

## STANDING COMMITTEES.

The report of the Committee appointed to name a Committee to strike Standing Committees was represented as follows:—that the Committee be composed of the Moderator, Rev. Dr. Reid, Rev. Dr. McGregor, Rev. Dr. McVicar, Rev. Dr. Bell, Rev. Dr. Waters, Rev. Professor McKerran, Rev. Professor Bryce, Revs. T. Duncan, D. M. Gordon, R. Torrance, A. McL. Sinclair, D. H. Fletcher, Messrs. C. Davidson, D. McVicar, D. Morris, T. W. Taylor, J. Charlton, G. McMicken, Mr. Croil (Convener.)

## HYMNOLOGY.

The consideration of the overtures on the subject of hymnology and the preparation of an uniform hymnal for use in the Church was continued.

Rev. Dr. Robb resumed the debate. He held that it was the duty of the Church to commit itself to no hymnology save that which God had provided in His own Word. He fully agreed that any matter calculated to promote the spiritual life of the Church should be considered by the Assembly, but the question now, was not, how men could best promote spiritual life? The question was what had God prescribed in His Holy Word for the promotion of spiritual life? He admitted that the state of the psalmody of the Church was, as represented, deplorable; the confusion, however, had been brought about, not by those who adhered to the Psalms, but by those who had used uninspired hymns in the Worship of God. He did not think that the confusion would be wiped out by introducing, as proposed, another to the twenty-six hymn-books now in use; the cure was to drop the use of hymn-books, which he repeated in addition to ending the confusion would put a stop to heresy. He stated that the principle of the Presbyterian Church was to have uniformity of practice, worship and praise. Those who had hymnals had broken through that desire for uniformity because they had said that it would produce beauty. Now they had found that ugliness instead of beauty had been produced, the hymn singers were anxious to return to uniformity and force everyone to use one hymn-book. Where, if they desired to force people to use one hymn-book, was the liberty now, of which they boasted? He denied that, as he said the Moderator had stated, the use of hymns had been sanctioned.

The Moderator—I said "allowed."

Rev. Dr. Robb said the Moderator had interpreted the word allowed to mean sanctioned. Hymns were not used where he came from. He had never heard any of the five hymns added to the Psalms given out in church anywhere, and he did not believe that the Church in Canada had sanctioned the use of hymns. He opposed the view that the use of hymns was to be allowed when the union of the churches was consummated; if such was the case, some people were very much mistaken in their views on that point. If the Church had tolerated the use of hymns, that was not to say that it had approved of them, for there was a great difference between allowing anything and approving of the same thing. And as to that matter of allowing the use of hymns, he might illustrate it by the reply of Christ when He was told that Moses had permitted divorces—"Moses, because of the hardness of men's hearts granted it to them, but from the beginning it was not so." He contended that it was because of the hardness of the hearts—not only of some of the people, but of the ministers—that the hymn-books were allowed, but from the beginning of the Apostolic Church it was not so. He was surprised to hear Mr. McMullen say—and no doubt he said it in consequence of the perverting influence of hymns upon him—that he could not see why he should not be as much at liberty to sing hymns as he was to compose prayers.

Rev. Mr. McMullen said he was sorry to interrupt Dr. Robb, but he wished to correct him. The statement he made was, that he was at liberty to address God in prayer in words composed on the spur of the moment, and he thought he was legally at liberty on Scriptural grounds, to worship Him by praising Him in words carefully put together in verse.

Rev. Dr. Robb said the acceptable way of worshipping God was instituted in His word, and men had no right to worship Him according to their own imagination and devices, or in any other way than that prescribed in Holy Scripture. There was this difference between the questions of praying and praising: a prescribed book of praise was given in the Word of God; but there was no prescribed book of prayer. Was it not for the principle of praising God in the words He had given that Presbyterians had suffered? Was it not because they would not be bound where God had not bound them, and that they would be bound where God had bound them that they endured every kind of pain? He was surprised to find that the admonition to sing praises and hymns and spiritual songs had been quoted in favour of the singing of uninspired poetry. Some people had thought the psalms meant Wesley's hymns—(Hear, hear)—but that could not be so. Some had thought that "psalms" were mentioned first, and that the term was applicable to the psalms of David, while the word "hymns" meant all the hymns or whims written down to the present day, even including the very latest edition of Moody and Sankey. Now, if there was that distinction between psalms and hymns, he would like some of those who favoured hymn singing to explain what was meant by songs. He contended that many of the Psalms of David were in the original called songs, that the word alleluia meant song, and that it was to psalms and alleluias that the Apostle referred, when he recommended the singing of songs. He sympathized entirely with the position of Professor Gregg. The Professor had stated he regarded hymns as legitimate. So did he (Dr. Robb). He also regarded sentimental and comic songs as legitimate under some circumstances. But he held that to sing a hymn, when a psalm should be sung, was to substitute a human production for the praise which had been provided by God. That was the position taken by the Westminster Assembly, and that was the principle to which the church should adhere. The Shorter Catechism put the matter in a very plain light when in answer to the question, "What is forbidden in the second commandment," it made the reply, "The second commandment forbiddeth the worship of God by images or in any other way not appointed." It was the de-

parture from that principle which had placed the Anglican Church in its present unhappy position with respect to ritualism. In the twentieth Article it was declared that the Church had the right to prescribe forms of worship. The present position of the Anglican Church would have been impossible if it had not been for that Article. He was surprised to find Mr. McMullen stating that it required so much intelligence to sing the psalms now-a-days.

