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HISTORY OF THE AUTHORIZED METRICAL VERSION OF THE PSALMS.

We have been favoured by a friend with a copy of the second volume of *The Orthodox Presbyterian*, a monthly magazine published in Belfast, Ireland, during the year 1831, from which we extract the following interesting sketch of the metrical version of the Psalms now in use in the United Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian Churches of America, and in the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Ireland.—ED. REP.

SIR:—I trust it will not be unacceptable to your readers to be furnished with a brief account of that metrical version of the Psalms which is used by the various sections of the Presbyterian Church in this country. To every *Orthodox Presbyterian* this version is full of deep interest. It has been so long used by his venerated forefathers—he has been so early and constantly familiarized with it as an inseparable appendix to the Word of God—it is so interwoven with all his recollections of early instruction, of a mother's tender solicitude, or a father's grave care to imbue his mind with the elevated piety of its simple strains—it is so indispensable to the performance of his devotional exercises, either in the sanctuary, or the family, or the closet—and so many tender and hallowed associations link themselves to almost every verse, that it stands, in his estimation, as a part of the Bible itself, and is equally venerated with the prose original. As poetry, it has no doubt its defects. What work of man has not? But though, since its adoption by the Church of Scotland, many versions of the book of Psalms have been published, and several of these by distinguished poets and critics, yet it is not too much to say that, as a whole, it has never been exceeded—perhaps not even equalled. I am borne out in this opinion by the testimony of Dr. Beattie, himself an eminent poet. In his letter to Dr. Hugh Blair, on the improvement of Psalmody in Scotland, lately published, though printed fifty years ago, he thus speaks of this version:—"Notwithstanding its many imperfections, I cannot help thinking it is the best. The numbers, it is true, are often harsh and incorrect; there are frequent obscurities, and some ambiguities in the style; the Scottish idiom occurs in several places, and the old Scottish pronunciation is sometimes necessary to make out the rhyme. Yet in this version there is a manly, though severe simplicity, without any affected refinement, and there are many passages so beautiful as to stand in need of no emendation."

Of the various metrical versions of the Psalms that are in use in Protestant churches, ours is both the most extensively adopted, and has had exclusive possession of the psalmody of the church for the longest period. The version by Sternhold and Hopkins, though of older date, has for a long time been very generally disused; and the other authorized version of the English Church is

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of a much later origin. How many thousand Presbyterian churches in Scotland, England, Ireland, North America, the United States, &c., do, on every returning Sabbath, tender their united praises to Jehovah through the medium of this valued version! How many broken hearts are bound up—how many afflictive dispensations soothed—how many death-beds brightened, by its simple and consoling strains! And now, for nigh two centuries, it has been employed throughout the church in these sanctifying ministrations. Our fathers sang its verses on the mountain-side, when hunted like wild beasts from the abodes of men by their bloody persecutors. They carried it with them to the scaffold; and oftentimes, in the very words in which our infant innocence lisped a Father's watchful care, did these men of God, of whom the world was not worthy, close their pilgrimage, and commit their souls to his keeping.

What Bishop Horne says of the book of Psalms in prose, in one of the most eloquent passages that can be found in our language, may with equal propriety be applied to it when versified:—"The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrantcy; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets are extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellences will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best."

This version has, therefore, Mr. Editor, many claims on our notice. It has long been an object of affectionate regard, and even veneration, to myself. I have consequently taken an interest in tracing the history of its origin and progress, and its final adoption by the parent church in Scotland. And trusting that many of your readers feel towards this version as I do, I have been induced to lay before them, through the medium of your excellent little work, the result of my inquiries and researches.

The subject will be best introduced by the following paragraph from M'Crie's *Life of Knox*:—

"In every Protestant country, a metrical version of the Psalms, in the vernacular language, appeared at a very early period. The French version, begun by Clement Marot, and completed by Beza, contributed much to the spread of the Reformation in France. The Psalms were sung by Francis I. and Henry II. and by their courtiers; the Catholics flocked for a time to the assemblies of the Protestants to listen to their psalmody. It has been said that there was a Scots version of the Psalms at a very early period. It is more certain that, before the year 1546, a number of the Psalms were translated in metre; for George Wishart sung one of them in the house of Ormiston, on the night in which he was apprehended. They were commonly sung in the assemblies of the Protestants in the year 1556. John and Robert Wedderburn, sons of a merchant in Dundee, appear to have been the principal translators of them. The version was not completed; and at the establishment of the Reformation, it was supplanted in the churches by the version begun by Sternhold and Hopkins, and finished by the English exiles at Geneva."

