

I. *As regards Public Worship.* The Scottish Reformers, like the German, French, and Swiss, restored to the Christian people what the Church of Rome had taken from them—'the service of song.' Psalmody was introduced into families, and practised in all Churches as a very important part of Divine worship. Various metrical versions of the Psalms of David were published in Scotland in the 16th century: but the first that appears to have been adopted by the General Assembly was the English version of Sternhold and Hopkins, published in the year 1563. In the following century, when it was attempted to establish a uniformity of worship in the three Kingdoms, the version of the English Puritan, Francis Rous, was submitted to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and after several revisions finally adopted. This is the version which Cromwell and his 'Ironsides' sung; but it fell into desuetude in England after the Restoration, and is now regarded all the world over as the Scottish Book of Psalms.

The metrical version, was called by our forefathers 'Paraphrases of the Psalms'; and they designed to add to these "Paraphrases of the other Scriptural Songs" We have before us the Acts of Assembly of 1647, from which we extract as follows: "The Assembly doth further recommend, that Mr. Zachary Boyd be at the paines to translate the other Scriptural Songs in meeter, and to report his travels (labors) also to the Commission of Assembly." This proposal was not carried into effect. Zachary Boyd indeed faithfully reported his 'travels,' and two revisers of his work were appointed by the Assembly of 1648; but troublous times followed, and the attention of the Church was otherwise engrossed during the remainder of that memorable Century. The ideal however was wise and good. If metrical verses are to be sung in Public worship, what can be better than to use for this purpose, the inspired and exalted poetry of Scripture?

It was in a later and less devout age, that our present Paraphrases were compiled—not metrical versions of the *Songs of Scripture*, as formerly proposed, but "Translations and Paraphrases in verse of several passages of Sacred Scripture." The collection contains several pretty poems, but very few spiritual songs, fitted for the use of a congregation praising the Almighty. The idea of paraphrasing the *prose* portions of Scripture for the purpose of sacred song, is one which could only have occurred to the tame mind and bad taste of the eighteenth century.

In the sacred music appropriate to the service of song, the superiority of our ancestors in the 16th and 17th centuries is indisputable. The old version of metrical Psalms was ordinarily printed with music, and that in the four parts; so that every one who possessed a Psalm-book possessed at the same time a Book of well chosen and arranged Psalm Tunes. The version had a greater variety of metres than that which is now in use; and each Psalm had its appropriate tune, the music of which was printed under the first verse. Several specimens of these Psalters are extant still. Scotland in those days was a country of high musical attainment. Church music was taught in the Schools, and