Rev. Mr. McMullen—Allow me to correct Dr. Robb again. What I said was that the psalms of David required a very intelligent and mature Christian to sing them intelligently.

Rev. Dr. Robb asked if it had come to this; that in this nineteenth century Christians were not able to appreciate the hymns which were household words with the early Christians when they were just coming out of heathenism. He was strongly of opinion that the Church had forbidden the use of hymns.

A Voice—No.

Rev. Dr. Robb—What is not appointed is forbidden; is not that logic?

A Voice—No; it's rhetoric. (A laugh.)

Rev. Dr. Robb—Use does not imply either authorization or approval. (Hear, hear.) All he asked for was toleration for his own views and for those who thought with him. He did not believe that the circumstances of the Church at present would warrant him in getting up an agitation against the use of hymns. There were far more important matters than that to be considered. But he thought it would be better to conform to constitutional usage and procedure than to adopt a resolution in favour of hymns; for it had come to this, that those who did not agree to the use of hymns would either be obliged to retire from the Church or to debase their own consciences by taking a course to which their forefathers would never agree.

Rev. Mr. Scott asked Rev. Dr. Robb's view as to the paraphrases.

Rev. Dr. Robb—I will discuss that when it comes up.

Rev. D. J. Macdonnell said from Dr. Robb's remarks it was evident he maintained the position that under no circumstances should hymns be tolerated in the Church—not sanctioned, simply, but tolerated. Dr. Robb might draw a distinction between sanctioned and tolerated.

Rev. Dr. Robb—I do.

Rev. Mr. Macdonnell said that whatever difference there was, Dr. Robb's remarks all tended in the direction of saying that hymns should not be tolerated. He had said that the Church was limited to what God had prescribed to be used in His worship. All agreed to that as a general principle, but the question was the application, where did Dr. Robb find the authority for saying that God had simply prescribed for use in His service 150 psalms and no more? Some 3,000 psalms had been written but there was no place in the Old or New Testament that he (Mr. Macdonnell) was aware of in which it was said that only 150 psalms should be used. He held that the Church was not restricted and that there was the apostolic authority to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Dr. Robb had interpreted the word alleluia to mean "hymn." He thought it always meant "praise ye the Lord." He very much questioned whether the Apostle meant to limit the songs to the songs of degree. Certainly if that principle were to prevail the present metrical version of the psalms would have to be dispensed with and a translation of the psalms as literal as possible, would have to be furnished for use in Church.

Rev. Dr. Robb—Oh, no.

Rev. Mr. Macdonnell said he had no doubt that Dr. Robb did not see it. Then Dr. Robb had said that the principles of Presbyterianism meant uniformity in doctrine, worship, and government—therefore no variety of psalms or hymns was to be sung. Push that idea to its logical conclusion, and it would be found that there was a very questionable variety in the prayers, and if it were good to guard against the use of psalms and hymns in variety, it was also good to provide that there should be no variety in the service of prayer. He would venture to say this, that in the Presbyterian Church there were more devout people hindered occasionally from joining with solemnity and devoutness in the service of prayer, by reason of the way in which that service was conducted, than were hindered from joining devoutly in the service of praise because a hymn was sung instead of a psalm. With regard to the statement that God had prescribed a book of praise to be used, and that alone, it might also be said that God had prescribed prayers—for the Bible contained beautiful prayers—and that no other prayers than those found in the Bible should be used. One argument was as good as another, and indeed, in regard to prayers, the argument was stronger, for did not our Lord say, "When ye pray, say Our Father which art in heaven." Dr. Robb had said that the five so-called hymns which were appended to the psalms had not been sanctioned or approved of. A great many ministers and elders were astonished also when he said that he had never heard one of those hymns given out. He (Mr. Macdonnell) was sure he was speaking the views of the majority when he said that "Salvation and immortal praise to our victorious King" had been given out time and again. Rev. Dr. Robb said he drew a distinction between toleration and approval. This was a matter for the Assembly to consider. Dr. Robb claimed apparently that the Church had better tolerate twenty-six books of hymns than tolerate one. He (Mr. Macdonnell) confessed he could not see the practical difference in such a case, between tolerating and approving; if there was a difference it was so slight as not to be of any consequence. There were at least three books that had the allowance of the Church; they had so much approval that they were allowed to be used by certain congregations, and that allowance was stated in the basis of union. Let matters go on as they were, and any one of these books could be introduced into any congregation with no other consent than that of the Kirk session. He did not think that so very terrible, but he did think, as he had stated in an overture he introduced before the Presbytery of Toronto, that it would be better if there was a uniform psalm and hymn-book both at home and here and in the other Colonies. He knew there would be difficulties in introducing a hymn-book different from those now in use in