That version was therefore the first that was used by the Church of Scotland after the Reformation. It was publicly authorized, both by the General Assembly and by the Parliament. Its reputed authors were natives of England. *Thomas Sternhold* was born in Hampshire, before the year 1500. He was educated at Oxford, held a situation at court under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., and died at London in the year 1549. To supersede the worthless songs in use among the courtiers, he rendered into metre fifty-one of the Psalms, which he also set to music, each Psalm to a separate tune. *John Hopkins*,* who was united with him in this useful work, and who was one of the minor poets of that age, little is known. He versified fifty-eight Psalms; and

*The following information is obtained from "Allibone's Dictionary of Authors:" "John Hopkins was the principal successor of Thomas Sternhold in versifying the Psalms of David. He was admitted A. B. at Oxford in 1544, and is supposed to have been subsequently a clergyman and schoolmaster in Suffolk. He versified

the remaining forty-one Psalms were, as intimated by Dr. M'Crie, paraphrased* by the English Protestants who had fled to Geneva during the reign of Queen Mary. This version being printed in England, and usually bound up with the English Liturgy, against which the Scottish Reformers had many serious objections, they resolved to have it printed in Edinburgh, for the use of their own church. This object, after many difficulties, they at length accomplished in the year 1564. In the end of that year the General Assembly ordered that every minister, exhorter, and reader, should procure a copy of the new edition. And, what is still more indicative of the spirit of those days, the Parliament in 1569 enacted, "That all gentlemen, householders, and others, worth three hundred merks of yearly rent, or above, and all substantial burgesses, who were likewise householders, and worth five hundred pounds in lands or goods, should be held bound to have a Bible and Psalm-book, in the vernacular language, in their houses, for the better instruction of themselves and their families in the knowledge of God: each person under the penalty of ten pounds (*Scots*)."

The great variety in the metres of this version rendered a proportionable variety of tunes and considerable skill in vocal music necessary in order to use it properly in public worship. Accordingly, the same Parliament also turned its attention to the instruction of the youth in music and psalmody. After observing that the art of singing was in danger of falling into decay, unless some reasonable remedy were provided, they required that all the principal towns, and all the patrons and provosts of colleges, should erect a singing-school, with an adequate master, within their respective jurisdictions, under the penalty of forfeiting their privileges. In consequence of this enactment, "sundry musicians of the best skill in music, set down proper and common tunes to the whole Psalms, according to their various forms of metre;" and the people were diligent in learning these tunes, amounting probably to nigh fifty, and delighted in singing them, not only in the church, but on various other occasions.

What a contrast, Mr. Editor, does the present state of psalmody, in many of our congregations, present to this state of things in the earliest and rudest stage of our church's reformation! Behold our venerable ancestors using above a dozen various metres, and singing above fifty various tunes in their religious assemblies, and still diligently aiming at a further improvement: and behold, in this enlightened age, most of our congregations content to use one or two, or at the utmost three varieties of metre—the short, long, and common—and the whole extent of their psalmody limited to six, eight, or perhaps a dozen tunes! And, what is more deplorable still, behold many of them obstinately resisting, as an intolerable innovation, the introduction of any additional metres, though already existing in the authorized version, or any additional tunes, though the same were used by their reforming forefathers!

Sternhold and Hopkins' version is still in authorized use in the United Church of England and Ireland. It is scarcely ever seen in the parish churches in this country; but I believe it is still in frequent use, under the name of "the Old Version," in the country churches in England. Dr. Beattie, in the "Letter" already quoted, thus speaks of its character:—"Its rudeness has become even proverbial. The verse is very incorrect, the sense not always clear, and the expression sometimes exceedingly vulgar. And yet, even in this version, there are a few stanzas, particularly in the 18th and 103d Psalms, which no true poet would undertake to improve." To this just opinion of a

fifty-eight of the Psalms, which bear his initials. The complete version was first printed (by John Davy) in 1562, quarto; though portions had appeared before. Warton says, 'Of his abilities as a teacher of classics, he has left us a specimen in some Latin stanzas prefixed to Fox's Martyrology. He is rather a better English poet than Sternhold.' See, also, *Athenæ Oxoniensis*; *Heylin's History of Reformation*; *Hawkins' and Burney's History of Music*; *Chalmers' Biographical Dictionary*; and authorities there cited; *Cotton's Editions of the Bible*; and *D'Israeli's Curiosities of Literature*.

* The word *paraphrase* was then used as synonymous with *tersify*.

deceased poet, I may subjoin that of a living one. Mr. Montgomery, of Sheffield, in his preface to the "Christian Psalmist," thus writes:—"The merit of faithful adherence to the original has been claimed for this version, and need not to be denied; but it is the resemblance which the dead bear to the living; and to hold such a version forth (which some learned men have lately done) as a model of standard psalmody for the use of Christian congregations in the nineteenth century, surely betrays an affectation of singularity, or a deplorable defect of taste."

As a specimen of its harmony, take the following passage from the 18th Psalm:—

9. The Lord descended from above,
And bowed the heavens high:
And underneath his feet he cast
The darkness of the sky.

10. On seraph and on cherubim
Full royally he rode;
And on the wings of all the winds
Came flying all abroad.

Of the incorrectness of the rhyme, and the vulgarity of the expression, alluded to by Beattie, take the following specimens:—

PSALM LXXVIII. 46.
Nor how he did commit their fruits
Unto the caterpillar;
And all the labour of their hands
He gave to the grasshopper.

PSALM LXXIV. 12.
Why dost thou draw thy hand aback,
And hide it in thy lap?
Oh pluck it out, and be not slack
To give thy foes a rap.

The copy of this version in my possession was printed in 1638. It has above fifty psalm tunes interspersed; none of which, so far as I can find, are now used, with the exception of that solemn and beautiful air, the 100th Psalm, long metre. The version of this Psalm is very nearly the same with that in use at present. The 23d Psalm, which is so literally, yet beautifully, rendered in our version, stands thus in that of Sternhold:—

The Lord is only my support,
And he that doth me feed;
How can I, then, lack any thing
Whereof I stand in need?
He doth me fold in coats most safe,
The tender grass fast by:
And after drives me to the streams
Which run most pleasantly.

And when I feel myself near lost,
Then doth he me home take;
Conducting me in his right paths,
Ev'n for his own name's sake.

And though I were ev'n at death's door,
Yet would I fear none ill:
For with thy rod and shepherd's crook,
I am comforted still.

Thou hast my table richly decked,
In despite of my foe;
Thou hast my head with balm refreshed;
My cup doth overflow.
And finally, while breath doth last,
Thy grace shall me defend;
And in the house of God will I
My life for ever spend.

From the time that Sternhold's version was adopted by the Church of Scotland, various attempts were made by her to remedy its acknowledged defects. Thus in the General Assembly which met in May, 1601, Mr. Robert Pont, one of the most learned and eminent ministers in the church, was appointed to revise the entire book. It does not appear, however, that this appointment was attended to: at least no revision of the Psalm-book took place. The Assembly at which this measure was proposed is remarkable for having been the means of first suggesting to James I. the propriety of obtaining an entirely new translation of the Bible. This most important object he accomplished soon after he ascended the English throne. The translation which we now use, and which is adopted by all the Reformed churches in Great Britain and America, was commenced by English divines acting by committees in the year 1606, and was brought to a happy and satisfactory termination in the year 1611. The narrative which Spottiswood, in his "History of the Church of Scotland," has given of James's proceedings at the Assembly above mentioned, though that of a fawning courtier, is worthy of being preserved in your pages, not only on account of its connexion with the subject of the present paper, but also as developing the germ of that noble undertaking, the present authorized

translation of the Bible, and as exhibiting a characteristic sketch of the learned, but vain and pedantic monarch:—

“A proposition was made for a new translation of the Bible, and the correcting of the Psalms in metre. His Majesty did urge it earnestly, and with many other reasons did persuade the undertaking of the work; showing the necessity and the profit of it, and what glory the performance thereof would bring to this church. When speaking of the necessity, he did mention sundry escapes in the common translation, (of the Bible,) and made it seen that he was no less conversant in the Scriptures than they whose profession it was. When speaking of the Psalms, he did recite whole verses of the same, showing both the faults of the metre, and the discrepancies from the text. It was the joy of all who were present, and bred not little admiration in the whole Assembly, who, approving the motion, did recommend the translation (of the Bible) to such of the brethren who were most skilled in the languages, and the revising of the Psalms to Mr. Robert Pont; but nothing was done in the one or the other. Yet did not the king let his intention fall to the ground. The perfecting of the Psalms he made his own labour; and at such hours as he could spare from the public cares, went through a number of them commending the rest to a faithful learned servant, who hath therein answered his Majesty's expectation.”

