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THE PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL AND THE PSALTER.

As might be expected, the action of the managing Committee of the Presbyterian Council, in excluding human hymns from its services of praise, during its late sessions in Philadelphia, has not failed to call forth much comment and severe criticism. By some, it has been denounced as "a concession to the superstitious whims of a small section of the Presbyterian body." It has been asserted that in "no line sung, was there the slightest recognition of Christ nor of Christianity." Even the *New York Observer* has many tears to shed over "an arrangement by which, through ten whole days, an assembly of warm hearted, earnest, active, working, redeemed Christians must omit all worship and praise of the crucified and interceding Jesus, the King of saints, etc." Hope is freely expressed that such "an anomaly in the history of the Church" will not be repeated, and that "the Council has witnessed the last expiring throes of one of the strangest delusions of the Church."

Is all this uncomplimentary criticism just and true? Is the exclusive use of an inspired psalmody "a superstitious whim?" Was the action of the committee of arrangements, in excluding uninspired hymns, a wrong done to warm hearted, earnest, active, working, redeemed Christians? Is a conscientious adherence to the songs of inspiration, "one of the strangest delusions of the Church"? To such questions our reply is a decided negative, and we shall now offer a few remarks in explanation.

It may be safely presumed, that the theory which would admit into the worship of God whatever is not absolutely prohibited, will not meet with much acceptance amongst the readers of this Journal. Scripture and reason unite in condemning it. It is that which has led to all the mummeries of the church of Rome, and all the tomfooleries sometimes practised in so called Protestant worship. Adopt that theory, and the way is clear for the introduction of the "flexions and genuflexions, the bowings to the east, and curtsseys to the west," and all the "man millinery" of the most advanced school of ritualism. Adopt that theory, and clouds of incense may encompass the worshippers in the house of God, bells may tinkle at the minister's garment as he enters the pulpit; pictures, images, crucifixes, and holy water may legitimately claim a place even in Protestant churches. None of these things are positively prohibited.

The Scriptural theory of worship is that which excludes whatever is not expressly, or by plain inference, *enjoined*. It is that which requires that any rite proposed for adoption should not only be *not forbidden*, but bear the seal of a positive *Divine appointment*. Such was the recognized rule in the old economy. The tabernacle, its furniture, and all its services, were of Divine prescription. Every thing was to be "according to the