congregations, unless congregations might be satisfied that a better one than that they were using was to be brought in—and perhaps it might not be a better one. But, after all, all that was asked for was the toleration of one good hymn-book, or that the Assembly should select a book and say that congregations which wished to use hymn-books should use that and no other. There were in the New Testament two grand canons of worship: one was "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Whatever in his opinion was in conformity with worshipping God in spirit and in truth was allowed in the Christian Church. The other canon was "Let all things be done decently and in order." He believed that with the variety of hymn-books the first canon was being conformed to; but by securing a uniform hymn-book order would be obtained and the second canon would be carried out.

Rev. Mr. McBain, (Chatham, N.B.) contended that to declare that nothing but psalms were to be used would concuss many consciences. It had been stated that the psalms were alone sung in the early Christian Church. He would point out in reference to that that Mosheim had stated that the psalms of David were not authorized until the fourth century of the Christian era and there was authority for the statement that hymns were sung prior to that. A great heretic he said had in the early Christian times advocated the singing only of psalms. The Arian heresy in Ireland, too, arose among those who used psalms only. He contended that in view of all this those who did not wish to sing hymns should not prevent others from doing so.

It being one o'clock the Assembly rose for recess.

## AFTERNOON SEDERUNT.

The proceedings were opened by prayer by the Moderator.

## HYMNOLOGY.

Rev. Mr. McBain continued his remarks. He contended that in no sense had the Word of God been appealed to in proof of the statement which had been made that the psalms were alone prescribed for use in the Church. It had been claimed that the psalms were a perfect system of worship. If they were perfect, where, he wished to know was the use of the giving of the remainder of the Scripture? It was a strange thing, he said, that those who were opposed to hymns were also opposed to the use of the organ, and while they were very particular to use the psalms they were not so particular to follow out the injunction found in the psalms to "praise the Lord with loud trumpets, with cymbals, and with the organ." In the Psalms, he said, the Holy Spirit was only mentioned five times. The versification of the Psalms by Rouse was not a version, and as a versification it was not perfect, words and sentences being transposed and changed. Besides that, not one-half of the songs of Scripture were to be found in the Psalm book. And if people were to be confined to the Psalms, surely Zechariah and Mary and Elizabeth were heretical in singing hymns not taken from that book. The Scripture most directly contradicted the assertion that the Psalms alone were to be sung. The Songs of Solomon were called the song of songs, and surely they should be used if the Psalms had to be.

Rev. Mr. Black suggested that some means should be taken to come to a decision as to the length of time the debate was to be continued.

Rev. Mr. Wilson (Kingston) contended that the last speaker (Rev. Mr. McBain) had held that the Psalms were inappropriate for singing in church.

Rev. Mr. McBain said he did not say that they were inappropriate; he did say, however, that the Scriptures taught that they were not the only hymns which Christians were at liberty to use.

Rev. Mr. Wilson said the rev. gentlemen had intimated that the Psalms did not refer frequently enough to the Holy Spirit. The Psalms did refer to Christ; he was to be found in every psalm. And as to hymns, he would say, in the language of a holy man: he would like to find a name for the man who pretended he could write better hymns for the use of the people of God than the Holy Spirit could. The Psalms, he said, were quoted approvingly by Christ and His disciples. They were written not in one year, but at various times, and they were collected through the means of the Holy Spirit. They were spiritual songs; they were of spiritual and divine origin. They were the spiritual songs to which the Apostle Paul referred. Paul must have referred, when he enjoined the singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, to those then in existence. If those psalms and hymns and spiritual songs were not the Psalms of David what had become of the other hymns and songs of human—

A delegate here took objection to the discussion of the whole question of hymnology.

The Moderator said that objection should have been taken before.

Rev. Mr. Wilson, continuing, said no hymns of human composition were used earlier than the second century, and what had the Church done in the meantime he wished to know? It must have sung the Psalms of David. He held that Rouse's version of the Psalms was a good version, the proof of which was to be found in the fact that it was approved of by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and they were just as able to judge as the divines of Chatham, New Brunswick, or Miramichi. He had never given out, or heard given out, the five hymns at the end of the Psalms. How did they get there, he asked? The manner in which they got there was, it was said, this: A bookseller had added them to oblige some friends, and printers had continued them there ever since. The departure from the use of the Psalms was a great danger; it was a departure from the sheet anchor of the Church. Principal Grant had said that he had preached in many pulpits, and he had found no difficulty as to the hymns. Well, all kinds of people might find no trouble with some of the hymns. An Unitarian might sing some of the hymns.

Rev. D. J. Macdonnell—So could an Unitarian sing the Psalms.

Rev. Mr. Wilson—Yes, but without finding his errors there. He contended that some of the hymns—one of which he quoted as saying: