has a decent religious or moral

meaning in it. This is the great argument of the Plea, occupying its first six chapters. Indeed, the book, leaving out its historical portions as extraneous, and the positive argument magnified in the seventh chapter, as a nullity, contains little else than a broad, bald negation, covered here and there with a little scrubby argumentation, and a vine-like species of special pleading, rather weak in the roots, but fair in the foliage, and very flexible in its runners. It may, therefore be called the negative argument, to express what it is, and in suitableness to its implied contrast with the argument called "positive."

We shall examine this negative argument, firstly, in respect to the use made of it in the interpretation of Eph. v. 19, and Col. iii. 16, by the author of the Plea, for the purpose of setting aside all the proof which those passages furnish in their definite terms, that they contain a command to sing the Bible Psalms exclusively. The argument in this special and limited application of it is well and forcibly stated, as follows:—

"Had the apostle meant to confine his reference to the Psalms, he would have said, 'in the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.' And even then it would not fix the obligation to sing them, and no others. If we should admit that nothing else but the Psalms of David was referred to or included in this expression, that admission would not help our brethren's case at all. They would still have the only hard part of their cause to make out. Suppose I say to my Associate Reformed brother, who is straining this passage to prove that it refers to the Psalms of David alone, 'Brother, you need not trouble yourself to do it; I will admit it all.' 'Then you admit all I maintain,' he gladly replies. 'Oh no, I do not; for you have yet the hardest part of your task to perform, viz., to show that the expression fixes the obligation to sing the Psalms of David, to the exclusion of every thing else.'" P. 65.

According to this, it is not hard to prove that the expressions "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," which occur in the two apostolic commands, refer to the Psalms of David alone. The reasons for this given before in this reply may, therefore, be deemed above measure sufficient. The only hard thing to prove is, that these expressions, having this definite meaning, referring to the Psalms alone, impose an obligation to sing them alone. It appears to me as easy to prove the one as to prove the other; and that, in proving the former, the latter is proved. If the Psalms of David alone are referred to or included in the expressions, then they can and do here mean nothing else; for terms that are definite cannot in one and the same statement be indefinite, and definite terms are restricted in their meaning to the specified object of definiteness, and exclusive of every thing else. To say that a term definitely means one particular object, and that this is not exclusive of all other objects in any matter predicated of it, is to utter a contradiction. It is impossible to express definiteness without exclusiveness. The proof which demonstrates that the Psalms of David alone are referred to, demonstrates that they are so referred to, in exclusion of every thing else. The admission that they alone are referred to, is an admission of the very thing which it is said to be so exceedingly hard to prove. It is fully proved in what is admit-

ted, so far as these two important passages are concerned. As these are commands, imposing an obligation to sing (what its terms, according to the concession, mean) the Bible Psalms alone, then these commands, in their express and definite terms, necessarily fix an obligation to sing them, to the exclusion of every thing else.

In this application of the negative argument, a rule of interpretation is followed so unfounded, so unsound in itself, and mischievous in the use that may be made of it, that it merits special notice. It is implied in the following statement:—"The *reference*, in these texts, might be exclusively to the book of Psalms, and yet the *injunction* not be so." P. 139. I may not understand this. I have been so accustomed to confide in the accuracy of the author's judgment for many years, that in meeting thus with statements in which I cannot acquiesce, I have to examine very closely into the accuracy of my own discernment before I can gain assurance enough to call in question the accuracy of his views. But I cannot see that the above statement means any thing else than this, as the principle it involves, that the terms describing the subject matter of a command may be special and exclusive, and yet the injunction itself be general and indefinite. It is one of the mental mysteries connected with the writing of this Plea, though not the greatest, that its intelligent author should propose to his intelligent readers a rule of interpretation that would in practice destroy all definiteness, and usefulness in scriptural terms and in scriptural statements of doctrine and duty, and overthrow all certainty in understanding the import and application of divine commands. Were this rule allowable with respect to these texts on the subject of psalmody, it would be equally sound and safe in its application to other passages on any other given subject of faith or duty. It would indeed unsettle all ordinances of worship and corrupt the very rule of faith itself. The only illustration and proof he gives by no means verifies the sweeping rule he lays down.

"I will illustrate by a plain parallel. Christ says, 'Search the Scriptures.' This refers indubitably and exclusively to the Old Testament writings, but it does not fix on us the obligation to read those writings to the exclusion of all others. So, admitting the verses under consideration to refer to the book of Psalms, it does not bind us to sing them to the exclusion of all others." P. 66.

The cases are parallel, but the parallelism is not in the direction which the author conjectured. The words of Christ do not restrict us from reading on any proper occasion other books, nor do the words of the apostle restrict us from singing on any proper occasion other songs. We must, in both cases, take into view the specific nature of these respective commands, and then we will find that the injunction in both cases is as exclusive as their terms. The command of Christ does not impose a general obligation to read the Scriptures, as we read other books, or in common with other books. If it did, the force of all that is definite in specifying the subject matter of the command would be annulled. If it does not this, then the command separates and distinguishes the Scriptures from all other writings. The command, "Search the Scriptures," by itself, and especially with the reason appended to enforce and illustrate it, has sole and exclusive respect to the written Word of God; and the injunction is so completely re-

stricted to the Scriptures in its reference and in the moral obligation it fixes, that the duty here enjoined would not be performed at all by searching or reading any other books, however good they may be. If a man read *Fisher's Catechism*, or *Baxter's Saint's Rest*, or the *Plea*, or the *Instructor*, or any other book, his duty to do so must rest on other grounds than any furnished in the command, "Search the Scriptures." So in the case which is admitted to be parallel to this. If the terms "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," have definite reference to the Bible Psalms alone, then necessarily the injunction has sole and exclusive respect to them, and is so restricted to them in the obligation it imposes, that it would not be obeyed at all by singing any thing else. So, if a man sing a religious hymn or common sonnet, his duty to do so must rest on other grounds than are found in the command of the apostle to sing the Psalms; for, since the terms in those passages descriptive of the matter to be sung have reference to the Bible Psalms alone by themselves, they have reference to these exclusively. It is, moreover, to be observed, that the definite designation of "the Scriptures" to be searched, implies that there is that pertaining to them, making them worthy of this distinction, and fit for this use, which pertains to no other writings. Therefore, although it may be proper and useful to read good religious books, yet the act of doing so, innocent in itself, becomes sinful when we read them as we are commanded to read the Scriptures—the Word of God. In like manner, the definite designation of the Bible Psalms for use in praise, implies that there is that pertaining to them making them worthy of this distinction and fit for this use, which pertains to no other songs; and, although the singing of lyrical poetry of man's invention may, in its own place, be proper and blameless, yet the act of doing so becomes another act, in its moral properties, and is positively sinful, when such poetry is sung as we are required to sing the Psalms of the Bible.

Not only the parallel case cited in the *Plea*, but many other instances may be adduced as additional proof that when the subject matter of a command is particularly and definitely specified in it, the command itself, or the injunction contained in it, is determinate and restricted to that subject. The great command is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." How would it sound to say, the reference in this text may be to the Lord God exclusively, and yet the injunction not be? Would it prove that the injunction is not exclusive to point out that it does not fix the obligation on us to love God to the exclusion of all others? We are bound to love others in virtue of another precept—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The former command has sole and exclusive respect to God, both in the reference and in the injunction; and though we should love others, we are not to love them as we are required to love Him. If we love father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife, son or daughter, as we are required to love God, even the love of kindred then becomes sinful, and a direct violation of the command.

Another great command is, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Were the author hereafter to be engaged in controversy about the worship of the saints, his popish adversary might find in the *Plea* the means of an easy victory on this,

as well as on some other important points, and there might be a little talk between them in the following strain:—

Protestant. This command enjoins us to worship God, and to serve him alone; consequently, it forbids us to worship any beside him, and him to the exclusion of all others.

Papist. I admit the premises you lay down, but I deny the conclusion you draw. Your nimble logic leaps over “a very wide chasm.”

Prot. The terms used in this passage describing the object of worship and of religious obedience refer to God alone, for it is evident that there is no other to whom——

Pap. You need not strain this passage to prove that it refers to God alone; you need not trouble yourself to do it. I admit it all.

Prot. Then you admit all I maintain.

Pap. I do a good deal of it: and my agreement with you relieves me from the trouble of making the forced distinction between *worship* in the former clause, and *service* in the latter clause of this command—a distinction which our polemical writers find it so necessary to make, and so difficult to show, in dealing with Presbyterian heretics less liberal in interpretation than you are. For you, as I learn, maintain that the terms defining the subjective or objective matter of a command may be exclusive, and yet the injunction not be exclusive.

Prot. Well, what of that?

Pap. Why, only that I agree with you in it; and this being so, the hardest task you ever had to perform is to show that any expression in this great command fixes the obligation to worship God to the exclusion of all saints. I will illustrate by a plain parallel, &c.

2. I will now examine the negative argument, in its wider scope on the subject generally, in its being brought to bear, for the defence of the principles affirmed in the Plea, against all proof that psalm-singing, in the use of the inspired Psalter, is a distinct and true ordinance of God. That I have not mistaken the nature and drifts of this argument, appears from what the author says of it towards the close of the sixth chapter, in entering on his ill-fated positive argument for the use of other songs of praise than those contained in the book of Psalms. “Hitherto I have spoken negatively, defensively, showing that ‘the main argument’ is not sufficient to sustain the practice of the Associate Reformed Church.” The principles on the subject of psalmody which this negative argument took under its protection are, that it is right to sing in divine worship:—1. Fair metrical versions of the Psalms of David. 2. Paraphrases of the Bible Psalms, which exhibit the sense thereof. 3. Metrical translations and paraphrases of other parts of the Holy Scriptures. 4. Hymns, or poetical compositions which are sound or scriptural in their matter. Of these the first is the most important, although equivocally expressed. If it mean a good metrical translation of the entire one hundred and fifty psalms, as a whole, in distinction from and in preference to all the rest mentioned, then it closely approximates to what is true. But in this view of it there is not one particle of evidence given in the Plea of its truth. There is an attempt to show a warrant for other songs of praise besides those contained in the book of Psalms, but none sought expressly and specifically for using those contained in

the book itself. That the inspired Psalms, in any one version or translation, however perfect it may be, have, in virtue of their inspiration, or by divine appointment, any claim to be used in praise, which does not belong equally to Watts' hymns, so as to bind the worshipper in conscience to use the former in preference to or in rejection of the latter, is the very thing which the Plea throughout denies and controverts. The first three specifications may, therefore, be condensed into one, thus:—It is right to sing metrical translations and paraphrases of any portions of the Bible. There is nothing, however, in the doctrine or reasoning of the Plea, to make any distinction as to this matter between the Bible and any other good book,—so that translations and paraphrases of other religious books may be sung when versified, and thus turned into hymns, together with other human hymns. The doctrine, then, of the Plea may, without any abstraction from its substantial meaning, be thus summarily stated. It is right in worship to sing any thing capable of being sung that is free from doctrinal error. Stripped of all disguise and of all superfluous verbiage, this is the sentiment, nothing else, nothing more and nothing less than this, is the proposition which the negative argument undertakes to defend. Still, this argument says not one word directly for it. The sentiment concerns an important and essential part of divine worship; it divides a matter of solemn and high moral obligation; it professes to be right, morally right; and yet it is not connected in this Plea by a scriptural proof or scriptural argument with good evidence of any kind, of its being right. It would furnish no support or defence to this sentiment, even had the negative argumentation been as successful as it boasts of being in overthrowing all proof that the Bible Psalms are ordained by God to be sung in his church to the end of time. Before following in its staggerings and shortcomings, I must stop a little that I may set to rights, into their proper places and natural shape, some things, which the Plea, from unskilfulness or unfairness, has quite disarranged and misshapen.

No statement of the views of those whom the Plea opposes is fair or full, which does not state positively that we are bound to sing in divine praise the Bible Psalms.

(To be continued.)

THE LAST DAYS OF DR. A. SYMINGTON.

The following account of the last days of Rev. Dr. Andrew Symington, of Paisley, we take from an extended obituary notice which appeared in the *Scottish Guardian*. It will doubtless be read with interest.—ED.

This naturally enough leads me to speak of his last days, and of that solemn and affecting event which fell upon us all with such a stunning influence. Like Samuel, he was somewhat advanced in years, and may be said to have 'come to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season.' (Job v. 26.) Yet the period of life was not such as to suggest the idea of speedy removal. Neither was there any warning given in protracted sickness. But his work was done, his warfare was accomplished; and he was invited to lay aside his armour, and begin the celebration of his triumph. The time at which he was called secured for his labours all the advantages, without the infirmities, of age. There was the ripe fruit of autumn, unhurt by the chilling colds of winter. Before old age had time to inflict its indolence and decrepitude, to check the glowing warmth of his affections, or to freeze the genial current of his soul; while as yet all that it

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THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

As the site for locating our Theological Seminary is a matter of considerable importance, and is to be decided on at the next meeting of Synod, it may be well to discuss the subject beforehand and go prepared to vote judiciously. The following qualifications should, we think, be distinguishingly sought for and obtained in the position of such an institution.

1. *It should be a place eminent for light.* The church is distinguished as "a city set upon a hill," an eminent place for light. And the Theological Seminary is the centre of the church's light, the fountain of her leading streams, the head quarters of her chief influences, and should not be fixed in some dark corner. It should be a place of two-fold light.

First. It should be pre-eminently illuminated by the most brilliant rays falling densely upon all its parts. How shall the students become "burning and shining lights," unless they be placed where the most effulgent orbs will *blaze intensely* upon their minds? This will require that the professors be not only men of distinguished knowledge and judgment, but of *energy* to throw out and impress light upon the mind and heart. But students need other luminaries than their professors. They need *variety* to awaken and arouse them to see the extensive field of usefulness held out to view. They should hear lectures by a variety of distinguished men on the different scientific, moral and religious subjects. Then their minds would come in contact with mind in its most active and luminous state, and become correspondently instamped with the image confronting. They should also be thoroughly acquainted with *human nature*, and the *present condition* of mankind; in order to know how to apply the truths of revelation to the heart. And therefore they need to *see men extensively*, to see at work the *influences* by which society is impressed. Hence they should have ready access to all kinds of people. So Christ brought his students, or disciples into close and extensive contact with all classes of their fellow mortals. He led them into villages, into cities, and among great multitudes.

Secondly, It should be a place from which the light will be most readily reflected on the community. The Seminary should not be a monastic cell. Its lights should not be confined to its own walls, but like the sun, it should occupy a *public prominent place* in the heavens,

REVIEW OF M'LAREN ON PSALMODY.

! (Continued from page 513.)

The question proposed in the Plea, "Are we bound, in singing the praises of God, to restrict ourselves to the Psalms of David?" is evidently a secondary question; for it implies that we are bound to sing the Psalms. If we were not bound to worship God, it would be superfluous to inquire, Are we bound to confine our worship to him? The fundamental and primary question in psalmody is, Are we bound, in obedience to God's appointment, in praising Him, to make use of the Bible Psalms?

The affirmative of this question is the proposition which the argument, showing divine appointment to this effect, is designed to prove, viz., that we are bound, in obedience to God's appointment, in praising Him, to make use of the Bible Psalms. If this is not true, then it is superfluous to inquire about restriction. But if it is proved to be true, then there is another proposition also true, implied in and inferred from it, viz., that we are bound in praise to use the Bible Psalms exclusively. The adroit or inconsiderate displacement of what the Plea calls "the main argument," and its forced misdirection from its true scope, are in a degree to its disadvantage, as it is thereby detached from the proposition it is designed to substantiate, and put in connexion with another which it does prove, but proves only as it is implied in or inferred from the former, and never could prove except through that medium. All I here intend is to restore the argument to its rightful place and proper connexion, and to direct it to its original aim. The proposition already stated is positive. The argument to sustain it is positive, comprising various reasons, all showing that the Psalms are ordained by God for universal and perpetual use in celebrating his praise. Some reasons of this kind I will enumerate, as follows:—

That the book of Psalms is a collection of psalms made by divine authority.

That the church has been furnished with only one book or collection of psalms, wholly and immediately from God.