This “faithful servant” was Sir William Alexander,* afterwards created Earl of Stirling. King James versified only the first thirty Psalms, and Sir William the remainder. The entire version, known by the name of the Royal Psalter, was completed and published about the year 1630. Charles I. was very anxious to have it introduced into general use, especially in Scotland. But as this was the first of his innovations on the usages and authority of the Scottish Church, it met with considerable opposition; and together with the more serious and offensive encroachments of Laud, was defeated by the commotions in 1638, when prelacy was wholly abrogated. Row, in his manuscript history of that church, thus relates the steps that were taken towards its introduction:—

* Allibone's Dictionary informs us that Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, (1580—1640.) commenced to be an author at the early age of fourteen. He was born at Menstrie, Scotland, and was a descendant of the family of Macdonald. James I. and Charles I. were both much attached to him. The first gave him a grant of Nova Scotia in 1621, which charter has since been the cause of considerable discussion. In his “Aurora” he presented the public with more than a hundred sonnets, songs, and elegies, as a poetical display of an ill-requited passion, which distance from the object of his attachment could not remove.

“He was greatly superior to the style of his age.”—*Horace Walpole*.

“The ‘Parænesis’ of Sir W. A. is a noble poem.”—*Pinkerton*.

After perusing his poems, Addison remarked that “the beauties in our ancient English poets are too slightly passed over by modern writers, who, out of a peculiar singularity, had rather take pains to find fault than endeavour to excel.”

Among his works are four tragedies in alternate rhyme, denominated “Monarchieke;” namely, *Darius*, publ. 1603; *Cræsus*, 1604; *Alexandrian Tragedy*, and *Julius Cæsar*, 1607. “These pieces are not calculated for the stage; but include some admirable lessons for sovereign power, and several choruses written with no small share of poetic vigour.”—*Dr. Drake*.

“My philosophical poet.”—*King James I.*

“His ‘Parænesis’ and ‘Aurora’ are almost classic performances, and well merit republication.”—*Dr. Anderson*.

John Dunbar, Arthur Johnston, and Andrew Ramsey, have lauded the Earl of Stirling in their Latin poetry. Daniel had complimented him before the edition of his ‘Philotas,’ 1605; Davies, of Hereford, has done the same in his ‘Scourge of Folly and Wit's Bedlam;’ Haymau addressed two plaudits to him in his ‘Quodlibets;’ Habington commended his ‘Tragick Raptures’ and ‘Doomes Day in Castara;’ Drayton gave him affectionate mention in his ‘Epistle to Henry Reynolds, Esq.’—*Park*.

He published, in 1637, a complete edition of his works, in one volume folio, under the title of “Recreation with the Muses.” It contained, beside the pieces above mentioned, another heroic poem, entitled *Jonathan*, and a sacred poem, in twelve books, on the *Day of Judgment*. The earl held the office of Secretary of State for Scotland for fifteen years, from 1626 till his death in 1640.

“In the year 1631, there was a report that the King (*Charles I.*) would have the Psalms of David, as they were translated and paraphrased by King James, his father, received and sung in all the kirks of Scotland. Some of the books were delivered to Presbyteries, that ministers might advise concerning the goodness or badness of the translation, and report their judgments, not to the General Assembly, for that great bulwark of our church was then demolished, but to the diocesan assemblies. Yet the matter was laid aside for some time.”

Of this Royal version Dr. Beattie thus speaks:—

“The work does honour to the learned monarch. It is not free from the northern idiom; but the style seems to me to be superior to every other Scotch writer of that age, Hawthornden* excepted. There are in it many good stanzas, most of which have been adopted by the compilers of the version now authorized in Scotland, whereof this of King James is, indeed, the groundwork. Nay, those compilers have not always equalled the royal versifier, where they intended, no doubt, to excel him. I shall give one example. The third verse of the fiftieth Psalm stands in our version thus:—

‘Our God shall come, and shall no more
Be silent, but speak out;
Before him fire shall waste, great storms
Shall compass him about.’

“James has the advantage, both in the arrangement of the words and in the harmony:—

‘Our God shall come, and shall not then
Keep silence any more;
A fire before him shall consume,
Great storms about him roar.’”

Though this version was almost unanimously opposed, and finally rejected by the church, yet the want of a new one, or at least an emendation of the old, was still felt and desired. Several persons, both in England and Scotland, translated particular Psalms. But a new version of the whole book was undertaken by Sir William Mure, of Rowallan, in Ayrshire, and completed by him in the year 1639. Sir William, or, as he was in those days more briefly styled, Rowallan, had early distinguished himself as a religious poet. He was a staunch friend to the Presbyterian Church, and died in 1657. Some of his descendants settled in this country, [Ireland,] where they still remain. His version does not appear to have been ever printed, though it must have been pretty generally known. For when the Westminster Assembly was engaged in preparing our present version, Principal Baillie, one of the commissioners to the Assembly from the Church of Scotland, writing from London, thus speaks of it:—“I wish I had Rowallan's Psalter here, for I like it better than any I have yet seen.” In the “Historie and Descent of the House of Rowallan,” written by the poet, Sir William, and lately published from the original manuscript, several specimens of his version are given, copied from the original, which is still preserved among the family papers in Scotland. As this version has been now altogether unknown for nearly two centuries, and as it was used in compiling our present Psalm-book, a few of these specimens may prove interesting to your readers, and especially to those of them who, like myself, are in any way antiquarian in their tastes.

Sir William, in a short preface, dated July 12, 1639, speaks thus modestly of his work:—“It is not to be presumed that this version, in the first draught, has attained the intended perfection. Let the reader observe and comport with this essay till (the Lord furnishing greater measure of light, and better conveniency of time) it be amended.” He dedicates it—“To all the sincere seekers of the Lord, and in him spiritual furniture from the rich fountains of his holy Word.” And he addresses them in the following prefatory lines, which afford a pleasing specimen of his poetical powers:—

* That is, William Drummond of Hawthornden, the friend of Ben Jonson.

"Let not seem strange that here no studied phrase
 Charm thy conceit, and itching ear amaze.
 Simplicity of words, still grave, bold, plain,
 The Spirit, doubtless, did not chuse in vain,
 Pure streams from purest fountains to present.
 In David's language David's mind to vent,
 My purpose is."

The following is a specimen of his version of a well-known and beautiful Psalm. Your readers will observe how vastly superior it is to Sternhold's version, already given, and how nearly it approaches to our present version, of which it was evidently the groundwork:—

PSALM XXIII.

<p>The Lord my Shepherd is, of want I never shall complain; For me to rest on, he doth grant Green pastures of the plain. He leads me stillest streams beside, And doth my soul reclaim; In righteous paths he me doth guide, For glory of his name.</p>	<p>The valley dark of earth's abode, To pass I'll fear no ill; For thou art with me, Lord; thy rod And staff me comfort still. For me a table thou dost spread In presence of my foes; With oil thou dost anoint my head, By thee my cup o'erflows.</p>
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Mercy and goodness all my days
 With me shall surely stay;
 And in thy house, thy name to praise,
 Lord, I will dwell for aye.

Shortly after the appearance of Rowallan's version, another candidate for the honour of being the versifier of the Psalms appeared in Scotland. This was Mr. Zachary Boyd,* Minister of the Barony Church, Glasgow, from the year 1623 till his death in 1654. He was a very liberal benefactor to the college, and a bust of him still remains over the inner gate. He had a wonderful propensity to the writing of verse; but as a poet he ranks very low. He unfortunately conceived that the more literal his translations were, and the more familiar his language, the more useful were his labours. But the devout have been shocked at his vulgarity, and the profane have turned his homely verses into ridicule. He rendered the greater part of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Solomon's Song, into metre, under the title of "The Garden of Zion; wherein the life and death of godly and wicked men in the Scriptures are to be seen," &c., printed at Glasgow, in 1644. He left, in manuscript, a metrical translation of the four Evangelists, and several volumes of what he styled, "Zion's Flowers; or Christian Poems for Spiritual Edification." But he never translated the *whole* Bible into verse, as has been erroneously supposed; nor is any part in manuscript, save his version of the gospel history. Dr. Jamieson, and several other well qualified judges, have given it as their opinion that the ludicrous passages commonly printed as Boyd's are not really his.

