

he explains the reason why the Holy Spirit excluded the poetry specified from the collection which he made for the service of praise in the house of the Lord. These inspired prophets spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; yet this same Holy Spirit who moved them to write this poetry, for reasons known to himself, saw fit to exclude it from the collection appointed for praise. Did their inspired poetry require the touch of the uninspired pen, to fit it for the service of song in the sanctuary from which the Holy spirit excluded it, and can they who place it there and employ it in the worship of God, say that they present an authorized offering of praise?

It is interesting to notice the rise and progress of hymnology in the public worship of God, or to trace its genealogy. Mr. Harvey having asked if it can be wrong to versify and sing the poetry of the ancient prophets, takes it for granted, without proving it, that it is quite right, and then adds, "if we may put into metre and sing the doxology of John, or Paul's rapturous outpouring in 8th chapter of Romans, why may we not accept as the vehicle of our praise, those other hymns which beautifully and touchingly express the very ideas of Scripture." This is, I have no doubt, the way in which hymns were first introduced into the public worship of God, but it is not the logic of the bible. Men, leaning upon their own understanding, began to versify and sing certain portions of scripture which they thought would impart more variety to the service of praise, and give it more of an evangelical aspect, and thus succeeded in introducing it into use. This they could the more easily effect by representing it as still being the divine word, though a little paraphrased. This having been accomplished, the next step would be easy. It would be argued that if portions of scripture paraphrased might be employed in the worship of God, why not those hymns which, although not strictly paraphrases of any particular portion of the divine word, yet contains the ideas of scripture. In this way the hymn would follow the paraphrase. This is precisely Mr. Harvey's course of reasoning. Had the reverse order been attempted, the probability is, that it would not have succeeded, and that the church would have resisted such an innovation. The consequence is, that there is to be found in use in the christian church, every variety of poetry, from the most beautiful paraphrase down to the commonest doggerel. The introduction of paraphrases and hymns is the result of human, not of divine wisdom.

The object of his argument here is to induce the Presbyterian church to admit a large increase of hymns to be used along with the paraphrases already in use. "It is not needful, however," he says, "to pro-

long argument on this point, as the highest authority in our church has given its sanction to the use of spiritual songs, in addition to those contained in the psalter; and the number of those we may use is but a question of expediency and detail." Surely he would not have the liberty of this enlightened age "tied down to ancient forms," precedents, or ecclesiastical authority! He says, the highest authority in the church has already done it. Now the authority of the church to do this, is the point questioned. We want proof from scripture that she has this authority. I have already referred to this point and need not repeat what I have said upon it, further than to observe, that unless it can be fairly proved from scripture, that God has left the matter of praise in the hands of the Church to regulate as she sees best, it is useless to argue about it. If God has not entrusted the church with this matter, that settles the question, and all reasoning about other points is time lost. We have never seen it proved from scripture that God has left this important matter in the hands of the church, or that the church has this authority. It might also be fairly questioned which was the highest authority, that which drew up and adopted the confession of faith, which strictly adhered to the inspired psalms in the service of praise in the sanctuary, or that which sanctioned the adoption of the paraphrases. The former refers to a time of great spiritual life and purity in the church, the latter to a time of great spiritual deadness and declension. Besides, this is just the old popish doctrine of the authority of the church as antagonistic to divine teaching.

Again he tells us that "many good men dread to encourage the singing of hymns lest the psalms should be lost sight of. The fear is groundless." We are surprised that Mr. Harvey should not be acquainted with the fact that in several large denominations of christians who sing hymns, and yet acknowledge the divine character of the psalms, these psalms have been wholly lost sight of in the public worship of the Lord. And among those sections of the Presbyterian Church which have adopted an "enlarged hymnal," there is a strong tendency to the same result. This is just what might be expected. The great proportion of hymns used in the worship of God, bear about the same relation to the psalms, that the great proportion of the popular light novelistic religious reading of the present day does to the scriptures, or to sound theological reading. It is a well known fact that the more persons indulge in sensational reading, requiring no effort of the understanding, the stronger their distaste for the scriptures, and for solid religious books, which require not only an exertion