That the significant title of this book presents some evidence in favour of its continued use in religious worship.

That the descriptive name, or official title, "Sweet Psalmist of Israel," given to David, who wrote the most of them, indicates a design that they were to be sung by the Israel of God.

That the psalms contained in the canonical Scripture Psalm book were sung by the church under the Old Testament.

That there is an express command repeatedly given in the Psalms which is not obeyed unless they are sung in praising God.

That the existence and continuance of this ordinance is recognised in commands contained in the New Testament.

That there are prophecies which are fulfilled only under the New Testament, and which contemplated the perpetual use of the Psalms in praise.

That there is no account of psalms being composed under the New Testament, nor any promise of aid from the Spirit in making them.

That as the book honours the Lord Jesus, so it was signally ho-

noured by Him, and should therefore be esteemed precious and honourable by his followers.

These reasons, which I merely state without comment or amplification, may not be all of equal force; yet, together, they supply abundant evidence that there is an ordinance respecting the Psalms that obligates the worshippers of God to sing them in his worship. That ordinance is valid—that obligation is in force over all. From this condensed summary of the facts and reasons embraced in the main argument, which sets forth a divine appointment in relation to the Psalms, it will appear that the Plea has taken an incorrect survey of the “main argument,” and given but a partial and imperfect account of it. There is no attempt to invalidate it, except in two or three particulars. I design to show that the attempt, after all its chivalrous parade and vaunting prowess, is feeble and unavailing.

A strenuous attempt is made to do away with the first reason in the above list. The fact stated is in part admitted. It is a distinctive characteristic of the book, that it comprises all the psalms given by inspiration of God, and is a collection made, arranged, numbered, approved, authorized, and published by Him. This cannot be denied. Now, the inquiry is, What does all this import, as to the design of God in it, or the special purpose for which that book, as a collection, was inserted in the sacred canon? This fact, in all its parts and compass, not only indicates, but certifies, that it is the will and design of God that the collection should be the accepted Psalter of the church, and that the psalms contained in it should be used universally and perpetually for the end for which they were at first given, in their being sung, as they were sung up to the time when the collection was made. If any one were to call in question the author's ecclesiastical right to sing in worship “psalms and hymns” in common use “in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,” he would be able to answer that he had the authority of the General Assembly, although by the help, and on the wings of their Plea he would not be able to get any higher. But what would he say if it should be pertinaciously urged upon him that there is no evidence that the Assembly designed that collection to be sung in the churches? Would he not be apt at once to point in the title-page of the book to the following declaration, “Approved and authorized by the General Assembly,” as evidence conclusive that the Assembly designed them to be sung?—and would he not be apt to regard it irrelevant small talk on the part of the disputatious writer to say, when he had not any thing else to say, “This mode of arguing inferentially from a *supposed* design” of the Assembly, “gives a little too much room for the play of the fancy.”

The important fact above stated is adduced as proof of the divine appointment of the Psalms for perpetual use in praise. The negative argumentation here makes five efforts, as vigorous as it can make, to strip this fact of the evidence it bears on this point; and this it does, not by reasoning directly that the evidence is not in the fact, but by reasoning mainly from certain consequences, which it is alleged must follow, on the supposition that the evidence is good, and the appointment of the Psalms thus shown.

The *first* effort calls the reader to consider with particular attention, that if the collection of the Psalms furnishes such strong evidence of a divine warrant to sing them in subsequent ages, then all

who lived during several ages immediately preceding the time when that collection was made and published, were destitute and ignorant of that evidence. Well, what if they were? That does not make the evidence less strong, since it was given. The Plea shall speak for itself. "But let the reader remember that they were sung for five hundred years before they were collected into a separate book, if that was done by Ezra; and it will appear that during all that period, in which the Psalms were used in the worship of God with a splendour and effect greater than at any subsequent time, the main proof of the divine appointment would have been utterly devoid of force. In the days of David and Solomon, and in the period even when king Hezekiah commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the Seer, and for three hundred years afterwards, the Psalms were not collected into a book, in their present form, and therefore this part of our brethren's argument would, during all that time, be utterly invalid." P. 34. Certainly; and more than that, there was then no such evidence in existence. But what does this prove? Just nothing at all. The evidence of an ordinance is one thing, and the ordinance itself is another thing. The evidences of an ordinance, as of a doctrine, may be many and various, yet all tending to one point,—the ordinance always one and the same. The collection of the Psalms did, as it still does, give evidence of divine appointment. But it by no means follows from this that those who sung them before their collection into one book were utterly devoid of satisfactory evidence that they were appointed of God to be sung in his praise. The admitted fact that they were sung for so many years does, of itself, manifest that this matter was then well understood.

The *second* effort is very negative. "All that the collection of the Psalms into one book proves, is, that they were to be preserved as a part of the sacred Scriptures: it proves nothing about their being intended to be sung." It might prove the former, and at the same time equally prove what is denied in the latter clause. Why not? But in the former part of the statement the proof is not exactly consonant to the thing proven. The book of Psalms, as a whole, is one in a collection of sacred books; and its insertion in the inspired canon does prove that it was to be preserved as a part of the sacred Scriptures, and preserved for the end and use for which it was given, in common with the other books. If there were a dispute about any one of these books being a part of the Word of God, the main argument in its favour would be derived from the fact that it has a place in the collection of sacred books made under the Old Testament. But would it invalidate that argument to say that, for ages before the Old Testament collection was completed, the main proof of the divine authenticity of the disputed book was utterly devoid of force? But further, the book of Psalms is not only one in a collection of books, but it is also a collection itself; and, as such, was inserted in the sacred volume. This fact stands just as it did. The negative argument does not touch it, much less obscure or weaken the evidence it puts forth that this collection of Psalms was prepared and ordained for perpetual use by the church in the worship of God. It includes compositions, every one of which was from the first not only inspired, but a psalm; and was, and continues to be, the latter as unalterably

as to be the former. Their collection into one book did not change their nature or end. Every psalm was given not only to guide in faith and practice, but also to be sung. Their collection, therefore, into one distinct book, by the direction, and under the supervision of God, among the people to whom the oracles of God were committed, was the chief means of their preservation for the end for which they were originally given; so that their collection into one book of Psalms did certify at the time it was done, and still equally certifies, that they were given and preserved, not only to be a part of the rule of faith to the end of the world, but also to be used as psalms, always and universally by the church, in their being sung in the worship of God, as they had been for hundreds of years, up to the time when they were all collected together into one book.

The *third* effort is a twin negation, that does not even look towards the part of the assailed main argument, where the breach was to be made. "And it is worthy of notice, that although Psalms, and the book of Psalms, and David, are again and again mentioned in the New Testament yet they are referred to in the same way as any other portion of the old Testament, and *not associated with singing at all*. David is spoken of as a prophet; his Psalms are quoted as proofs and illustrations of doctrine; they are classified with the Scriptures, but *are not mentioned* in connexion with singing in a single instance in the New Testament." What impression for conviction can this make on a thinking mind? "The reader will remember that they were sung for five hundred years before they were collected into a book," and are referred to seldom in connexion with singing during that time, and thus they might have been sung for five hundred years afterwards with little mention made of them. To affirm that they are not associated with singing at all in the New Testament, is the next thing to saying that singing is not associated with them; and the Plea admits, that to affirm the latter proves nothing. But the Plea also admits, what is here twice denied. In its comment on Eph. v. 19, and Col. iii. 16, of which "the interpretation of the one will do for both," the Plea owns, "It is not denied by any good interpreter that the terms of this passage include the Psalms of David. We admit that the Psalms of David are included." Here are two instances, at least, in which the Psalms are associated with singing. In another place he seems to think it would be embarrassing to those whom he opposes, if he should ask them to show that the Psalms were sung *at all* in the apostolic age, (p. 37,) and that, if he should demand divine warrant for singing the Psalms of David at all in the New Testament, it would be extremely hard to meet it, (p. 51.) The author himself, however, can meet it without difficulty.

The *fourth* effort is an argument drawn from consequences said to follow from restriction to the Psalms in praise, although it does not apply to the proof of this furnished by their collection into one book, nor to the proposition which that proof is brought to sustain, but to what is implied in it. "It might appear frivolous, and yet not more so than the reasoning which it meets, to say, that if a supposed design of the Psalms is to be so narrowly defined and rigidly adhered to,"—that is, if there were a design, and if there be an ordinance to sing the Psalms exclusively, then "they ought by no means to be read, because they were given to be sung." Is there any contrariety in

these two things, so that if they should be sung, they should not be read? May there not be a command to read them, and a command to sing them alone, and these two be obeyed without clashing? Does not the Assembly's act, expressed on the title page of the Collection of "Psalms and Hymns" used by the author, refer to it alone, and to it so exclusively, that no other collection can be admitted into use in their churches under that act, and by its authority? But ought those psalms and hymns by no means to be read, because they were given to be sung? This reasoning has an appearance of frivolity by no means deceptive, making it the next thing to nonsense. The Plea hurries away from this objection to another equally thin in the shell, and empty within.

The *fifth* and last effort is but the repetition of a piece of reasoning before noticed, in which the Plea argues that, if the command to sing in praise the Psalms requires us to sing them only, then, by parity of reason, the command to read the Scriptures would restrict all our reading to the Scriptures. "But there is another reply to the allegation on broader and more important grounds." I have searched but cannot find these in what is added. "The reading of the Scriptures is inculcated as often and explicitly as the singing of the Psalms is. Now, if the collection of one hundred and fifty Psalms into one book is sufficient evidence that God designed to restrict all our singing of praise to these, then the collection into one book of all the inspired writings is equal evidence that he designed all our religious reading to be confined to this one book, and the reading of any other is a corruption of the ordinance of religious reading, just as we are told the singing of hymns is a corruption of the ordinance of praise." This objection, in the mode of terms of its statement, is so interwoven with the proof it proposes to rebut, that it would seem to be the understanding of the objector that it had special respect to that proof; but it has in reality none. It has sole respect to what is necessarily implied in the main proposition which that proof is designed to make good. Let the proof be in nature and kind what it may, let it be unobjectionable and decisive, so as to place beyond the reach of doubt that there is a divine appointment restricting us to the use of the Psalms in praise, the objection would be what it now is. According to the immediate preceding effort of reasoning from analogy or consequence, we ought not to read the Psalms, because they were given to be sung. According to this homogeneous effort, our reading must for the same reason be restricted to the Psalms with the rest of the Bible; that is, we would not be permitted to read any other book than the Bible. On this we before said enough to answer it.

There are two admissions, however, in the above extract, which are valuable on account of their truth. The first is, that the singing of Psalms that is, (as the connexion shows,) of the one hundred and fifty Psalms in the Bible collection, is often and explicitly inculcated in the Scriptures. The obligation to sing them, therefore, is perpetual and universal. It is only to prove this that the fact is adduced that the inspired Psalter is a collection of hymns and spiritual songs, made, arranged, edited, and published by human agency, infallibly inspired and directed. The other admission, contained in mode and terms in which the objection is stated, is, that the collection of all the inspired Psalms into one book, and the collection of all the inspired books into

one volume, are parallel or analogous facts. If the collection of the sacred Psalms proves that they are always to be sung for the purpose for which they were at first given, the collection of all the sacred books proves that they are always to be read for the purpose for which they were at first given. If the collection of the Psalms into one book, with the command to sing them, obligates us to sing them exclusively, then, also, the collection of the inspired books into one volume, with a command to read them, obligates us to read them exclusively; or to invert this order of statement, if the collection of all the inspired books into one volume furnishes evidence that in harmony with the command to read them, they only are to be read for the end for which they were given and collected, then, also, the collection of all the Psalms or books into one Psalter furnishes evidence that in harmony with the command to sing them, they only should be sung for the end for which they were given and collected. The command to read the Scriptures is not obeyed when we read any thing else, and the command to sing the Psalms is not obeyed when we sing any thing else. If we read other books, however free from doctrinal error, as we are required to read the books of the inspired collection, we violate the divine ordinance that makes that collection the only rule of faith and practice, and so if we sing other hymns, though free from doctrinal error, as we are required to sing the Psalms in the inspired collection the only psalm-book of the church. We are to receive and use the Word, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God. So we are to receive and use the Psalms, not as the hymns of men, but as they are in truth the songs of the Lord. The Bible is a religious book, and there are other religious books; but the sacred books are distinguished from all other books in their being the Word of God, the only authorized rule of faith and obedience towards Him, and in their being as such collected into one book and published by the authority of the King for use, perfect and entire, all over the world to the end of time. The Psalms are religious poems; and there are other religious poems; but the sacred Psalms are distinguished from all other hymns, however sound in doctrine and pious in spirit, in their being the only divinely authorized form of religious praise, and in their being, as such, collected into one book, and published by the authority of the King and Head of the church for use, in praise, perfect and entire, as a whole, without addition or subtraction, all over the world to the end of time.

The act of lowering the Psalms, or any one of them contained in the canonical collection, to a level with even the best hymns composed by uninspired men, and act of elevating uninspired books, ancient or modern, to a level with the books contained in the canonical collection of sacred books, are acts which in their nature are an infringement on what is sacred, in their interfering with the established inspired canon, are both equally unjustifiable, and equally detrimental in the respective spheres into which they intrude, of faith or of praise. If an author in framing an historical compilation, professing to derive his materials from the writings of men, should insert or intersperse among his extracts two or three books or chapters of our English Bible, without making any distinction of them from the rest, putting them all on one common ground for truth and authority, and attributing to them all a like excellence or like fallibility, would not the Christian reader be

apt to deem the compiler an infidel, and his act an insulting sneer thrown at the Holy Scriptures? If the compiler of a hymn-book, made up professedly of human composes, include among them a few or more correct metrical translations of inspired psalms, he does, by thus classing them with hymns of man's device, expose himself to the charge of making that common which God has made holy, and of taking away all difference as far as it can exist in a translation between the Word of God and the writings of men. Were the same thing done with the inspired Psalms in Hebrew, if such an act were practicable, were they ranked and intermixed with human hymns, though it were done by the largest assembly that ever bore rule in the visible church, the deed would in its moral nature be a deed of barefaced profanity. What is wrong in the treatment of the original untranslated Psalms is at least culpable in the treatment of a good translation of them. What would be wrong in its being done by a scoffing infidel against the prose of the Bible, cannot be any thing else than wrong in its being done, though ignorantly, by a band of Christian ministers against the poetry of the Bible. A good translation of the Bible Psalter should not only give the sense of every Psalm, and of every part of it, but also give it a poetic form and measure, to admit of its being sung in worship. Of two versions of the same Psalm, the one in prose and the other in metre, the latter would justly claim the preference from its more close conformity to the original Psalm, in its being in a poetical form, and capable of being sung; for translators have no right, and the church cannot give them the right, of translating the poetry of the inspired volume into prose, or the prose into poetry. To class Psalms, faithfully translated, though in plain and humble verse, with hymns composed by men, is as wide a departure from what is holy and comely, as to class our English version of the Bible, or any part of it, with ordinary books.

We have thus aimed to show that the special pleadings of the Plea do not so much as touch the proofs which they were designed to subvert, nor weaken the argument which that proof strengthens.

One reason, which the Plea makes no attempt to invalidate, for singing the Psalms, is found in an express command often met with in the book itself, and so expressed, that it cannot be obeyed except by singing the Psalms. The word *zimra*, psalm, has a specific meaning; that is, in every place in which it occurs, it signifies a well-pruned, choice poetic composition, given by divine inspiration, to be sung with the voice in worship. There is also a Hebrew verb often used in the Psalms, which expresses the act of singing them, or the articulate utterance of a Psalm in a musical voice, with the accompaniment of instrumental music, or without it. The genuine meaning is not given to this in the *The Psalms, translated and explained by J. A. Alexander*. He renders it, "to make music, to play." But the mere exercise of making music is expressed by a different word; 1 Sam. xvi. 16; Isa. xxxviii. 20, xxviii. 16; Ps. xxxiii. 3, lxviii. 26; Ezek. xxxiii. 32. But although he assigns to the verb this meaning, he usually translates, as in the prose and metrical version, "to sing, to praise, sing praise, celebrate." But in no instance has he given to it the meaning, in his comment on Ps. xxx. 13, "psalmos canere," to sing psalms. Thus, also, he renders Ps. xviii. 49, *sing psalms to thy name*. The work of Venema, though scarce now, has been too long known

and too highly prized to need any new recommendation. Those who have it cannot get a better; but those who have not access to it may have the best substitute for it in Alexander's Translation and Notes, a work which was much needed, and is well fitted to furnish valuable aid to ministers and private Christians in the study of the Psalms. The following extract will manifest that the opinion of the learned Princeton is very different on some points from that which is set forth in the Plea promulgated from the Western Theological Seminary. "These hundred and fifty pieces, different as they are, have this in common, that they are all poetical, not merely imaginative and expressive of feeling, but stamped externally with that peculiar character of parallelism, which distinguishes the higher style of Hebrew compositions from ordinary prose. A still more marked resemblance is, that they 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 public worship, not excepting those which bear the clearest impress of original connexion with social, domestic, or personal relations and experience of the writers."