Amid his other occupations, he prepared a new translation of the Psalms in verse, which he was very ambitious of having adopted by the General Assembly. It had been published soon after Rowallan's version appeared; as the *third* edition, which I have seen, was printed at Glasgow, in the year 1646. Principal Baillie, to whom I have already alluded, as entertaining a high opinion of Rowallan's Psalter, does not appear to have favoured this attempt of

* Zachary Boyd, or Boyde, author of "The Battle of the Soul in Death," Edin. 1619, 8vo.; "Oratio," &c., 1633, 4to.; "Crosses, Comforts, Counsels," &c., Glasgow, 1643, 8vo.; "The Garden of Zion," Glasgow, 2 vols. 8vo., 1644; "Two Oriental Pearls, Grace and Glory." This good man turned the Bible into rhyme, in the vulgar dialect of the country, to be published and circulated for the benefit of the common people; and for this purpose he intrusted a large sum to the University of Glasgow. His executors, however, never published the MSS., deeming it inexpedient to circulate this poetical version.—*Allibone's Dictionary*.

Boyd. In one of his letters he thus writes:—"Our good friend, Mr. Zachary Boyd, has put himself to a great deal of pains and charges to make a psalter; but I ever warned him his hopes were groundless to get it received in our churches; yet the flatteries of his unadvised neighbours make him insist in his fruitless design." And he attributes the slowness with which the Assembly proceeded in the publication of the present version to the opposition of Mr. Boyd's partisans. "Had it not been," he says, "for some who had more regard than needed to Mr. Zachary Boyd's Psalter, I think the Psalms had passed through in the end of the last Assembly."

This version, however, is not without occasional passages of considerable merit; and as it was, in common with Rowallan's, used by the brethren who revised and published the present authorized version, it furnished the groundwork of several of our Psalms as they now stand. As a favourable specimen of its character, I subjoin the translation of two short Psalms, which, in my opinion, is superior to our present version:—

PSALM CXVII.

<p>O praise the Lord most thankfully, Ye nations great and small! With heart and voice praise him also, On earth ye people all.</p>	<p>For he his kindness merciful, To us doth still afford: For ever the Lord's truth endures. Praise ye always the Lord.</p>
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PSALM CXXXI.

<p>My heart, O Lord, not haughty is, Mine eyes not lofty be; I meddle not in matters great, Or things too high for me.</p>	<p>Myself I have behav'd and still'd, As of his mother mild, A child that's wean'd, yea, ev'n my soul Is as a weaned child.</p>
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Let Isr'el all, ev'n in the Lord
 Still hope and him adore,
 From henceforth, as their duty is,
 And so for evermore.

The three versions to which I have referred, and of which I have given specimens, namely, those by King James and Lord Stirling, by Sir William Mure, of Rowallan, and by Mr. Zachary Boyd, appear to have been all that were published prior to the present version. Your readers are therefore now prepared to enter on the history of the origin, progress, and final adoption of this version by the Church of Scotland.

The version of the Psalms now used by the Church of Scotland, and by all the other Presbyterian churches that have branched off from this parent stem, was the production of Mr. Francis Rouse, an English gentleman, of whom your readers will doubtless expect a brief account. He was a native of Devonshire, and youngest son of Sir Anthony Rouse, Kt. He was educated at Oxford, where he took the degree of B. A. in 1591. He early appeared as an author in opposition to the Arminian doctrines and High Church principles of some of the more popular of the court divines; and in 1627, then an active and prominent member of Parliament, he, before the House of Commons, impeached Dr. Manwaring, a celebrated partisan of Archbishop Laud, of maintaining principles subversive of religion and civil government, and procured his conviction and punishment. As the Parliament was not suffered to meet during the subsequent twelve years, Mr. Rouse employed his leisure in preparing his version of the book of Psalms. At the meeting of what was called the *Long Parliament*, in November, 1640, he was one of the representatives for the borough of Truro, in the county of Cornwall, and very soon re-appeared as the intrepid opponent of Laud and his party, and the zealous advocate of civil liberty. He now published his version of the Psalms. When the Westminster Assembly of Divines met in the year 1643, Mr. Rouse was one of the lay assessors nominated to sit as members by the English Parliament. Though originally a Presbyterian, he joined the Independent and Re-

publican party after the execution of the king. He was a member of the select parliament which Cromwell assembled in 1653, and was chosen its Speaker. He was also one of Cromwell's Council of State. In 1657 he was made a member of his House of Peers, under the title of Lord Rouse; and about the same time Provost of Eton College. He died at Acton, near London, January 7th, 1659, and was buried at Eton.

