

had been begun in England by Sternhold & Hopkings, and completed at Geneva by the English exiles, who had fled from the persecution against the Protestants in England, then carrying on under Queen Mary. Knox was at Geneva at the same time; and from his connection with the English exiles there, we may infer that he was the means of introducing it into Scotland, where it was coming into use in the Protestant churches about the time of the establishment of the Reformed Religion in 1560; and we find that in 1562 the General Assembly took steps for having a large edition of it printed at Edinburgh, and afterwards ordained it to be generally used. This was the authorized version of the psalms used in the Church of Scotland for about 90 years.

In 1620, a version was printed, the first thirty-one psalms of which, had been versified by that vain and foolish pedant King James VI, and the remainder by the Earl of Stirling, but it never came into public favour.

About 1633, there were two new metrical versions published, both of which were well received—one in Scotland, by Sir Thomas More, of Rowallan, and the other in England, by Francis Rouse, Esq., of Devonshire, a pious and venerable gentleman, and a member of the English House of Commons.

When the celebrated Assembly of Divines, consisting in part of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, met at Westminster, in 1643, to frame a Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Form of Church Government, Directory for Worship, &c., one part of the grand plan appears to have been to obtain a better version of the psalms in metre, for the worship of the Church than the one hitherto authorized. With this view, Rouse's version was selected as a basis for the labours of the Assembly.

Accordingly, on the 20th November, 1643, the Parliament recommended Rouse's version to the Assembly of Divines for their consideration and revision, and they, after some discussion, appointed a committee of such of their number as were particularly qualified for the task, to carry the object of the Parliament into effect. After dismissing from this version every extraneous composition, such as hymns and doxologies, which in those days, were attached to some of the psalms, and occasionally sung at the close of worship, the Assembly laid it down as a leading principle in the correcting of this version, that they were to keep not only to the sense, but as far as possible, to the very words of the sacred text.

After being about two years in the hands of the Assembly, during which time there were many alterations and amendments made on the original copy, it was finally approved of by the Assembly, on November 11th, 1645, and shortly after approved and authorized by the English Parliament.

The improved version, as thus approved and authorized, was sent to Scotland, and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1646, took the matter into consideration and deliberated on the propriety of adopting it for the use of congregations and families. In 1647, they passed the following

“Act for revising the paraphrase of the psalms brought from England, &c.

“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 Mr. John Adamson to examine the first forty psalms; Mr. Thomas Crawford the second forty; Mr. John Row the third forty; and Mr. John Nevey 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 of Rowallan, Mr. 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, and likewise they shall make use of the amendments sent from Presbyteries, who for this cause are hereby desired to hasten their observations on them; and they are to make report of their travails to the Commission of the Assembly for public affairs at their first meeting in February next. And the Commission after revising thereof, shall send the same to Provincial Assemblies, to be transmitted to Presbyteries that by their farther consideration the matter may be fully prepared to the next Assembly; and because some psalms in that paraphrase sent from England are composed in verses which do not agree with the common tunes, therefore it is recommended that these psalms be turned into other verses which may agree to the common tunes, that is, having the first line of eight syllables and the second line of six, that so both versions being together, use may be made of either of them in congregations as shall be found convenient.”—Act Sess. 25, Aug. 28, 1647.

This committee performed the task assigned them, and the General Assembly in 1648, sent the version with its corrections and alterations made upon it to Presbyteries “that they may carefully revise and examine the same, and thereafter send them with their corrections to the Commission of this Assembly to be appointed for public affairs,