In view of the undeniable fact that those unto whom the oracles of God were committed had in their possession in the days of Christ an approved and long-used collection of church psalms, which they were commanded to use in their worship of God, it is no presumption to believe that it was then in common use among the worshippers of God in the land of Israel, and by Jews dwelling in other lands, that after our Lord's resurrection his followers, "the churches in Judea, which were in Christ," sang from it in praise to Him, "the great God and our Saviour," at Jerusalem, and in the synagogues, and wherever they met to worship in his name, and that the apostles brought it into use in the churches of Christ among the Gentiles. One thing is certain, they had this ancient and sacred collection of psalms or hymns in their possession, in having the Holy Scriptures, and thus had the means of knowing that it was their duty to sing them. Looking at these facts in their true aspect, no impartial historian could hesitate to record that there is a high probability, bordering on certainty, that the Bible Psalter was in common and universal use among primitive Christians.

These Psalms are referred to in 1 Cor. xiv. 26—"Every one hath a psalm." The Plea does not assent to this for reasons given as follows:—"From the omission of the article before the word psalm, from the connexion of that word with the extraordinary spiritual gifts, and from the train of reasoning throughout the chapter, it is evident that the psalms offered in the Corinthian church were such as the Spirit enabled the Christians there to make, and not psalms of the Old Testament." P. 62. There is no evidence of this in either or all of the reasons stated.

The author's eyes are so dazzled by the article-argument that his vision is confused by it, else he never would have blindly thrust that fragile argument in here, where it has no more meaning in it than it would have, had he stuck it on to the cover of the book. The omis-

sion of the article before "psalm," is no evidence that the psalms which they severally had were not the Psalms of David, nor would its insertion, in this case, have proved of itself that they were. But whether the psalms were old or new, the apostle, by using the article, would not have expressed what the words show he intended to express. Had he inserted the article before psalm, making the noun thereby definite, the sentence would have conveyed a meaning diametrically opposed to what it has, as it now stands; for it would then signify that every one had *the* "psalm," a particular psalm, and every one the same; whereas, as the sentence now stands; every one had a distinct and different psalm. They had severally diverse psalms; one person had one psalm, another person some other psalm, and so on. Hence arose a part of the discreditable disorder and confusion that disturbed their church meetings when they came together into one place for worship. This the apostle aimed to correct—"Let all things be done to edifying;" "be done decently and in order." But there would have been no such confusion in their praise if every one had *the* psalm particularized by the article.

To affirm that every one *made* the psalm which he had is to affirm what is purely suppositive, and not sustained by any thing in the passage or in the context. To have a psalm does not mean to compose a psalm, nor to sing a psalm in an unknown tongue; for having "a psalm" is mentioned in the enumeration as something distinct from having "a tongue." Indeed, there is no evidence in the whole chapter that they sung in an unknown tongue at all. It is a mistake to suppose that in their public assemblies they omitted the ordinary parts of worship, and exercised themselves only in extraordinary spiritual gifts, and that the disorders which impaired the usefulness of those assemblies were entirely confined to the latter. We have no reason to suppose that all their prayers made on these occasions were in a strange language. When any thus prayed, the prayer, as to the *foreign language* in which it was uttered, was an extraordinary gift. This the apostle disapproved of, at least to the extent to which it prevailed; and in expressing his own views and practice he said, "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also," as he aimed to do in singing, which was also an ordinary and common part of worship—"I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." He certainly might thus have sung the Psalms of the Old Testament. The word here translated "sing" corresponds to the Hebrew verb which signifies to sing psalms. See James v. 13. In no instance in the Old or New Testament does either word signify to compose a psalm.

It is included in the summary of reasons before given for singing the inspired Psalms in divine worship, that we have high precedent for this in the uniform and approved practice of the church for many ages under the Old Testament and under the New Testament, to the close of Revelation. This is not denied. Still, as a set-off to this fact, and as a bar in the way of any inference from it adverse to the claims and use of human hymns, the Plea maintains that songs of praise not taken from the book of Psalms are recorded in the New Testament as both sung with acceptance in the worship of God.

It always had been the opinion of the best expositors and soundest critics that the hymn sung after the institution of the Supper was of

the psalms usually sung by the Jews after eating the Passover. But this is too much to the credit of the old Psalms to be deemed at all probable; and, therefore, in the judgment of this Plea, the opinion that psalms were sung at that time "rests only on conjecture, without even traditionary authority." In the place of this rational conjecture, the Plea substitutes another conjecture as unsubstantial and visionary as a lawless fancy ever put into shape.

"Our Divine Lord, in instituting the Supper, which was to succeed the Passover, accompanied it with several new, significant actions and circumstances, and with explanatory words; and he might also have added a new hymn at the conclusion. Poole very plausibly conjectures that the discourse and hymns used on this occasion are the words recorded by John in the fourteenth to seventeenth chapter of his gospel. (See Synopsis Criticorum on Matt.) The conjecture is certainly as good as that the hymn used was the 113th to the 118th Psalm. Nay, it is much better; for the connexion of events, the order of narrative in John, and the strain of the thoughts, are such as decidedly to favour the hypothesis." "And then having so fully and affectionately discoursed with his disciples, he turns and addresses to his Father in heaven the sublime and appropriate hymn contained in the seventeenth chapter." "The subject, the style, and the position of the discourse, seem to change the conjecture of Poole almost into a sweet and undoubting conviction." P. 41.

It is one of not a few evidences of the carelessness as to material with which the Plea was constructed, that the author should ascribe this capricious notion, unworthy of the name of "hypothesis," to the venerable and sober-minded Matthew Poole, who never gave it the slightest approbation. It is found in the Synopsis, in an extract taken from the Commentary of Grotius, as is indicated in the margin. The notion, however, did not even in the genial mind of this fanciful commentator grow up to any thing like "a sweet and undoubting conviction." That it has not upon it the semblance of plausibility, the author, and especially his learned coadjutors the Professors, will find by consulting De Moor's Commentary on Mark's Compend of Theology, chap. xxvi. 8, where, in its refutation, several reasons are given, which will suggest themselves to any thoughtful Bible reader. 1st. Our Lord, in this address to the Father, said again and again, "*I pray*;" thereby teaching that in its nature and form it was true and proper prayer, and not the utterance of a hymn. 2d. This was a part and sample of his entire intercession, which is every where represented to be real prayer and supplication—"I will pray the Father." 3d. In the prayer recorded by John, Jesus alone prayed, his voice only was heard; but the disciples sang with him the hymns mentioned by Matthew. The prayer and the hymn are not, therefore, identical. 4th. There are affirmations and petitions in this prayer which are peculiar to Christ in his priesthood, and in which no other can associate and participate with him. 5th. If Jesus on that occasion had made and sung a new hymn, the evangelists would no doubt have plainly recorded the fact. 6th. If the supposed hymn had been formed at the time, the disciples could not have well followed him in reciting it.

As the Plea has used this insnaring extract by piece-meal, I may as well here insert the whole of it, adding from Grotius the sentence

that precedes it. "Men of learning think that the hymns sung by Christ were those which used to be sung at the Passover, such as Ps. 114, and following. But as Christ added to the ancient thanksgiving a new one suited to his institution, so also it is credible that he may have done with the hymn, and perhaps Christ spake those things which we read (John 17th) in the form of a hymn; for the Hebrews were wont, on special occasions, to utter hymns extemporaneously, without being restricted to poetic rule or measure. Such were the songs of Deborah, Anna, Zecharias, Mary, of the Jews, 1 Mac. iv. 24, 2 Mac. x. 38; and that hymn of the Christians, which is extant in Acts vi. 24. I doubt not but this mode of singing is especially commended by the apostle, Eph. v. 19, Col. iii. 14. This custom remained a long time in the ancient church. Tertul.: *Post manulem aquam et lumina, &c.* Pliny also mentions the songs which were addressed to Christ and the Toletan Council, 4 Con. 12, and a writer against Urtemon, mentioned by Eusebius."

Here we have in its native nut shell the precious kernel which the Plea has economically broken into parts, and then incruited the choice fragments in saccharine words of diverse colours to suit the taste of those to whom the old Psalms are distasteful. The author of the Plea has in this work improved upon Grotius, and outstripped him exceedingly. Grotius made a little out of nothing, and he did his best; but the Plea works up that little into a good deal. What was with Grotius a perhaps, a feeble "forte," becomes in the kind-hearted and credulous Plea "almost a sweet and doubting conviction." Grotius aimed to prove that extemporaneous hymns were sung in the primitive church; the Plea, however, regarding this imitation as too "exclusively," undertakes to prove by the same testimony that hymns, all carefully prepared beforehand, should now be sung, after the example of the primitive church. What in the conjecturings of Grotius, was a "pro re nata" effort, a mode of hymning practised under circumstances special at the time, becomes under the plastic power of the Plea, "*the custom,*" stated and ordinary, "of singing in the church;" that is, it was the custom in the ancient church to sing hymns without premeditation, as persons might be suddenly moved by impulse. Grotius seems to acknowledge that Christ and his disciples did sing the Psalms usually sung at the Passover, and he only suggests that a new hymn might have been superadded to them, not substituted in their room, and that the new hymn might perhaps be contained in John xvii. The Plea discards the idea that the Hallel was sung at all. That it was customary for the Hebrews, under the spur of excitement, to sing in worship extemporaneous hymns in extemporaneous tunes, and that too, without regard to metrical arrangement or to the laws of Hebrew versification, is very doubtful. There are no instances of it in the New Testament. Still this was the opinion of Grotius. The Plea takes it for granted that what might have been done on special occasions in Hebrew, can be done at any time with ease in English. "It is just as easy for a Christian, who is intelligent and devout, to make a hymn, as it is to make a prayer." P. 131. I would be constrained to doubt the intelligence of any man or woman who might believe this in the understanding of what is ordinarily meant by a hymn. But it seems that understanding is erroneous. "It is not necessary to a hymn that it should be in rhyme,

or in any regular metre, or suited to any particular tune. Is there one in the Assembly's collection of hymns of this kind, or one that was composed off-hand? Or was that collection made from erroneous notions of what a hymn is? According to the above negative definition of a hymn, almost any thing, however prosy, may be so called, as appears from the subjoined illustration, drawn from private Christian practice. "Some Christians have been accustomed in their private devotions to express their feelings, their desires, and their praises, in a musical tone of voice, without any regard to rhyme, time, or measure. So persons may, in public, pray in a musical tone." There are two other facts which illustrate the point equally well. Some ministers have been accustomed to preach long sermons, free of all doctrinal error, in a tone of voice very musical and sonorous, in a variegated sing-song tone, high and low, quick and slow, without any regard to rhyme, time, or measure. But an Associate Reformed minister even might do this with consistency. I might do this every Sabbath during the year; but for my so doing, could any one, without extravagance and laughable injustice, charge it upon me that I was in the habit of singing hymns?

Another case of singing, it is said, is recorded in Acts iv. 24. So said Grotius, and so says the Plea. There is not the least evidence that this is a hymn. No reason is given for the opinion that it was sung. It seems to be insinuated in the Plea that the alleged hymn was distinct from, and anterior to the prayer. "For it is said, *after* they had finished their hymn, 'And when they had prayed,' the place was shaken." If such an idea was in the mind of the author, he outdoes Grotius; for he only conjectures that the prayer is a hymn. To the arbitrary allegation that it is a hymn, we place in opposition the absence of all evidence of its being such, and of its having been sung, the prayer itself, and the declaration, "And when they had prayed," which plainly refers to the preceding address to God, and explains its formal and true nature.

"A third case, and perhaps the most unequivocal of all, is the ascription of praise to Christ on his public entry into Jerusalem. It is recorded in Matt. xxi. 9—15." In the shouts of the multitude on this occasion, it was their design to apply to him the shouts usual at the inauguration of their kings, and especially at the Feast of Tabernacles. Some cried "Hosanna;" others, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." This was taken from Ps. cxviii. 24, 25. The shouts of the children in the temple were but the repetition of the shouts without. It excites no common surprise that the author should affirm of their acclamation of praise to Jesus as the son of David, that "the language of the children is not all in the words of any psalm." The whole of it is taken from the first clause in the 25th verse of the above psalm. "The whole phrase (Hosheah nah,) 'Save, we beseech,' became a standing formula of supplication with reference to great public interest or undertakings, and re-appears in the New-Testament under the form Hosanna, Matt. xxi. 9, where we find it in the acclamations of the multitude, combined with other expressions from the same psalm, which, as we have seen, they were accustomed to sing at their great festivals." See Alexander's Notes on this Psalm.

"Let us now proceed to the other New-Testament songs of praise

in which the words used are recorded. The songs of Mary, of Zacharias, and of Elizabeth, in Luke, 1st chapter, are of this class. Well, then, here we have in the New-Testament songs of praise; a 'collection' of them, indeed; three in one chapter." P. 42.

This has been often enough asserted before to prove its truth, if positive assertion, even with the aid of supercilious self-confidence, could prove any thing. There is nothing in the narration given by the evangelist to show that these are songs, or that they were sung. Elizabeth "*spake*" with a loud voice, and "*said*" what she said in an address to Mary, not to God. What Mary "*said*" she said in reply. Zacharias praised God at the circumcision of his son, when his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed. In what form he gave praise we are not told; but we are informed that he and his wife walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; and as psalm-singing was an ordinance of God under the Old Testament, we have no right to suppose that on this occasion he departed from it. It is recorded that subsequently to this he uttered the prophecy, and in preparation for this duty was filled with the Holy Ghost. He "*prophesied, saying,*" not singing. Whosoever, therefore, says that these were songs, is wise above what is written, and says it of his own spirit. When David "*spake*" the eighteenth Psalm, we are made acquainted with the character of what he spake, in its being added, "*The words of this song;*" but it does not follow, because David at first spake this song, that therefore what another prophet spake is a song, or was sung. If the use of the word "*Blessed*" in an address, renders it a hymn of praise, then the thanksgiving at the Supper was a hymn, Mark xiv. 22; Daniel ii. 19; Eph. i. 3; 1 Pet. i. 3, and others are hymns. According to such unrestricted license of interpretation, the Plea need be in no straits to find poems in the New Testament. This answer to this part of the Plea is in itself sufficient to satisfy those who for the guidance of their faith look to the Word of God in its simplicity, and not to the assertions and sophistications of men. It is necessary, however, to go into a more extended and minute examination of the evangelical record, to satisfy, as I hope it will, the talented author and misguided followers of this Plea, that they should, in reference to the Word of God, renounce this error, re-affirmed, in a manner not commendable, in the following statement:—

"It is further alleged by some of the more extravagant advocates of the restrictive system that these are not praises. The songs of Zacharias, and of Elizabeth, and of Mary, not praises? They certainly have very much the appearance of them. If these are not praises, it is hard to find any thing that is. Now, when a person asserts that these are not praises, he seems to me to evince great confidence in the easy faith of those whom he addresses, or small knowledge of the subject of which he speaks." P. 46. Heeding only the question, Are these songs of praise directed to God in worship? I answer again peremptorily, they are not.