He was a learned and religious man, fearless in his opposition to error, and zealous for every thing which he conceived to be for the interest of the gospel. During the latter years of his life he enjoyed the high satisfaction of seeing his version of the Psalms in very general use in England; and of knowing that it was universally adopted by the Church of Scotland, and that the pious and devout people of an entire kingdom were daily employing his strains in both their public and their domestic worship.

The version of Mr. Rouse was introduced to the notice of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in the month of November, 1643, by a message from the House of Commons, requesting that it might be taken into consideration with a view to its adoption in public worship. The Scottish commissioners opposed the motion, till the opinion of the General Assembly of their church should be ascertained. Accordingly in May, 1644, they thus informed their brethren of their proceedings in this matter:—

“There was also presented to the Assembly a new paraphrase of the Psalms in English metre, which was well liked and commended by some of the members of the Assembly. But because we conceived that one Psalm-book in all the three kingdoms was a point of uniformity much to be desired, we took the boldness (although we had no such express and particular commission) to oppose the present allowing thereof, till the Kirk of Scotland should be acquainted with it; and therefore have we now sent an essay thereof in some Psalms.”

The General Assembly having empowered them to sanction the preparation of the new Psalm-book, the Westminster divines accordingly entered on the work, but they appear to have prosecuted it very tardily. We learn from Baillie that, early in 1645, they had unanimously agreed to omit the doxologies which had hitherto been sung, both in the Scotch and English churches, at the end of each Psalm, as they are in the latter church to the present day:—

“About the conclusion of the Psalms we had no debate with them, (the Independent party.) Without scruple both Independents and all sang it, so far as I know, where it was printed at the end of two or three Psalms. But in the new translation of the Psalms, resolving to keep punctually to the original text, without any addition, we and they were content to omit that; whereupon we saw both the Popish and Prelatical party did so much doat as to put it to the end of most of their lessons, and all their Psalms.”

As the new Psalms were revised in the Assembly, they were forwarded to Scotland for the animadversions of a Committee of that church previously appointed to examine them. In June, 1645, Baillie thus writes from London to Lord Lauderdale, then in Scotland:—

“You have herewith, also, the last fifty of Mr. Rouse's Psalms. They would be sent to Edinburgh to the Committee for the Psalms. Mr. Andrew Ker will deliver them. When your lordship goes thither, you would stir up that Committee to diligence; for now the want of the Psalms will lie upon them alone; for, if once their animadversions were come up, I believe the book would quickly be printed and practised here. I know how lazy soever and tediously longsome they be here, yet that they will be impatient of any long delay there in this work.”

His exhortations to diligence appear to have been so far effectual that in the month of November following he states that the Psalms were perfected by the Westminster Assembly, and at press; and he describes them as “without all doubt the best that ever yet were extant.” The Parliament, however, were very dilatory in giving their final sanction to the book. For this delay Baillie, in December, 1646, accounts in the following manner:—

“The translation of the Psalms is past long ago in the Assembly; yet it sticks in the Houses. The Commons passed their order long ago; but the Lords joined not, being solicited by divers of the Assembly and of the ministers of London, who love better the more poetical paraphrase of their colleague, Mr. Burton. The too great accuracy of some in the Assembly, sticking too hard to the original text, made the last edition more concise and obscure than the former. With this the commission of our church was not so well pleased; but we have got all those obscurities helped; so I think it shall pass.”

Having been at length approved by the English Parliament, as well as by the Westminster divines, the General Assembly in Scotland now resolved seriously and deliberately to examine the whole version, previously to its receiving their sanction. Accordingly, at the Assembly which met at Edinburgh in 1647, the following overture on the subject was passed:—

“The General Assembly having considered the report of the Committee concerning the paraphrase of the Psalms sent from England, and finding that it is very necessary that the said paraphrase be yet revised, therefore doth appoint Master John Adamson* (*Principal of the College of Edinburgh*) to examine the first forty Psalms; Master Thomas Crawford, (*Professor of Humanity and Mathematics in the College of Edinburgh*.) the second forty; Master John Row, (*Principal of the King's College, Aberdeen*.) the third forty; and Master John Nevey, (*Minister of Newmills, Ayrshire*.) the last thirty Psalms of that paraphrase; and in their examination they shall not only observe what they think needs to be amended, but also to set down their own essay for correcting thereof: and for this purpose recommends to them to make use of the travails (*labours*) of Rowallan, Master Zachary Boyd, or of any other on that subject, but especially of our own paraphrase, that what they find better in any of these works may be chosen.”

