

The Scottish Psalmody

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Like *The Comprehensive Psalter* the text of this psalter is from the 1650 Scots Metrical Version (SMV) so I will not review the text itself. It is available for purchase primarily from the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) who sells it through various venues that are a little difficult to track down.

Background

Aside from the history of the SMV, I do not know much about the history of this particular publication. My understanding is that it was originally printed by the FCS and then reprinted by the FCSC for use in their congregations but that it has also enjoyed extensive use among other denominations and congregations as well.

Format

The psalter is a split-leaf, cloth-bound with a glued binding but fairly sturdy with good quality paper. The edition I have was printed in 2013 but I get the impression that this is a reprint of an earlier edition. The typesetting is not completely clean and it has a little bit of a dated feel to it.

The indices are good, but simple. At the front is a list of tunes and the psalm they are associated with. In the back is a subject index of psalms, to aid in choosing a psalm for various occasions.

Words

The words are easy to read but I was disappointed that the convention used in the SMV portion of *Sing Psalms* was not used, such as underlines for two syllables expressed on one note or marks for where one syllable was held

for two notes. I liked that because it gave a consistency when singing with others and also a quick note to people unfamiliar with the words that this line had an unusual part to it. It is disappointing for me just because I was hoping for it, but those who have not experienced it or congregations used to the SMV will not miss it.

Music

There are about 140 tunes in CM or CMD and another 50 or so in other meters, giving a good selection of music to choose from. Without singing through all of them they look to be mostly familiar tunes, set at a singable range, and in general easy to learn while still being enjoyable and pleasant.

Much like FCS's publication, *Sing Psalms*, this has suggested tunes and their numbers next to each Psalm, giving an appropriate and consistent setting for each of the 150 Psalms. I find this very useful.

Conclusion

All in all, I really like this psalter for the SMV. My edition had a couple of pages that interfered with the split-leaf portion but I suspect that is not always the case. Despite the lack of singing notes in the text, this is one of the better editions of the SMV for its music. I would like to see a little better binding and page cut, cleaner text, and singing marks for the words but still think it is an excellent edition of the SMV.