With respects to the words of Elizabeth and Mary, I make this positive denial, not merely in defence of the truth on the subject of psalmody, but also in defence of the gospel and worship of God in another more important respect. There is certainly no evidence on the face of the narrative—and none has been pointed out—that the ad-

dress of Elizabeth to Mary, or the reply of Mary to Elizabeth, is in its form a song of praise, or in its nature an act of worship offered to God. The words of Elizabeth are a congratulatory salutation addressed to Mary with a loud voice, and with an excited, joyful heart. It will not be asserted by any one not ready to sing the Ave Marias of the Roman Rosary, that the address of the angel to Mary was *religious*, either prayer or praise. But why may it not be said of this as well as of the others? It can, in truth, and with reason, be said of neither of them. The first salutation by the angel closed with the words with which Elizabeth, prompted by the Spirit, began hers—"Blessed art thou among women." I ask the sagacious author of the Plea, How can the same words, addressed to the same person, be worship in the *one* case, and not in the *other*? The poetical style of the composition, or the fervid emotions of the speaker, indicate nothing of this kind in either case that the words of the angel are prayer, or the words of Elizabeth praise. If Mary herself had understood that the language which pronounced her blessed was employed in a religious sense, and in religious service, and that Elizabeth in addressing her offered religious praise to God, then her own words must have been in accordance with that understanding; and it must have been in prophetic anticipation of the high estate to which she is exalted as "our Lady" in the Ave Marias of antichristian superstition, that she sung in her alleged song of praise, "For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." But, surely, the humble Mary never expected to be the object or partaker of praise in songs of praise sung, or chanted, or recited in the worship of God. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen."

The author of the Plea, with others before him, and many others besides him, unwarrantably convert the prophecy uttered by Zacharias into a song of praise, by making it identical and contemporary with the praises with which he praised God as soon as he recovered his speech. The advocate of hymns argues that Zacharias praised God, and that subsequently we have the very words in which that praise was offered, which are not the words of any psalm, and that therefore we are not restricted to the Psalms. If the interpretation were in harmony with all the recorded circumstances of the case, still the alleged fact would be entirely reconcilable with the doctrine in favour of the exclusive use of the Psalms. For the ordinance establishing the inspired Psalter is for man, as the Sabbath is ordained for man. God, being its Lord, can, if he see fit, dispense with it: but his procedure, in such cases, furnishes no precedent or example for us. What he enabled Zacharias by plenary inspiration to do, was more his act than it was that of Zacharias. Besides, if Zacharias had thus uttered the prophecy in the form of a song, and as an act of praise, wholly by the aid and impulse of supernatural inspiration, his act would not warrant another man, of his own accord and in his natural ability, to indite a hymn, any more than it would warrant him to indite a prophecy. But I need not take this ground; for the alleged fact that the act of prophesying and the act of praising are the same and simultaneous, is not admissible. There are insuperable objections to it.

1. It violates the order of the narrative, which first states that when Zacharias had regained his speech he praised God; then narrates

the influence which the occurrences at the circumcision had on those present, and on all round in the region who in the mean time had become acquainted with these things; and at last mentions, with respect to the child, that the hand of God was with him. All contained in these two verses is narrated before any mention is made of the prophecy. Now, is there any ground for representing that what is related as taking place *before* the prophecy, actually took place *afterwards*? Such a transposition would place these two intervening verses towards the end of the chapter, and remove the prophecy into juxtaposition with the sixty-fourth verse. We assuredly are not at liberty, and are under no necessity so to understand the inspired narrative, or so to change its order and tenor. Had the praise and the prophecy been the same, it would have so appeared on the record.

2. The acts are described as distinct and different. With respect to the first it is simply recorded, "And his tongue was loosed, and he spake and praised God." But with respect to the latter, "And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying." The former was an ordinary act of grateful worship; the latter an extraordinary service, for which he was specially fitted by the Holy Ghost.

3. According to the interpretation which makes these two distinct and separate acts one and the same, Zacharias is made to overlook in his praise the signal favours and special interpositions of God's goodness and power to him and his family. This is an unseemly representation. The immediate connexion would seem to intimate that the divine blessings which rendered that sacramental occasion in his family circle so joyous and memorable, were not forgotten in his praises. He must have been familiar with the Psalms, which he had used from his youth in public and family worship; and after his long, involuntary dumbness, would not some psalm come into his memory appropriate to his condition, and to God's wonderful dealings with him?

4. There is another weighty objection to the interpretation that makes the praise and the prophecy identical. The neighbours and kindred of the family who were present at the circumcision, heard and saw there what filled them with wonder. Their curiosity would prompt them to collect all the information they could respecting the child; and as the matter was of great interest to themselves, and extraordinary in its aspects, it was natural that they should speak of these things to others, so that they became a subject of common conversation and earnest inquiry to many. "And all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea." Still there was a deep mystery about the child, which none could penetrate. With all the knowledge which every one could give or get, they could do little more than conjecture that he was born for some great purpose. All they heard they laid up in their hearts in suspense and expectation, saying, "What manner of child shall this be?" They did not know. Now, if Zacharias the priest had uttered this prophecy in the hearing of those who were present when his tongue was loosed, and heard him when he spake and praised God, would they not have paid particular attention to it, and have published this also abroad? Could any one, after hearing that prophecy, or hearing correctly of it, have been in any doubt or suspense of mind as to what manner of

child that was to be when his father expressly made known by prophecy the purpose for which he was born? "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way," &c. If this had been published in their hearing, they would have remembered it, and pondered it, and talked of it, and been at no loss in deciding what the office and work of John were to be. Seeing that they who laid up in their hearts all the sayings that were noised abroad concerning the priest's son were still uninformed as to the nature of his mission, and the purpose for which he was designed, we must conclude that according to the tenor of the narrative, the prophecy was not spoken by his father at the circumcision, but at some subsequent period. When Zacharias says, "Thou, child," we are not to understand it as though it were addressed to the unconscious new-born babe. The word is afterward applied to him growing up in his youth, "And the child grew." It is often applied to infants, but also to young persons, male or female, who have come to years of understanding. It is translated "damsel," Mark v. 40, 41, and is there applied to a girl twelve years old. The prophecy was probably spoken when John had arrived at sufficient years and maturity of mind to understand fully what was said to him and of him, and this may have been the first message sent to the sanctified youth to apprise him of the high office in which he was to be employed as the forerunner of the Messiah.

Had the beloved author of this Plea thoroughly investigated the subject of psalmody—had he taken time, and directed his mind to the work with the powers of discernment and discrimination which he is known to possess, he would have perceived, without any help from this review, that there is no ground to sustain his confident averment that there are songs of praise in the New Testament. I may be over-persuaded and too sanguine, but I cannot but hope that he will see his error; and if he does, I have so much confidence in the integrity of his heart, I know he will retract it. It is my earnest desire to convince the judgment of those who may read these pages; and so far as I bring out the truth, I pray God to bless it, so that my labour may not be in vain in the Lord.

It is a consideration of great weight, and one bearing directly on the subject, that it is not imposed as a duty on apostles or evangelists, or on the ordinary overseers and rulers of the church, to provide hymns for use in religious worship; and that no promise is given of aid by the Spirit to enable any one to compose them for this purpose. Had there been work of this kind to do, some one would doubtless have been directed to do it, with a promise of grace sufficient for the undertaking. The absence of such command and promise in the New Testament indicates that this necessary work was done already, and need not be done again; and done so well, that it neither requires nor admits of addition or amendment. This argument does not have respect to the proper use of songs of praise, but to the original composition of them, which is a matter distinct from their subsequent use. To this the Plea, with unconscious evasion, replies:—

"We have the promise of the Spirit to aid us in worshipping God, and we need it as much in praising as in praying. In both cases we are authorized to use the revelation of the Spirit, all of which is profitable for religious edification. There is a difference not noticed by

our brethren in using this part of their argument, between the aid of the Spirit by plenary inspiration, and his ordinary enlightening and sanctifying influences. Inspiration is not claimed for hymns composed by men, yet the aid of the Spirit may be enjoyed in making and singing them." P. 49.

The Spirit is promised to aid us in every part and mode of worship which God hath prescribed; but not in will worship, nor in services which he does not require us to render. To affirm that we are authorized in singing praise to use the whole Bible, or all revealed truth, modified and transformed into verse as man's discretion or fancy may dictate, is to assume or take for granted the very thing which we deny, and which the Plea has failed to prove. It seems from the last part of the above extract, the author cannot himself avoid the distinction there is between *making* hymns and *singing* them—a distinction which shows that his reply, having respect to the Spirit's aid in singing, is not directed towards the argument he professes to meet, for that argument has sole respect to making hymns. The Spirit is promised to aid in singing the inspired Psalms acceptably; so, also, is his influence promised to aid us in reading the inspired Scriptures profitably: but it does not follow from this that we have liberty, or that we will receive aid, to add more books to the Bible, or more psalms to the Psalter. The difference there is between plenary inspiration and the ordinary influences of the Spirit, is not by any means left unnoticed by those who present the above argument against the claims of uninspired hymns. The Bible Psalms were given by inspiration, without which such psalms could not have been made. It will not be said that plenary inspiration, exercised in the composition of the Psalms and in their embodiment into one book, was unnecessary or superfluous. The Psalms, therefore, in the divine collection, are all the fruit of plenary inspiration; and there is no promise to authorize the church to look for more fruit of that kind, and no promise that the Spirit of Christ will endow any one with the ability necessary to produce them. Herein consists the main strength of this argument adduced to show that God has treasured up in the canonical Psalter all the songs of praise which he designed his church to have or use. They were given by inspiration, and there is no promise of further inspiration to give more. The reply offered in the Plea has in reality nothing to do with the argument. It fails, also, to make out that there is any promise of the ordinary influence of the Spirit to enable a person to compose hymns, or any command to do so. There is, indeed, a command to sing praise, with a promise of being aided in so doing. This, however, is a matter about which there is no dispute.

The reasons before summarily given to prove that psalm-singing is a distinct divine ordinance I have now vindicated, so far as they are impugned in the Plea. In respect to their proving this, the Plea has indeed avoided coming in contact with them, under the pretence that in that aspect of them they look to a point not controverted. The reasons, therefore, comprised in the main argument, may be pronounced sufficient and incontrovertible, so far as they prove that the Psalms should be sung. But it has been my special aim to evince that the main argument, curtailed as it is in the statement of it in the Plea,

is but slightly touched, and not at all weakened, even in the form and direction there given to it in view of its being designed primarily and solely to prove that the Psalms alone should be sung, by the attempted refutation of it. The author of the Plea, after conveniently casting out of sight important parts of the argument, and putting the residue in a shape and position most to his own advantage, has utterly failed to show that there is any lack of point and force in the argument, even in favour of the exclusive use of the Psalms. No reason is given for singing in worship any thing else. I ask not the reader to take my word for this. Let him search and judge for himself, and he will come to the conclusion that it is a confirmed truth there is a divine appointment, not only for singing the inspired Psalms in God's worship, but for singing them exclusively.

There must have been full and express evidence in the Scriptures of such appointment in the considerate judgment of those who first framed, and of those who for years afterwards maintained the standards under which the Presbyterian family was once united. The doctrine which Dr. M'Gill stigmatizes as "a novelty," and which the Plea affirms "has not hitherto been admitted in any Confession," is contained in the Westminster Confession, as follows:—"Singing of psalms, with grace in the heart, is part of the ordinary worship of God." Chap. xxi. In the Form of Church Government, also, it is laid down that—"The ordinances of a particular congregation are prayer, thanksgiving, and singing of psalms." Also in the Directory for the Worship of God:—"It is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly, by singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family." "Every one that can read is to have a psalm-book." This is the doctrine still maintained by those churches which adhere to the old Psalms. Those Presbyterian standards do not expressly or impliedly admit into them the opposite doctrine contended for in the Plea, that it is the duty of Christians to sing in the worship of God psalm imitations, paraphrases, and hymns made by uninspired men.

The General Assembly Church in this country, instead of conforming its service in this department of worship to those venerable standards which it professes to honour, did, on adopting them, alter them, so that they might be made to give a sanction, though partial and equivocal, to a practice which those standards, in their original integrity and strictness, did not allow. The articles to which we refer, with the alterations made in them, are the following:—"The ordinances in a particular church are prayer, singing praises, reading," &c. (Form of Government, chap. vii.) The alteration here substitutes the general term "praises" for the specific term "psalms," and thereby makes vague or void what the original article, unmutilated, plainly expresses and decides. Again:—"It is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms, or hymns." (Directory, chap. iv. *Of the Singing of Psalms.*) In this case the additional words, "or hymns," makes this part of the Directory ambiguous. Does the added word, hymns, signify the same that is meant by "psalms?"—or does it mean something else? If it mean what the Westminster divines meant by psalms, then the supplemental term is unnecessary. But if it mean something in addition to what they meant by the term

“psalms,” then this additional meaning is so much new matter thrust into the original Presbyterian standards, and thrust in where it cannot have place without thrusting old matter out. No one can mistake the design of these alterations. Those who made them would never have made them had they not been fully aware that the original articles are too definite and restrictive to furnish the shade of a covering for the use of any thing else than the Psalms in praising God.

Who, therefore, is justly liable to the charge of departing from the genuine standards of Presbyterianism, and of introducing innovation, and consequent disunion, into the Presbyterian family—those who in practice strictly adhere to the plain and only doctrine of its articles on psalmody, or those who have shown, by their deliberate and formal actings, that they have introduced, with a fixed purpose to perpetuate it in their worship of God, a practice with which those standards cannot be brought into any degree of harmony, without being first essentially altered in their terms and meaning? The godly and able men who framed and first adopted those standards solemnly affirm—“Our care hath been to hold forth such things as are of divine institution in every ordinance.” Singing of psalms they pronounce to be a divine ordinance, and an ordinary part of worship. What they deemed to be of divine institution in this ordinance they held forth in teaching that it is the duty of Christians to praise God by singing psalms in public and private worship. Had they judged it to be consonant to Scripture, and of divine institution, to sing human hymns, in their faithfulness they would have said so.

I know that the negative argument stands ready to present its usual and pliant plea, that these articles in the old formulas “do not exclude or prohibit other songs of praise. My eyes look in vain for the exclusive clause.” The old fathers in the General Assembly, who laid the foundation of the superstructure which the Plea lauds and defends, had too much sagacity to trust the vindication of their practice and consistency to such spurious special pleading. They therefore set themselves to the work of defacing the old formulas by alterations, so as to accommodate them to the change of practice made by the introduction of Watts’ imitations and hymns. Had the secret force of the great negative argument been known in those days, the discovery would have done away with the necessity of those alterations, and saved a good deal of small work. There would have been no need, in revising the ancient Directory, to erase psalm before “books,” to make it read, “The whole congregation should be furnished with books.” Before going into the hollow interior of this argument, I will take the liberty of advising the author to test the strength and propriety of it, and to give it a fair trial, on the following statement in the *Book of Government* in the church of which he is a minister—“The ordinances of a particular church are reading, expounding, and preaching the Word of God,” &c. His eyes will look in vain for the exclusive clause. But is he, therefore, at liberty to take with him into the pulpit, for use there, the word of man, the Mormon fiction, the Alcoran, or Apocrypha, in addition to the Bible, simply because the above article does not expressly exclude or prohibit *other* books? Again: “The ordinary and perpetual officers in the church are pastors, ruling elders, and deacons.” There is no exclusive

or prohibitory clause here. What then? Are there *other* ordinary and perpetual officers in the church, not in the place of, but besides these? There would be no sense in an affirmative answer to this question; yet this is precisely the nature of the argument which undertakes, by mere bold negation, to set at naught all proof, and to refute all argument, derived from the divine appointment of the Psalms for use in religious worship, that they only and exclusively should be used for that purpose. The argument is thus presented:—

“The Presbyterian admits all the *facts* included in the main argument for the exclusive use of the one hundred and fifty Psalms; he admits that they were given to be sung by the people of God; that they were collected into a book by themselves for the use of the church; and he might even admit that they were designed to be sung to the end of the world, and yet consistently use hymns and paraphrases, just as he does, in connexion with them; for his opponent has done nothing towards proving that the Psalms *alone* are to be sung. This is his conclusion, I know; but between his premises, admitted by the friend of hymns, and this conclusion, there is a very wide chasm, that it requires great logical athleticness to leap over.” P. 33.