At the General Assembly in the following year, the animadversions of these ministers were transmitted to Presbyteries, who were to enter on the examination of the book without delay, and report to the standing Commission of the church. At length, at the next Assembly, which met at Edinburgh in July, 1649, the work was found to be in such an advanced state that it was referred to a special Committee, appointed to read it over carefully, and transmit their corrections to the standing Commission of the church, who were empowered to publish it forthwith for general use. The following is the Act passed on this occasion:—

“The General Assembly, having taken some view of the new paraphrase of the Psalms in metre, with the corrections and animadversions thereupon, sent from several persons and Presbyteries, and finding that they cannot overtake the review and examination of the whole in this Assembly; therefore now, after so much time and so great pains about the correcting and examining thereof, from time to time, some years by-gone, that the work may come now to some conclusion, they do ordain the brethren appointed for the perusing the same during the meeting of this Assembly, namely, Masters James Hamilton, (*formerly Minister of Ballywalter, in the county of Down*.) John Smith, Hugh Mackail, (*uncle to the youthful martyr of the same name*.) Robert Trail, George Hutchinson, and Robert Laurie, (*all ministers at Edinburgh*.) after the dissolving of this Assembly, to go on in that work carefully. and to report their travails to the Commission of the General Assembly for public affairs, at their meeting at Edinburgh in November; and the said Commission, after perusal and re-examination thereof, is hereby authorized with full power to conclude and establish the paraphrase, and to publish and emit the same for public use.”

The book being now in a fair way of being introduced into the public worship of the church, Principal Baillie, who had watched its progress with great anxiety, thus expresses, in September, 1649, his fears, lest the change which, in the mean time, as already stated, had taken place in the politics of his friend, Mr. Rouse, should impede the reception of his book in Scotland:—

* John Adamson, author of “The Muses' Welcome to King James VI. at his Return to Scotland, Anno 1618.” Edin. 1618. The speeches will be found in Nichol's Progress of King James. He published several other works.—*Allibone's Dictionary*.

"I think at last we shall get a new Psalter. I have furthered that work ever with my best wishes; but this scruple now arises of it in my mind. The first author of the translation, Mr. Rouse, my good friend, has complied with the sectaries, and is a member of their republic. How a Psalter of his framing, albeit with much variation, shall be received by our church, I do not well know; yet it is needful we should have one, and a better in haste we cannot have. The Assembly has referred it to the Commission to cause print it after the last revision, and to put it in practice."

His apprehensions, however, appear to have been groundless. The Commission of the church, which met at the time appointed, finally approved of the version; and in the following Act authorized it, and it alone, to be used in the public service of the church:—

"The Commission of the General Assembly having with great diligence considered the paraphrase of the Psalms in Metre sent from the Assembly of Divines in England,—and having exactly examined the same, do approve the said paraphrase, as it is now compiled; and therefore, by the power given them by the said Assembly, do appoint it to be printed and published for public use; hereby authorizing the same to be the only paraphrase of the Psalms of David to be sung in the Kirk of Scotland; and discharging the old paraphrase, and any other than this new paraphrase to be made use of in any congregation or family, after the first day of May, in the year 1650."

On the 8th of January, 1650, it was approved by the Scottish Parliament; and having thus received the approbation and sanction of both the civil and ecclesiastical powers, it soon supplanted Sternhold's version, and was universally adopted throughout the kingdom.

Thus, Mr. Editor, have I traced the history of the psalmody of our church from the earliest period to the introduction of the present version; which, since its original adoption, has undergone no alteration. Notwithstanding its many excellences, it is susceptible of considerable improvement, which I have no doubt, in the course of time, it will receive. And as this is a subject full of interest to Presbyterians, I shall with your permission, lay before your readers, in a subsequent number, the pertinent and judicious observations of Dr. Beattie, relative to a revision of our psalmody. These observations occur in the Letter to Dr. Hugh Blair, to which I have already once or twice referred, and which is not generally known.*

Praying that your readers may be both edified and entertained by this letter, and grateful for the opportunity you have afforded me of laying before them my researches on a favourite topic,

I remain your obliged servant,

BEN-EZRA.