Here you again have the deflatory negative argument for the defence of hymns and paraphrases, in all its characteristic versatility, bravado, and weakness. I will reply to it in a few general remarks.

1. This negative argument does not invalidate the ordinance of psalm-singing. Those who conform to and abide in that ordinance have proof satisfactory to them, and collected from Scripture, that it is of divine appointment. They do not take this for granted. They do not sing psalms in worship without being able to give a better reason for it than fashion, example, expediency, or tradition. They certainly do not continue to use them merely because an opponent has not proved that they should not sing them. They have divine authority for singing psalms, and therefore they sing them. They thus occupy ground which the negative argument cannot disturb; but which it professes to approve, although it covertly aims to undermine it.

[To be continued.]

THE GOSPEL THE TRUE AND ONLY REFORMER OF MANKIND.

We take the liberty of presenting in this and our next number, the greater part of an Introduction from the pen of Rev. J. B. Dales, to a work entitled “Lectures on Odd-Fellowship,” the second edition of which has just been published. We have omitted that portion of the Introduction which speaks of the book. What we here present discusses an important truth, and will doubtless be read with interest.

That, from some cause, every thing in the individual and the mass of our race is in some way out of order, and tends in the natural state of things to confusion and misery, is felt, if not acknowledged, by almost all. And with equal certainty it is generally felt that there must be some grand specific by whose use this confusion may be made to give place to order, this misery be exchanged for general comfort, and the very earth itself be reformed from being a continued Aceldama, or “field of blood,” to become another Paradise where, disrobed of corruption and its attending ills, man shall universally bask

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THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST.

(The report of a Committee appointed by the Associate Synod.)

The advent of the Messiah into our world in a state of humiliation was for a long period the great promise of God to the church, and the ground of her faith and hope, in which all other gospel promises centred and on which the fulfilment of them depended. That great promise is now fulfilled, and the fulfilment is thankfully acknowledged and religiously professed by all who are justly called Christians. But another leading promise has been given to the church as the ground of her joyful hope—till that hope is consummated in fruition; and that promise is, that Christ shall “appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” And this is the subject intended in this paper. In reference, however, to this great promise, there is a material difference of opinion in the New Testament church, as there was in the Jewish church respecting the first advent. And such differences we may expect on items of unfulfilled prophecy in every age. There are some great outlines of unfulfilled prophecy on which all true believers of divine revelation, in all ages, have been agreed; such as the former promise that the Messiah would come into our world as the Saviour of his church, and the New Testament promise that Christ will come into our world a second time. On many subordinate points connected with such promises a difference of opinion may exist among true believers, which does not jeopard their salvation. Yet, on the other hand, erroneous opinions, even on those subordinate points, may exist, which do endanger the soul, especially when they lead to errors in doctrine, as some opinions of the Jews respecting the first advent did. And any of those errors, though held by persons in a state of grace, may still do serious injury to their souls, to the cause of Christ, and to the church as a body. The second advent of Christ, then, so prominently exhibited in Holy Scripture as the hope and joy of the church, and as a gospel stimulant to faith and a godly life, demands an humble, prayerful, and diligent consideration.

It is not to be expected that on this subject, which has been agitated in the church less or more for nearly two thousand years, any thing new can be advanced; but the evidence in favour of the position which we adopt may be condensed and made more accessible to the people than it is as presented in the numerous volumes written on the subject. For this reason, we suppose, our synod appointed a committee to present this subject to the people, and, perhaps, that the synod might unite in an expression of a judgment on the question.

The name millenium signifies a *thousand years*; and is taken from Rev. xx. 2—6, where that peculiarly prosperous state of the church, so often, and so many ways predicted and promised in the scriptures at large, is described as a thousand years in which Satan is bound and the martyrs live and reign with Christ. And those who hold that Christ's second advent will be at the beginning of the millenium, that he will then come into our world and reign in glory, personally

REVIEW OF M'LAREN ON PSALMODY.

[Continued from page 579.]

2. The great fault which the negative argument in favour of hymns finds with the positive argument in favour of psalms is, that the latter is partial, one-sided, and exclusive, in proving too much for the Psalms, and nothing for hymns. I do not see how we can help this. We do not make the proof. We only find it where it grows, hanging in clusters, on the vine of Revelation. We cannot press out of it more than is in it. It proves all it was made to prove, and that is enough. If any one think that he can increase the proof for hymns, and diminish that for Psalms, he can try it. Who hinders? The oracles of God are free and open to him. It also plainly devolves on those who sing hymns and paraphrases to show, if they can, from Scripture, that they ought to do so. If they find no authority for it in God's Word, they should own it and alter their ways. When they are unable to prove that uninspired hymns and paraphrases should be sung, they behave themselves unseemly under these circumstances to persist in using them, under the poor subterfuge that an opponent has not yet proved to their satisfaction that they should not be sung. They demand of us as the fixed and ultimate condition of their repentance, not only that we prove a negative, but prove a direct negative in the very matter concerning which they themselves have tried and openly failed to prove a positive. It is strange to meet this demand in a work that pretends to possess superior logical fairness and accuracy.

3. There is nothing in the ordinance that designates the psalms for use in divine worship, from which it can by just and necessary consequence be deduced that any thing else, at man's discretion, may be sung. It would be subversive of the nature of a divine ordinance, or of any ordinance, to provide for its own infraction and neglect. A command to do an act virtually forbids its omission, and also the doing of any thing else or different, under the circumstances, in the relation, and for the end contemplated in the command. What God commands is always our duty.

4. The appointment of God, which imposes on all Christians the duty of praising him by singing psalms together publicly in the congregation, and privately in the family, does not leave the question of restriction undetermined; for all our moral obligations, and all acceptable worship, are not only founded on, but limited by the revealed will and express authority of God. When a command is enjoined, or an ordinance is appointed, it is our duty to conform to it. We have no more liberty to go beyond its limits than we have to stop short of them. "Ye shall not add to the word that I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you," Deut. iv. 2. "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it," xii. 32. There being a divine appointment to sing the Psalms, and no joint or similar appointment to sing any thing else, it follows of necessity that the existing appointment creates an obligation to sing them only and exclusively. I cannot, then, under these circumstances, sing in worship other songs in addition to or beside the Psalms, without adding to a command of God. How

can I do this at the urgent solicitation of the Plea, without falling into the sin of the disobedient prophet, and into a state of mind unprepared to hear without a tingling emphasis in the conscience, "Who hath required this at your hand?"

If the long demanded Scripture warrant could be produced for singing other songs, then such other songs, whatever they might be, would occupy a place of equality with the Psalms; and different as the former might be in nature and kind from the latter, there would be no difference between them as to authority and use in offering praise. In this case there would be no more propriety in saying that the other songs were to be sung in addition to the Psalms, than in saying that the Psalms were to be sung in addition to them, neither would there be any ground for saying that either was sung in the room of the other.

5. In view of there being a divine ordinance to sing the Psalms, and only a human ordinance to sing paraphrases, hymns, and psalm imitations, in every case in which the latter are sung in divine worship there is a *substitution of them* in the room of the Psalms. This is a grievous corruption of the worship of God not to be thought of or spoken of with levity; for there is in it a twofold wrong against God, as it not only takes away from his command, but also adds to it. It takes away and lays aside what he requires, and substitutes in its room what he does not require. We certainly have no more right to dispense with or suspend a divine command, by omitting what it enjoins, or by doing in its stead something else, than we have to be independent of God's law at our own option and convenience. The command to the Hebrews to take a lamb from the sheep or goats for the Passover, without any appended express prohibition, strictly prohibited them from taking for that sacrifice a bullock or dove, or any other beast or fowl. So when we are enjoined to sing the Psalms in worship, we violate that command whenever we in act substitute any thing else in their room; for, since this command is positive and express as to the Psalms, it is necessarily restrictive to them.

6. Were we able to produce from the sacred Scriptures a hundred passages which commanded us, in the plainest terms, to sing in praise the psalms of the inspired Psalter, even that accumulated positive testimony would not stop the mouth of this negative argument. In its vaunting, and from its deep emptiness, it would still be able to vociferate, as loudly as ever, its familiar war-cry, bold in sound, but cowardly and skulking in spirit, all those commands simply prove that the Psalms of David should be sung. Who doubts or controverts that? You have yet done nothing towards proving that the Psalms *alone* are to be sung.

The negative argument, that human hymns may be consistently used in connexion with the Psalms, unless they be expressly interdicted, or, which is the same thing, until some prohibitory expression, or "exclusive clause," be found in the Bible, to certify that nothing but the Psalms should be sung, may, by merely changing its direction and outward form, be brought against every ordinance of God to destroy its integrity. It is founded on the assumption that we may do and employ in the worship of God, whatever is not expressly, in so many words, forbidden. Now, the groundwork is false, and the argu-

ment reared upon it altogether false and pernicious, in whatever way it is turned and applied. I will give a few exemplifications of the mischievous uses that may be made of it.

Water is the element used in baptism. But a person with the negative argument in his mouth might plead, The command does not exclude or forbid the use of other liquids, for instance, wine or milk; and, "therefore, the prevailing belief that does so, is astray from" the Bible, and unsupported by it. So another may argue with respect to the Lord's Supper, that any thing capable of being eaten or drank may be used in this sacrament in connexion with bread and wine, on the ground of there being no exclusive clause in the words of institution to show that bread and wine are to be used to the exclusion of all else.

The same trains and stress of negative reasoning, urged with so imagined effectiveness in favour of human hymns, would open an avenue, or rather defend an avenue already opened, for the introduction of any amount of error and corruption into the church and worship of God. "Error here has been one of the most fruitful sources of corruption, and an inlet to all the rabble of the antichristian hierarchy." It would subvert the fundamental principle of true Christianity that the written Word of God is the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice. Popery does not claim in behalf of its traditions the substitution of them in the room of the Scriptures, but the annexation of them to Scripture, as of equal authority for use, and equal value for good, among men. Bellarmine held "that Scripture, although not written especially to be the rule of faith, yet is a rule of faith, not total, but partial; for the whole rule of faith is the Word of God, or the revelation of God made to the church, which is divided into two parts, Scripture and tradition." The opinion advocated in the Plea might be presented in a statement of similar form. The Popish controversialist admits that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and an important part of the rule of faith, as the Plea admits that the Psalms, with a few omissions and modifications here and there, are a divinely appointed part of the psalmody of the church. If the sturdy Papist, protesting against Protestant exclusiveness, and perplexed under the conscious want of all positive proof fit for his purpose, should demand, Where is the exclusive clause or express prohibition that condemns or excludes apostolical traditions from being a part of the rule of faith, would the demand be less forcible, less argumentative, or less scriptural in behalf of human traditions, than it is in the Plea in favour of human hymns?

Try this negative argument on the Apocrypha, and see if it would not find for them admission to a place alongside of the books in the canonical Bible, in the same way that it seeks to admit human hymns to a place beside the Psalms in the canonical Psalter. The Bible is a collection of sacred books given to be an infallible and sufficient rule to guide men in faith and practice. The book of the Psalms is not only a component part of the rule of faith, but it is also a collection of sacred songs ordained by God to be sung in his worship by the church. For this twofold end and use the book was made. In the former respect it was given for a general end, for which it is perfectly fitted in common with the rest of the Scriptures. In the latter re-

spect it is given, and is perfectly fitted and sufficient for a special end as a necessary help in the performance of an ordinary part of worship. It is not claimed for the hymns of men that they are entitled to a place beside the Psalms as a part of the rule of faith, as it is claimed for apocryphal books that they are of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures. Herein the two claims differ, but it is only in appearance in relation to the special end for which the Psalms were given. The advocate of the Apocrypha invests them with the character of inspiration to elevate them to a level with the accepted Scriptures. The advocate of hymns makes the inspiration of the Psalms a matter of indifference, or not essential, in regard to their being acceptably sung in religious worship; for in his view, so far as authority and fitness for praise are concerned, there is no difference between inspired and uninspired compositions; so that virtually the Psalms, as such, are divested of their inspiration. In respect to being sung, the 151st Psalm in the Septuagint version has as good a claim as the genuine Psalms, and is not more apocryphal in that respect than Watts' hymns in their being made a part of a church's Psalter. The degradation of the Psalms to a level with human hymns, if not theoretically avowed, is practically effected and perpetrated in the treatment they receive, and in the place they now occupy in the General Assembly Church. In the psalmody authorized in that church they have what they call "Psalms." But whose psalms are they? They are not a metrical translation of the inspired Psalms. The author of them designated them Imitations of the Psalms. He did not pretend to have made a version. They are nothing but loose paraphrases of such psalms and parts of psalms as he chose to imitate, modify, and transform. By this process the Psalms are divested of their inspiration, and in all that remains of them by authority in the psalmody of the General Assembly they are lowered to a common level with the hymns of Watts, or of any other lyrical poet. The principle defended in the Plea leads to this; for it is claimed for uninspired hymns and paraphrases, that they should be included as a part of the Psalter divinely appointed for the church, in connexion with, and in addition to the Psalms, to be used as substitutes for them, or as associates with them, not as inferiors, but as equals. This claim is set up with the admission that the Psalms, as a part of the rule of faith, were given by inspiration, were given to be sung by the people of God, that the collection of them into one book by themselves was made by divine direction. A Presbyterian may admit these facts, which, with others equally undeniable, are comprised in the main argument for the Psalms,—he might even admit that they were given to be sung to the end of the world,—yea, "a Presbyterian" might, on the generous liberality of his concessions, admit what his own Confession of Faith teaches, that singing psalms is an ordinary part of the worship of God; yet, with this admission on his lips, and in the absence of all Scriptural warrant to justify him, he may consistently use hymns and paraphrases, just as he does, on the plea that his opponent has done nothing towards proving that they should not be sung, or that the Psalms *alone* are to be sung. A Romish controversialist may follow in the same beaten track of negative argumentation with the Apocrypha in his hand. He will admit that our sacred

books are inspired—that they are the Word of God—that they were admitted into the canon by divine direction—that they were given to be a rule of faith, so far as they go, not total, but partial, and that they were given to be used to the end of the world,—and yet, he may argue, he may consistently use the Apocrypha as he does, in connexion with the undisputed Scriptures, for his Protestant opponent has done nothing towards proving that those Scriptures *alone* are to be considered the rule of faith. He offers no positive argument to sustain the claims of the Apocrypha. He seems to think he need offer none until it shall have become utterly impossible for him to get one; that is, until his opponent shall have proved a direct negative against them. He might, however, be able to raise up a showy argument of that kind independently of the negative one, on the same ground taken in the Plea, and with like ill success; an argument, too, which it would puzzle the heads of at least one Protestant seminary to answer; for he might appeal to Rom. i. 2, and xvi. 26, and argue from the *omission* of the article before "*holy Scriptures*," in the former place, and before "*prophetical writings*" in the latter, that these expressions were indefinite and unqualified, and of sufficient latitude to include the Apocrypha, and the argument would not be a whit less presumptuous than that in the Plea, or more at variance with sound criticism and the true doctrine of the Greek article. We press this matter no further.

It may seem like cruelty to return again to that fallen positive argument; but argumentative fallacy, especially under the polished mail of learning, is always very tenacious of life. It never dies without a struggle. As I am now on the battle-field, soon to leave, it behooves me to make sure work with this fallacious argument, by piercing it through and through, and before the multitude of its lovers, that they may say, as they mourn over it, "Alas! it is dead." Not that I care to make them sorrowful for its death and their loss thereby, for that is a selfish sorrow that works no good; but I would have them grieve after a godly sort for the injury they have done by it to a good and holy ordinance of God. Neither their reputation nor mine is of any account, in comparison with the interests of God's glory in his own righteous ordinances. We shall soon pass away. Our tears will dry up as the morning dew, and all our glory here shall fade as the flower. In mockery of all our longings, in contempt of all our efforts, we shall soon be forgotten among men, and shall cease to be the objects of praise or blame, the active agents of good or evil on the earth. But the ordinances of God are to all generations. One of these ordinances I have endeavoured to defend and vindicate against an assault upon it tending to impair its credit, and to unsettle its usefulness, if not designed to effect its entire overthrow in what appears to be its last resort. I believe the author of this work and his friendly associates are good men, but the business in which they have leagued is bad. It is a noble aim to aim at doing good, and at gaining an influence over the minds of our fellow-men, when that influence is gained by means of the truth; but it cannot be a pleasant reflection to the heart of a godly man that he has, to any extent, influenced the opinions and conduct of his fellow-men, especially in respect to any part of the worship of God, by the dissemination of error in doctrine or error in

argument. It is painful to me to be constrained to express my conviction that all the influence this Plea has gained, or may gain, is gained by error in doctrine and error in argument; therefore I feel at liberty, as God gives me ability, to withstand and rebuke it. Peace or union effected by such means will never do good. It may promote denominational aggrandizement, and gratify overreaching sectarian pride, but not advance the kingdom of Christ, where peace and truth walk together agreed. So, then, I cannot say, "A Confederacy" unto all them unto whom thou hast said, "A Confederacy."

I have now worked my way forward through the book to its beginning, to the aggressive movement which the negative argument makes to get near enough to knock its hard head against "our own version." After stating, in his own way, "the argument from divine appointment in favour of the Psalms, and its sufficiency, in its being sound, to establish and maintain the doctrine" it sets forth, the author adds, "I propose to dismiss all others from the arena, and to fight neither with small nor great, but only with the king of arguments; or rather, as a herald, not as a combatant myself, I will examine the quality of this champion knight."

This is a strange avowal to issue from the opening lips of a professed peace-maker; yet it is candid, even to excess, in severity of personal reflection. I would not like to say any thing of the kind. Still, I must admit that the Plea has done unintentional justice to its author as a polemic, in making him as one of the two and thirty captains who did the bidding of the Syrian king in the strife at Ramoth Gilead, where a true prophet of God, in vision, "saw all Israel scattered on the mountains as sheep having no shepherd." 1 Kings xxii. 17, 21. There is too much sad truth and propriety in the allusion for me to take any pleasure in viewing or reviewing it; and its truth was not concealed, nor was the representation improved, by the sudden outward transformation of the militant captain into a reconnoitering herald, differing little from an awkward spy. This is all I have to say of this caricature, and others not far off. The fondness for them shown in the Plea is a polemical foible that can do little good or harm. I will now pass from the close of the second to the commencement of the third chapter—from the plan of battle against "the main argument," to its incipient execution.

"First, let us examine the above main argument in its application to a particular version of the Psalms of David. We might admit the obligation to use the Bible Psalms alone in the worship of God, and yet consistently refuse to be confined to a particular version of them." P. 19. I would have been pleased had the author given some reason for the right here claimed, or had stated the moral grounds on which persons under obligations to sing the Psalms may, at their own option, refuse to be confined to any particular version of them. But, whatever ground there may have been, in the judgment of the author, for the opinion here dogmatically propounded, he has kept it in the secret places of his thoughts. As the matter itself is of great practical importance, and as the opinion of the author respecting it is the basis of the throne of judgment, from which he reviews and reverses certain judicial proceedings that involved the question about versions, it merits, as it shall receive, more than a cursory notice. What I

deem erroneous, and propose to refute, is the general statement 'that we may refuse to be confined to a particular version of the Psalms.' Have we an abstract moral right to choose or refuse, to use or disuse a version, just as we please? This question, as answered affirmatively in the Plea, does not—1. Concern the comparative merits of respective versions—of this particular version, or of that. For it is affirmed irrespectively of any thing pertaining to a particular version, that we may refuse to be confined to it. 2. The obligation to sing the Psalms *alone* has no special bearing on this question, so as to affect its merits or limits. The admission, in the above extract, of such an obligation, is a verbal superfluity. If there be a specific obligation to sing the inspired Psalms—whether there be or be not an obligation to sing any thing else—then there is room and occasion for the question, Can we refuse to be confined to a particular version of them? The Plea affirms that we—that is, all persons, not only ministers, but all worshippers, individually and collectively, may refuse to be thus restricted. This is claimed to be a privilege belonging to all in the church indiscriminately. Every person may refuse to be confined to any particular version—to one more than to another—without committing any sin; and, of course, every one may choose, if he be so disposed, to be confined to a particular version, without fulfilling any duty. This is a fair statement, if my understanding be correct, of the opinion expressed, without any qualification, in the Plea. Here, then, is a department of human conduct—and that, too, in immediate connexion with religious worship—in which there is no law, no moral obligation, no accountability, no conscience—but, where every one is left to his own independent judgment and individual discretion. Here is a spot in the kingdom of God, where men may say in his name, and under the light of his favour, and with songs of praise on their lips, "Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?" If this is unpromising and repulsive in theory, how will it look and work when carried out to its legitimate extent in practice? The minister, the ensample to the flock, refuses to be confined to any particular version; he is a law unto himself in that matter. As to the people, by his teaching and example, they also are a law, each one to himself; and every one of them may refuse to be confined to a particular version. Every one thus asserting and using his privilege, how can they worship together in unity? It may be said that this supposes an extreme case, but the principle of itself runs directly into this extremity; and when it stops short of this—when the practice correspondent to this principle is limited to ministers, it produces some of the bad confusion which the same course produced among ministers and people in their church assemblies at Corinth, where "every one had a psalm." The rule which the apostle applied in that memorable instance is still in force—"Let all things be done to edifying—be done decently, and in order." This apostolic rule was not local, conventional, or municipal; but moral, universal, and perpetual. It is fitted to prevent and correct all similar disorder, and virtually interdicts whatever may give rise to it. It consequently forbids the giving of such occasion for disorder as must be given if every one in the church assumes the right of refusing to be confined to a particular version of the Psalms. God is the God of order. He does not by any ordinance create or tolerate

what is detrimental to the edification of his church, or favour any principle or course of conduct, on the part of ministers or people, which tends to produce disorder.

This alleged indifference, in point of duty, as to what version we may use in the worship of God, must be put into the list of pleadings which the Plea has uttered without evidence of their truth. In testing it, to evince its unsoundness, by its natural and necessary consequences, when acted upon, we need not restrict ourselves within the limits which the Plea has drawn around it by the cautious admission he makes as to the use of psalms "alone." If the principle is right, safe, and scriptural within those limits, it is so outside of them, and without respect to them, even to the full extent of the broad and boundless ground on which, the author maintains, the psalmody of the church should be established. How, then, will it work where the impracticable psalm-imitation of Watts, paraphrases of every kind, and hymns in endless variety, are in vogue? Where it is partially acted upon, let it be fully carried out. Where it is commended to others abroad, let it be practised at home, and see whether it would not be subversive of the residue of order that remains among them in this department of public worship. Let the author's ministerial actings in the church of his adoption accord in this particular with the doctrine he proclaims to the church he has left. He stigmatizes it as a very horrible thing on the face of the earth, that any denomination or judicatory should interdict the exercise of the right which that doctrine claims. Now, let him exercise that right himself, and claim it boldly for others within his denominational bounds. Would he regard himself as pursuing an orderly course, or a course for which his brethren could not rightfully call him to account, should he undertake to disseminate in the churches to which he ministers, the sentiment, that they may refuse to be confined to the "psalms and hymns" authorized and approved by the General Assembly? If this may be done by one congregation, it may be done by another. If it may be done by a number of ministers or members, it may be done by any one of them singly. I do not know of any right of refusal in the case to be justly claimed by ministers, to which private members are not entitled, and one of them as much as another. But how could this part of worship be carried on in any congregation, if each of the members might consistently refuse to be confined to a particular collection? The exercise of such a right by them individually would defeat, so far as they are collectively concerned, the ordinance of praise. A right having this result they, of course, cannot possess. The exercise of it, to its full extent, would only increase and consummate the confusion which now in a measure exists, where the Psalms are displaced or discarded. If the principle has not been found good as already applied, where hymns only or chiefly are used, can it be any better where the Psalms only are sung? The author cannot but see, if he would, and common judgment will decide, that the principle which, without any qualification, he lays down about versions, must, in practice, in its direct and unrestricted operation, be attended with consequences of such a nature as to impeach the soundness of the principle itself, and require limitations to be put upon it which would leave it but little room to work in. No church can sanction it, or to-

lerate the course of conduct to which it leads, without thereby introducing disorder commensurate with the extent to which it is internally pursued.

(To be continued.)

REGULATIONS AND USAGES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

There is no country, next to our own, in which we feel a deeper interest, than in Scotland. In early youth, the midnight lamp burnt down before we could consent to retire from the reading of the trials and struggles of Sir William Wallace, Bruce, and others, who fought for the liberties of their country many centuries ago. We have been not less interested in the ecclesiastical history of this country. Who could read M'Crie's Life of Knox—the trials of the Covenanters in those dreadful times of the persecution—without admiring the Church of Scotland?

It may not be known to all that our own church, as also the purer branches of the Presbyterian family in this country, are formed chiefly after the model of the Scottish Church. We have in our possession an old book, entitled "Collections and Observations concerning the Worship, Discipline, and Government of the Church of Scotland, in four books, by Walter Steuart, of Pardovan, printed in Edinburgh, 1770;" from the reading of which we have gathered some curious and important information. The manner of calling and ordaining ministers two hundred years ago was substantially the same as it is now among us. Indeed it is obvious that the form of a call, as laid down in the Directory of the Associate Reformed Church, was taken from the Directory of the Church of Scotland.

According to acts of Assembly, 1638, 1647, and 1704, no one was allowed to enter the ministry, under twenty-five years of age, except such as the Synod or Assembly should judge fit for the same. For the benefit of ruling elders among us, we would direct their attention to a regulation of the Scotch Assembly, 1648, in which certain bounds of the parish or congregation were assigned to the elders to visit the same every month at least, and to report to the session the scandals and abuses that appeared therein. From this we see that the Scotch idea of the duties of ruling elders was somewhat more stringent than ours in the present day. Where are the elders who make a habit of riding over their congregations to inspect their condition and to report abuses? Who among them are accustomed to visit the sick, to pray and converse with them about divine things?

Deacons were regarded as a perpetual office in the Kirk of Christ. By the 9th chapter of the Policy of the Kirk, it was made their duty "not only to collect and to distribute the ordinary alms, but all the church goods, teinds, &c., and uplift and pay to the ministers their stipends."

They were also authorized to provide the elements, to carry them, and serve the communicants at the Lord's table.

Another custom in Scotland, of which we in this country know nothing practically, and of which we have only heard by the hearing of the ear, was "parochial visitations by the Presbytery." "Parishes

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THE PRESENCE OF THE SAVIOUR IN CHURCH COURTS.

As this number of the Repository, although bearing the date of June, will be in the hands of not a few of the members of the Associate Synod, we have concluded to give a prominent place to the following extract of a discourse delivered by Dr. Duff before the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, on Thursday, May 20th, 1852, on Psalm ii. 6: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." We hope it will be read by every member of Synod.—ED.

"As a trial of faith and patience—a trial of simplicity of end and aim—a trial of temper and disposition—a trial of integrity of motive and rectitude of principle—the Lord has been pleased to devolve upon the rulers of his Church, with only *general* principles in *many* instances to guide them, the settlement and adjustment of endlessly varied questions connected with doctrine, discipline, and government;—the management and arrangement of endlessly diversified affairs connected with her judicial administrative functions—affairs often so intricate and complicated, that ordinary sagacity is overtaxed and baffled in detecting a clew to their adequate unravelment. And, as if in order to provide, by anticipation, for such felt need—in order to relieve, by anticipation, the oppression which, under a sense of difficulty and responsibility, might weigh down the souls of his believing people, and crush their fainting spirits into the impotency of a hopeless paralysis—in order, also, doubtless, to enhance the duty, the privilege, and the profitableness of keeping close to himself, and waiting on him, and enjoying his blessed fellowship and communion,—did not the Saviour graciously promise his special presence to those who earnestly and believingly asked for it? And if this be true in the case of even two or three ordinary disciples, how much more absolutely may the promise be expected to be fulfilled in the case of faithful ministers and office-bearers of his Church,—who are the stars whom he holds in his right hand.

When, then, any number of these meet, as in a church court, whether kirk-session, or presbytery, or synod, or assembly,—meet for the transaction of the business of his own house,—meet for the administration of the affairs of his own kingdom; when, after formally repudiating all exterior or usurping authority,—whether that of antichristian pope, or tyrannical Cæsar,—they solemnly constitute in the name of their only King and Head, and, in accordance with

at hand; yea, much better than if you falsely believe it near. Thus we see that the objection under consideration, which is made to the doctrine that Christ's second coming will not take place till the end of the world, is without any weight, and is even directly in opposition to the apostle's express warnings and instructions on this subject to the Thessalonians. Therefore we may fairly infer that pre-millennialists do not take a correct view of the Scripture references to the coming of Christ as an inducement to watchfulness and hope, since the apostle frequently alludes to it for these purposes, and yet warns the Thessalonians against supposing it near. The pre-millennial theory, and the practical use which they show by their arguments they would make of it, seem to indicate a disposition to build their piety on sensible excitements, and to overlook as weak and insipid the divinely-appointed means of grace employed by Christ in his present mode of dispensation; and, consequently, the feelings which they would excite by their doctrine, and their doctrine itself, the apostle condemns as unfavourable to true godliness, and to the godly comfort of true faith. The coming of Christ, to which the apostle refers so often, is indeed intended to promote Christian watchfulness and hope; but it is calculated to promote these ends, not on the pre-millennial theory that Christ's second coming is near, but on the following views:—

1. That Christ's coming to each one at death, the moment of which is uncertain, settles the state both of believers and of unbelievers as really and as irrevocably as the day of judgment will do. It absolutely puts an end to all happiness, to all hope, and to all the means of grace in the case of the wicked; and an end to all afflictions and dangers of the godly, and commences their unalloyed and eternal happiness in heaven.

2. The second coming of Christ to raise the dead, to re-unite soul and body, to judge the world, to consummate the miseries of the wicked, and the happiness and glory of the believer, is also calculated to excite watchfulness and diligence to be prepared for death and eternity, and to elevate the hopes and desires of the believer, although it be distant even thousands of years; because death determines their respective states, and thenceforth they wait with absolute certainty for the consummation, the one of their miseries, and the other of their happiness, at the second coming of Christ. As all our preparations for the second coming of Christ must be made before death, this view lays before us all the grounds of hope and joy, and all the excitements to holiness and watchfulness that the actual nearness of that great event could do, without those disquieting thoughts which the apostle labours to allay in the Thessalonians. Faith in the word of God is the great means of promoting holiness and watchfulness, without which no external excitements will be of any avail. After the millenium, when men must know the judgment is near, the great apostacy will take place; from which we infer that the consciousness of the nearness of that awful scene will have but little effect in restraining vice and promoting holiness. It is an unquestionable truth, that as they who will not believe the word of God, nor follow holiness through its influence, will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead; so those who will not be induced to watchfulness by the thoughts of death and a future judgment, would not be induced to it by the exciting thoughts of the second advent itself as near.

A. ANDERSON, }
T. BEVERIDGE, } Committee.

REVIEW OF M'LAREN ON PSALMODY.

[Concluded from vol. xii. p. 641.]

If the Psalms are to be sung in religious worship according to a divine ordinance appropriating them to that use, it is as much our duty, and as proper, to have and to adhere to a particular version of them as a Psalter, as it is to have and to adhere to a particular ver-

sion of the entire Bible as the ordained rule of faith. For instance, the English Bible is a particular version, and wherever the English language is spoken, Protestant churches, with very limited and blameable exceptions, have adopted it as the Bible, in marked and merited distinction from all other English versions. It is in the place of the original authenticated Scriptures, of which it is a translation, to all who cannot read them. As to authority for the direction of faith and practice, and as to use for edification, almost all churches are confined to it; that is, they are confined to a particular version. This is as it should be. If a man, unable to read the original Bible, should avow that he would not be confined to this or to any other version in particular, what would he have for a Bible? If he professed to have one at all, he would of course pretend that his Bible was in all the versions, some in one, and some in another, divided and dispersed in parts through them all. But, practically, would he have any at all? The Bible, as God's gift, by inspiration, is one, connected, harmonious, and complete in all its parts. But the Bible which he imagines himself to have who grasps all the versions without being confined to any one in particular, is manifold, disconnected, and discordant. If a co-presbyter of the author should openly publish a refusal to be confined to a particular version of the original Scriptures, and should act in accordance with this refusal in his public ministrations, by using them all indiscriminately, without exclusion or preference of any, would such a procedure be allowed to pass without notice or reproof? I think there would be some stir in his Presbytery. There are "watchful guardians of orthodoxy and order"—and I say this not in sarcastic irony, but sincerely—and the author of this Plea would doubtless be found prominent among them, who would be disposed at once to call the very liberal brother to account, under a sense of their obligation promptly to vindicate and enforce the correct practical doctrine inculcated in their Directory, chap. iii., 2d par., as follows:—"The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament shall be publicly read *from the most approved translation* in the vulgar tongue." The arraigned brother might urge the specious plea, that in all his readings from translations unapproved, he took care to select and read before the congregation only those portions which were truly and honestly translated. But would this defensive confession of his offence be a justification of his offensive acts? Would it show that he had not violated that article which required him to read the Scriptures publicly *from an approved translation*? Would this convenient plea exonerate him, before wise men, from the charge of having broken a rule in the Directory which he was bound to respect?—or would it clear him from the twofold blame—1. Of breaking in upon the integrity and unity of the Sacred Volume, by diffusing it through all versions, and separating it into parts to be found in different and distinct translations? 2. Of being accessory to the corrupting of its purity by using in his public official ministrations, and thus giving his sanction to diverse translations, in which the facts or doctrines, or the original word, are suppressed or misrepresented in various parts by a false rendering? In the course of such a trial the question of indifference as to versions would fairly come up, and the omission would, of course, repudiate such indifference in theory and practice, in agree-

ment with the Directory, which enjoins that the Scriptures be publicly read from an approved translation—that is, from a particular version. Some member might possibly, in the course of discussion, call attention to that speculative indifference, by saying—"I am scarcely prepared to vote for this resolution. We have high personal authority in the church for saying that we may refuse to be confined to a particular version. I am not able, at this moment, to say whether the parts of versions read by the accused brother are good translations or not. But they were good or bad. If the latter, I do not know that we have any right to inquire into the matter. If they were good, then, according to our own theory, no fault has been committed; and surely we would not censure a person for reading a good version of a chapter of the Bible, *from* a translation, which might, in other parts, be too erroneous and defective to allow of their being read as parts of the true Bible." If any one should so deliver himself, it might be for his diversion, but it could not be to the convincing of himself or others, or have weight enough to defeat or defer action in a church court.

The correct practical principle recognised in the Presbyterian Directory, loses none of its propriety or force in its application to the Psalms. As the Scriptures should be read from the most approved translation, which of course is a particular version, so the Psalms should be sung from a particular version, which of course should be the most approved. It being settled or conceded that it is our duty to sing the psalms of the book of Psalms, then, if we could speak the Hebrew tongue, all we would have to do would be to sing them as God gave them. This, however, we cannot do. Still, the ordinance is in force, and remains the same. It is, therefore, our further duty to do whatever is necessary and within our power, to the right observance of the ordinance; for when an ordinance is appointed, the means of its orderly, profitable, and acceptable performance, are also virtually commanded. On this ground there is obligation, as well as warrant, for the church to make a translation of the Psalms in a form to admit of their being sung. As we are commanded to sing the poems contained in the book of Psalms, that book, as a whole, should be faithfully translated into verse, without omitting psalms or parts of psalms, or transposing them by changing their order or connexion, and without adding to them, or taking from them—so that, as far as practicable, the Psalter in English, in its form and substance, and in all its parts, may be a true copy of the Psalter in Hebrew. Would any one in possession of such a psalm-book be justifiable in refusing to use it? The ordinance that imposes the universal obligation to sing the Psalms evidently implies that the visible church should have one and the same psalm-book. It was in fact so for a long lapse of time under the Old Testament. So it should be now among Gentiles, to whom translations are necessary. The Psalter in the visible church, where the English is the common language, should be substantially and formally one and the same. If we had now a perfect version, a faithful translation, unexceptionable in language, measure, and rhyme, and giving the sense of the original clearly and fully, a version in all respects faultless, could any one, under acknowledged obligations to sing the Psalms, consistently refuse to be confined to

it? I cannot view such refusal in any aspect in which it does not appear to be disobedience to a divine ordinance. There may, then, be a state of things, such, indeed, as the ordinance itself requires and contemplates, in which it would be very wrong to depart from a particular version. The conclusion, therefore, to which, in the path of truth, we come, is, that there is no solid ground for the unqualified declaration that we may refuse to be confined to a particular version, or, which is the same thing, that it is a matter of moral indifference, and of independent, individual choice, what version we use. It is plainly obligatory on us to have respect to the character of versions. A version may be such that it should be adopted universally, and used uniformly. A version, or what purports to be a version, may be such that we should not use it at all.

It may, I conceive, be considered indisputable, that if we are obligated to sing the Psalms in religious worship, as we can sing them only in a translation, we should sing them from a true, and proper, and complete translation, and not from one in which the psalms are curtailed and mutilated. A person may take in hand to revise, modify, amend, or imitate the original Psalms, omitting psalms in whole or in part, expunging in other places the thoughts of the inspired penman, and inserting in their place his own thoughts, as was done by Dr. Watts. But would such a work, however poetic and elegant its outward form, have any claim to be considered a *translation* of the inspired Psalm-book? Although it should be so named, and published as such, yet such, in reality, it would not be. To receive, recognise, or use such a book as a version of the book of Psalms, would be to sanction and participate in a deception. Even though it should contain a few psalms correctly translated, these few would not have the effect of rendering the book, as a whole, a true and proper version. A pretended version of the Bible might, after the same fashion, be made, with some parts omitted, and other parts transposed, modified, and changed, according to the discretion of the writer; but would it be proper to receive and use such a production as a version of the Scriptures? Would not the public reading of those parts that might be true to the original, or be the least faulty, be an act calculated to reflect honour on a book which dishonoured the Holy Bible? By using it as the Bible, would the minister be observing and keeping pure and entire the ordinance of God concerning his oracles and the reading of them? Such a book could not, with any propriety, be used for the end for which the Scriptures were given. A work which does similar violence to the book of Psalms is not a version, and it is a gross perversion of terms to call it so. If one man may take such sacrilegious freedom with the inspired Psalter, and be permitted to elevate the fruit of his labour to the place and rights of a version, another may do the same. If, then, one may have a moral license to accommodate his translation of the book to his private opinion, to the creed of his denomination, to the taste of the age, or to the genius of pagan poetry, another may claim the same license, and I do not see where this unholy freedom would stop. One undertakes to evangelize the Psalms, another to rationalize them, a third to legalize them, and a fourth to Judaize them. One man omits Psalms or verses here, and another man omits certain other portions which he cannot shape

to his wishes. One Psalm has in it too much that is personal, another too much that is local or historical, another is too ceremonial, another not sufficiently doctrinal; all must be uttered in conformity to the pattern which each poetizer has framed in his own mind, and to the judgment which he may have formed of what is "suited to the use of persons worshipping in the church under its New Testament dispensation." The Calvinist modifies the Psalms to suit his tenets, the Arminian to suit his, and the Unitarian does the same, so does the Millenarian, and so on through all the sects. Every class, every denomination, might, by the aid of its favourite poet, in the name of the inspired psalmist, express its own peculiar doctrines in a version of the Psalms; and their several poets, as pretended translators, might furnish them with the means of doing this, and yet not take a larger amount of self-willed liberty with the original Psalms than was taken by the popular author who composed the "Psalms," which, with the sanction, and by the authority of the General Assembly, have been styled "Watts' version." But is his work, or would that of any other man, made after his as a general model, be worthy of this name? His is certainly not a translation of the inspired Psalter; and it is consequently wrong to authorize and approve, to receive or use it as such. It is a book which has no claim to be taken into consideration in the question about *versions*. Take away the false face, the borrowed veil, and it will be seen that the *General Assembly, at the present time, has no version of the book of Psalms*. It has imitations of the Psalms, but no version even in use, except in a few churches, where "our own version" may be yet tolerated. The original title-page and preface with which Dr. Watts introduced his lyrics to the English churches were honest. The Doctor himself was honest to his dying hour, and meant to tell the truth. But what shall we say, what can we think of "the advertisement" prefixed to the collection by reverend hands at Philadelphia in 1843? Does that tell the truth, Watts himself being witness? Does it not with predeliberation gain-say the deliberate judgment of the deceased author, by formally and officially pronouncing that to be a "version," which he calls "imitations?" I do not mean to intimate that this arbitrary and unjustifiable change of name was at first the deliberate act of the Assembly. It was, however, the accepted act of an authorized committee, who, after four or five years for consultation and experiment, came to the conclusion that they could change their favourite collection of psalms into a version with far less trouble and difficulty, by giving it a new name, than by giving it a new body and spirit. But new names cannot alter the nature of old things. The inclusion of a few psalms, which, under a loose and generous criticism, might separately pass for fair translations, never did and never will render the book a version. To admit that the book of inspired Psalms is the divinely authorized psalm-book of the church, and to sing praise at the same time from a reputed psalm-book, which is not a true and proper version of the original book, is not only inconsistent, but contradictory. To sing only a few of them on the specious plea of their being tolerable translations, is to countenance and sanction the use of a book which, as a whole, we profess to condemn. If the author of the Plea should by invitation enter a Unitarian pulpit, and there sing from a

Unitarian psalm-book, or read from a Unitarian Bible, would he not by so doing signify, as distinctly as he by deeds could signify, his acceptance and approbation of books both heretical and sacrilegious? Should he thus offend against the aforesaid rule of the Directory, would it deter his brethren from giving a judicial expression of their disapprobation? Would it persuade them to spare the rod of discipline, if in vindication of himself he should declaim, "I have done nothing wrong, whereby censure should accrue to me? I admit the obligation to sing the Psalms and to read the Bible, but I refuse to be confined to a particular version of them. I took special care to select good chapters and scriptural songs, such as were free from all heresy, well translated, and filled with truthful and devout sentiments. If individual members or ministers worshipping in the churches of other denominations choose to join in praising God in an orthodox and scriptural song, they do not expose them to censure for so doing. To debar the people is spiritual tyranny, contrary to the spirit and design of our authorized church standards, and is not less contrary to the spirit and law of God's Word." P. 109. Is there in the General Assembly a Presbytery where the principle contended for in such pleading would receive favour or judicial confirmation? I hope there is none. A man might as well think to justify, on this ground, an occasional use of the Koran in Christian worship, instead of the Bible, if he should be able to find in the former some passages taken from the latter, and confine himself to them.

The general principle with which the author starts being false in the abstract, his application of it is not warranted by the principle, and is unjust. The premises being wrong, the inference he draws therefrom adverse to the claims of "our own version," is also wrong. If, desiring to use the Bible Psalms, a worshipper should ask, "Where are they to be found?" it will not do to put Rouse's version, for example, into his hands as the only songs of praise that he can properly sing. Why not? "This is only one among many." That is an absolute truism; it proves its own truth, but what else does it prove? "It does not, therefore, hold exclusive claim to use." Why not? From what is this sweeping conclusion drawn? It is drawn simply from an assertion, and an assertion which, as I have shown, embodies an abstract principle altogether incorrect, and one which no church ever adopted or acted upon in respect to versions of the Psalter or the entire Scriptures. The principle, not having strength to hold itself up, cannot hold up the heavy inference put upon it so as to be brought to bear against "our own version," or to have the effect, mainly aimed at, of putting it on a par with all other versions. That version is one among many; and yet it may be the very one, and the only one of them all, that should be sung, for aught that the Plea has advanced to the contrary. Are the "many" versions to be theoretically regarded as having equal claims, without any respect to their respective inherent merits or defects, excellencies, or faults? Are not some really better than others? Among those better than the rest, may there not be one version justly entitled to be esteemed the best, and ought not that version to be preferred? If it should be preferred on account of its pre-eminent merits, is it consistent or right to displace it in use, and practically to annul its claims by using

another inferior to it? The author seems to be aware that he must go further, in order to do any thing effectively against "Rouse's version, for example," the one he had in his eye. He must say something against that particular version. He must disgorge upon it what he has in his mind. But the difficulty was to do this decently and logically—a difficulty which he did not remove, but which he was able to overleap. "The main argument says nothing about this or that version." How, then, can the Plea in its reply, examine that "argument in its application to a particular version," to which it does not refer? The author's apology for going so far out of his way to make an assault on "our own version," I will insert in full, as it will give opportunity for several explanatory observations.

"The distinction which I am now noticing is a most important one, and if candidly adhered to in this controversy, would narrow the grounds of dispute very considerably. But, unfortunately, it is not adhered to. The ground is taken by the Associate Reformed brethren in favour of the Bible Psalms; for the defence of this ground ramparts are raised, and this argument from '*divine warrant*' is placed, like a Paixhan gun, on a commanding point, and a banner is hung out with the alluring motto, '*An inspired Psalmody*,' and we are loudly assured that the contest is not about a particular version. But when we look within the circumvallation we discover that it is a particular version that our brethren are contending for. This is evident from the single fact that while they admit the existence of excellent versions of psalms and parts of psalms besides their own, they condemn the use of them as much as they do hymns of human composition." P. 20.

On this I observe—1. That in the discussion of one question, it is unnecessary and injudicious to introduce the merits of another distinct from it. It is true, as the above military figures elaborately represent, that when we are arguing the primary question, Ought we to sing the Bible Psalms? we confine ourselves to it, as we should do, and we do maintain that this is not a question about versions. Aside from the main question, however, and in addition to it, there is occasion and place for the other question, What version should we sing? Both these have long been settled questions in the oldest branches of the Presbyterian family. They are entirely distinct questions, and, of course, should not be confounded. Each must be determined on its own separate merits, and the just determination of the one would not determine the other. The question of versions does not concern those solely who feel themselves bound in duty to sing the Psalms only. If the psalms or hymns in the inspired Psalter were designed to be sung permanently in the church—if there be an ordinance to this effect—then, whether they are to be sung exclusively or not, the question about version would be the same. We do contend for the old version in opposition to all spurious and inferior versions. But I can see no candour in the endeavour of the Plea to make out that, in arguing the other question, we are, after all, only contending for this version. Every one acquainted with the tactics of popish controversialists in the controversy respecting the right and duty of the people to read the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue, knows that they endeavour to evade or mystify the true question at

issue by representing that the Protestants are only contending for king James' translation. In claiming this right for the membership of the church, in discussing the main matter, we say nothing of versions. Still there is a question of this kind, which, in its own place, is right and unavoidable. It would not be fair reasoning to argue from the fallibility of a translation against the infallibility, perfection, and freeness of the Scriptures; and it is equally unfair and unreasonable to argue from the imperfections that must cleave, more or less, to a metrical translation of the Psalms, against the claims, perfection, and sufficiency of the Psalter itself. There is, therefore, no occasion for the author's strictures on our version; they are out of place, and have no bearing on the matter he undertook to discuss.

2. If we should entirely leave out of view all consideration of the comparative merits of different versions, the grounds of dispute in this controversy, the difference between the author and those whom he opposes would not in the least degree be removed. That matter is left out in the main argument, it is not brought up in any one of its departments. It could not, with propriety, be introduced. The Plea, in coming into direct conflict with the series of arguments in favour of the Psalms in his attempted refutation of them, finds no occasion for saying any more about versions. I, therefore, cannot see how the grounds of this dispute can be narrowed by adhering to the distinction there is between these two questions. But I understand very well that on the part of those whom the Plea represents, the ground of dispute would be narrowed very considerably if we would consent to drop the question about versions. It would be of no moment to them how the dispute as to the claims of the Psalter issued, if we only would coincide with the Plea in opinion that it is a matter of indifference what we sing under the name of a version. If, believing as we do, that there is a divine appointment to sing the Psalms only, we would make this a merely speculative or private opinion, would exercise that forbearance which begins in suppressing convictions of duty, and in closing the eyes to evil, and then be content to sing any thing and every thing in the shape of versions and songs that may be found in the pulpits and galleries of churches, I presume our brethren would then find no fault with us, would praise us within their gates, and be ready with solemn sneer softly to soothe the old country prejudices and predilections by pouring out their laudings on the old Psalms. Then, indeed, the grounds of dispute would be narrowed very considerably, there would be none left, controversy would cease, peace would be proclaimed, and a commencement made to the doing of a wonderful amount of good all over the world. But there are those in the ministry and membership of the Presbyterian family who cannot accede to these terms of peace and popularity. They cannot adopt a practice at variance with the persuasions of their own minds, and with what they judge to be the teachings of God's Word on this subject. With those who differ from them they are willing to enter into the covenant of love, but into no covenant of silence. The seemly thing for them who would have no noise made about this subject is to make no noise themselves. If they dislike controversy, let them desist from what they dislike. If they think the controversy on psalmody is especially bad, and does mischief, then

they should not promote what is bad and mischievous by engaging in it themselves. In doing so they need not look for success, but correction. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." I am not of those who regard controversy as an evil in itself, neither can I say that I dislike even earnest contention in furtherance and defence of the truth. I would not do evil that good may come. But if I do good and evil come from it, not as its cause, for that can never be—but from it as its occasion, I will bear my share of it, for it will not last very long, and it will teach me that I have need of patience, that after having done the will of God I may inherit the promises.

3. "Our ancient and excellent version," which the Plea blames us for retaining in the church in preference to and exclusive of all others, is, according to the estimate expressed in the Plea, the one after all which in the main it approves. He approves of a free version, and stoutly pleads that this one is very much so: "Although I speak of this as not a literal translation, yet I do not maintain that a literal translation is the best one." P. 27. He labours hard to impress it upon the mind of his readers that this version does not possess the character of a close translation. Speaking as one within the communion, which he had forsaken when this book was published, he thus describes it:—"Now, notwithstanding these high and varied laudations of our Psalter, it is not any where in the vicinity of perfection as a close translation; it is paraphrastic in innumerable cases." P. 22. And when he had determined formally "to examine the claim of our version to the character of a strict translation, and having set about the investigation of this subject with a solemn conviction of its importance to the interests of religion in this part of the country, he resolutely yet modestly determined to turn over every stone in search for the truth," what discovery was made in those unfrequented regions? What was the result of this solemn and laborious exploration? Why, nothing but this:—"And I must honestly confess that I was surprised at the amount of paraphrase and of gratuitous deviation from the text that I met with." It seems like going against the grain to be constrained to make the confession. But surely the surprise could not have been else than agreeable to find the version so much better than he expected—so much nearer to what he maintains a version ought to be. Then, also, in the final summing up of his proofs "that the doctrine of exclusive use, as held by many in the Associate Reformed Church, is an unscriptural and very modern innovation, the first proof specified is, "the paraphrastic character of our Psalter"—that is, of "the excellent and ancient version." Now, why is all this pains taken, and this reiteration resorted to, with intent to make it appear that our metrical version is so very free, loose and paraphrastic in its predominant character? Is it on that account objectionable and displeasing in his sight? Certainly not. He holds that a free translation is the best, and observes that those portions of the Psalms which are freely translated are more easy and lucid than other portions, where the translation is more rigidly verbal. Why, then, is this character attributed to our Psalter, and set forth with such priority and prominence? I am unable to discover any good reason for it. It furnished him occasion for saying what he had to say "of a particular version, say

that of Rouse." It might make the impression on some minds that the controversy involved no important principle of duty and concerned no ordinance of God, but was a mere difference of opinion about this version. It seems to be the understanding of the author that "the main argument" and this version are somehow intimately related, and it may have been his design to show that the intimacy is not so close as they generally suppose, inasmuch as the argument in its practical application would require a close metrical translation, while this version, as he represents, though unjustly, is far from being such a version. The truth about that is this, that, if the book of Psalms is ordained by God for perpetual use in his church, then, of course, it behooves us in obeying that ordinance to sing what is really a translation, and not a paraphrase or imitation of the Psalms. So far as this idea was in the mind of the author it is correct, and it is so without respect to "exclusive use," or to the kind or nature of the proof by which the existence of the ordinance is made manifest. If there is a divine appointment to employ the book of Psalms as a psalm-book, no matter by what arguments that appointment is proven, or whether that appointment is restrictive to the Psalms or not—obedience to it can be rendered only in the way of singing a true and proper metrical version.

4. If we should produce a version free of all the defects unjustly charged on our own, a version absolutely faultless, the Plea would not be satisfied with it; it would demand something more. "Having shown that the argument from 'divine warrant' does not require us to restrict ourselves in singing the praises of God to the Scottish version, let us now try whether it is sound and competent to prove an obligation to use exclusively the Bible Psalms, in any one version, however perfect it may be." P. 32. How totally fruitless that trial proved on being tried, the foregoing parts of this review will attest. The extract shows the real position occupied by the author and those whom he represents. They find fault with our version, represent that with us it is all strife for a version, pretend that the ground of dispute would be much narrowed if we would leave that one version out of the question; yet when they speak candidly what is in their minds, they show that they are as opposed to the exclusive use of a perfect version as they are to that of an imperfect. If a perfect version of the inspired Psalms were placed on the pulpit beside the collection of six hundred and eighty hymns, the author would not, from any conscientious scruples or dictate of duty, give any preference or prominence to the former above the latter. Even if there should be command on command from heaven to sing that particular version, he might release himself from all obligation to be confined to it on the poor plea which constitutes the chief part of the Plea, that the commands to sing it did not obligate him to sing it exclusively. The truth seems to be that they whose mouth-piece the Plea is, will be satisfied with no version of the Psalms, with no argument or scriptural text in their behalf, that does not allow them the free use of the orthodox paraphrases and sweet hymns, and if the Associate Reformed and other churches will also use and not condemn the latter, then our brethren will quarrel with no version, old or new, will gainsay no argument for the Psalms, will avoid controversy as a bad practice, and henceforth will allow us to live in peace.

Neither the question which the Plea undertook to answer, nor the arguments it undertook to refute, involved the question about Versions. For if we are only obligated to sing the Psalms, whether there be or be not an obligation to sing them exclusively, there is and there must be a question about versions, which claims to be considered and settled on the ground of its own merits irrespective of arguments affecting the great question. The Plea, however, has given a sinister priority to the minor question, and in its discussion has interlaced and entangled two subjects which are naturally and logically distinct, so that a cloud of obscurity overshadows the first part of the book calculated to confuse and prejudice the mind of its readers before they come to the real question at issue. The author having without necessity, and, as I think, without propriety, summoned our own ancient and excellent version into the judgment-hall of criticism, I beg leave to say a few things in its defence. The faults charged upon it, are—

1. "It is not any where in the vicinity of perfection as a close translation, and is paraphrastic in innumerable cases." The Plea has expressed two opinions on this point. The one is, that "the makers of the metrical version not only did not deem it necessary to confine themselves to a strict translation, but even studied to give a somewhat free and varied paraphrase." The other opinion is, that "there was on their part a too servile effort to conform it to the prose translation." Both these descriptive statements cannot be true. We can know nothing of what the authors intended or attempted but from the work itself. Now, can the version furnish evidence that in making it they studied to give "a free paraphrase," and at the same time furnish internal evidence of their making "a too servile effort to conform it to the prose," which is admitted to be a very close translation? Did the makers of this version study and aim to do *one* thing, while they made an effort to do another? The one opinion contradicts and counterbalances the other. Where the Plea crosses its own track, I leave it for the present.

2. "It is often impenetrably obscure." Indeed! Obscure, *often* obscure—often *impenetrably* obscure! It would, then, have been easy to give at least one instance of this. A charge of this grave magnitude against an old, familiar friend, should not have been thus improvidently sent forth to the pitiless public to beg for proof to cover its nakedness, and to make it decent. Had some specification been appended to this charge, we might then be able to determine where the alleged obscurity is located, whether in the version or in the understanding of the critic, or in the medium of his vision. I can scarcely think that he speaks for himself in giving such emphatic utterance to this part of the indictment. He must be speaking representatively for those ministers of other denominations, for whose embarrassment, real or affected, in reading our Psalms in this version, the Plea makes the charitable apology—which they might be very loath to make for themselves—that the version "is, to some extent, still in an unknown tongue—an ancient, if not a foreign language," "in a language which they have not learned in their childhood." This apology may be founded in truth in the case of some of those ministers; but even in their favour it derives no enforcement from the declaration that "the English metre of the seventeenth century is not the same language as

the English metre of the nineteenth." P. 31. True, the metre of one century is not the language of another; still I do not see wherein the *common, short, or long* metre of the seventeenth century differs from that of the nineteenth. To men, and ministers especially, having the limited acquaintance with their mother tongue which the above excuse imputes to them, I will be duly lenient, but they ought themselves to make due allowance for their ignorance, and be modest enough not to express any judgment on a version which they have not yet learned to read. For others, endowed with ordinary understanding, I presume it is as easy to understand the language and meaning of the metrical, as it is of the prose translation. The former might, in a few places, be made more lucid than it is; but I think it may be every where understood. There are some passages in the Hebrew Psalms, about the sense of which interpreters differ in their views. When such passages, instead of being expounded, are faithfully transferred into the translation, as nearly as can be in the same condition in which they are in the original, they should not be considered defects, but merits, in a translation. This was done occasionally by the learned authors of our standard English translation of the Bible, without detracting from its value.

3. "It does not always give the right sense." No instance of this is pointed out, and the reader is left completely in the dark where the critic who undertakes to guide his judgment should, if he could, have illumined his path. Such disparaging assertions are not worth the ink with which they were printed.

4. "And in one instance, at least, gives a direct contradiction to the Sacred Word." Why, then, not speak out like a man, and name the psalm and verse, so that the reader might have some means of judging for himself? I do not mean to intimate that the author merely erected these naked charges, or that he indited them wantonly, without believing them to be true. The fact that he believes them is, however, of itself, no evidence of their being true, and has in it nothing argumentative; for he may be mistaken, and one man's faith is not a safe and sufficient ground for the faith of another man.

I shall now return to the first fault which the Plea imputes to our version. I shall not take advantage of the complete refutation of this charge which the Plea itself offers, in affirming that there was on the part of the makers of this version "a too servile effort to conform it to the prose translation." It was not the design of the author that this assertion should be so used; for he still labours hard to prove that the makers of this version "even studied to give a somewhat free and varied paraphrase," and that the version has, after all, a predominant paraphrastic character, and this he does for the purpose of setting aside its claim to the place it now occupies in the churches on the ground of its long acknowledged superiority. The author candidly states the design he has in his italic exposure of paraphrase in his several quotations. "As my brethren set a claim for that version to exclusive use, basing their claim on its alleged superiority, I have shown, that even as a version, it is far from being correct." P. 30. How did he undertake to show that it was so incorrect? He adduces no instance, no evidence, that it fails to convey the sense of the original, and to express it truly and clearly. He, in fact, brings forth nothing but playful ridicule to disprove its old claim to be "more

plain, smooth, and agreeable to the text than any heretofore." He has, however, collected a number of scraps of paraphrases from this version, with the design of proving that it is little else than a paraphrase. Supposing himself in this way to have accomplished his aim, he judges that the version being "no where in the vicinity of perfection as a close translation," is, therefore, "even as a version, far from being correct." Well, then, admitting that it is in this respect as defective and incorrect as the Plea affirms, what does the Plea gain thereby? Does it follow that the claim of this version to superiority is thereby subverted or weakened? By no means, and it is a great mistake to suppose this. Those who uphold and prefer that version are not blind to its imperfections. They may know these with a knowledge far more accurate than the Plea has manifested, and still judiciously and justly give that version the preference, in virtue of its real superiority. No one need to be told that the word superiority has a comparative sense. We do not claim for this version absolute perfection. If we did, the author's italic criticisms would overthrow that claim. We claim for it higher perfection than belongs to any other; that is, we claim for it *superiority*. The special question which the Plea in this part of it proposed to meet was this—Is our own version justly entitled to the claim of superiority as a metrical version? That we should be confined to the Psalms in singing praise, is one proposition; that we should be confined to this version in singing the Psalms, is another. On the former I have said all I intend to say. The present question has respect to the latter. If our version is in fact superior to every other, it ought to be preferred. If it ought, for its merits, to have the preference, it should be approved and used by all; and if it is worthy to be esteemed the best, then we ought, in singing praise, to be confined to it. Even should the Scriptures allow of the use of hymns and paraphrases, if we were also required to sing the Psalms, we should sing them from this version, on the ground of its superiority. If the Scriptures furnish no warrant to sing human composes, and authorize only the use of the Bible Psalter in offering praise, we should still use this version on the ground of its superiority. Some churches use this version only and exclusively in singing psalms, although they are not, in singing praise, restricted to the Psalms; and they sing the Psalms only from this version for the same reason that leads others to use it who sing nothing but the Psalms. These remarks I make for illustration, and to prepare the way for considering the question which the Plea, in its introductory digression, commenced, but left in a very unfinished state, after a very partial consideration. Call this version what you please—Rouse's version, the Westminster version, the Scottish version, the Irish version, the English version, or call it as it is sometimes affectionately styled in the Plea, our own version. The question is, Is it justly entitled as a metrical version to the claim of superiority above all others? Here the Plea shall answer for itself:—"From what has been said it is evidently not so superior to all others (as to entitle it to the reverence due to an inspired work,) or to preclude the use of any other version in praising God." P. 30. (The Plea is permitted, in its sober second thought, to withdraw what I have hemmed in with parentheses. It has nothing argumentative in it, but something else which cannot be argued with.) In the above extract there is enough

to reveal that the author had at least a glimpse of the work he had undertaken, which was to prove, by critical examination, that our version is not so superior to others as to entitle it to be preferred to them. But he stopped very far short of making that evident to his readers which seems so evident to himself. How can we learn from the showing of the critic that this version is not "so superior to all others," when all others are carefully kept out of sight, and not one of them even named? He has only proved, what no one denies, that this version has some imperfections cleaving to it, and that it is not as good as it might be. All he has advanced may be true, and still the version may be in many respects superior to any other. It may have defects, but others may be vastly more defective. How can its superiority be proved, or disproved, except in the way of trying it in common or in contrast with other versions, by the test of the original text? To give judgment in the case without such trial, without instituting such comparison of this with others that may claim to be equal or superior to it, is to give a judgment partial and premature. This is all the Plea has done, and therefore his criticisms and hyper-criticisms amount to nothing for the purpose for which they were framed. He ought to have done a great deal more, and suspended his judgment, or at least refrained from pressing it on others, until he had cited and examined those other versions, and especially the one which he vaguely denominates "the Presbyterian Psalmody," which I take to be Watts' Imitations. I have, at his polite invitation, accompanied him in his "short tour of inspection into our excellent and ancient version." I have attentively heard him "examine the claim of our version to the character of a strict translation;" and the impression made on my mind is, that it is much to the praise of the sterling excellency of our version that after more than twenty years' daily use, and "a couple of hours' comparison of it with the prose translation," he has been able to present so small an amount of paraphrase in it, and of deviation from the text. I will furthermore affirm that if the author had compared our version with the Psalms in Hebrew, he would have ascertained that several of his alleged samples of paraphrase are *not such*, but are in fact instances in which our version gives the sense of the original more fully than it is given in the prose translation.

My reply to the author's strictures in this Plea on our version is now complete, and I might here close. He proposed to prove that its claim to comparative superiority was not good and well-founded. He finds, on search, what never was a secret and hidden thing, that it has some imperfections. He does not, however, compare it with any other. He does not even name one to be put in competition with it. Still, I presume, he had his eye on what he queerly calls "the *Presbyterian Psalmody*," the "Psalms" contained in the Assembly Collection. I do not intend to go into a critical examination of those "Imitations." The Plea admits that Dr. Watts omitted psalms and parts of psalms; and any person, by comparing his psalms with those in the Bible, will ascertain that Watts has not only suppressed numerous portions of the inspired Psalms, but also inserted in their place his own poor thoughts. I will do the author of the Plea the justice of remarking that he has not called the Watts' Imitation a version.