

the purpose of refuting them, and yet he admits that Christ wrought miracles. The emperor Julian, who was once a nominal Christian, at a later period, regarded miracles as an example of Christ's power and skill as a physician, as if any medical skill could charm the dull cold ear of death. The early enemies of Christianity admitted that Christ wrought miracles, that he lived, died, and even rose again from the dead, though they endeavoured to turn aside the force of their admissions, by referring his mighty works to divination and magic. But modern philosophy has completely dispelled these chimeras as to magic; and, therefore, as soon as the facts are admitted, we know that Christianity is from God.

IV. The credibility of the New Testament is demonstrated from modern researches, in cases where the New Testament was supposed to be in error. There are two instances in which the English translators were so sure that some error had crept into the sacred text, that they translated the Greek word *proconsul*, by *deputy*—though the manuscripts and even ancient versions were all against them. The first instance is in Acts, xviii. 12. It was objected that Achaia was included in the Roman province of Greece and the Peloponnesus; that it was made a province, not by the senate, but by the emperor, and that, therefore, its governor ought, in accordance with Roman usage, to be styled not a proconsul, but a procurator, or deputy. This objection was long thought to be unanswerable, till it was discovered that Gallio was the brother of the philosopher Seneca; that, through his influence, Achaia was changed into a province, and that its governor was addressed by the title, Proconsul. The second instance in which inaccuracy has been charged upon Luke by our translators, is in Act. xiii. 7—Sergius Paulus is called the Proconsul of Cyprus, where we would only expect to find a prator; and to avoid the objection, our translators have falsely rendered the Greek term, deputy. But a considerable number of years ago, a coin was found in the isle of Cyprus, having in the middle of the reverse the word Cyprus—on the other side, the image and superscription of Claudius Cæsar, while Commodus Proculus was proconsul, being graven on the circle round the coin. Now, this individual succeeded Sergius Paulus, in the office of governor of the island. These examples prove, that all attempts to correct or overthrow the Word of God, has hitherto proved abortive, and that the Word of the Lord shall endure forever.

There is another instance of wondrous accuracy in Acts xviii. 7.—Publius is here styled the "first man of the island," and it has been asked, what is meant by the title? Malta was included in the province of Sicily; and the proconsul of that province appointed a deputy in Malta. Now here again a coin comes to our aid. A medal has been discovered, having a Roman Knight inscribed on it, named Publius, with the title given by Luke to Publius,—"the first man of Malta"—another undoubted verification of the sacred records. Thus, the truth of the Bible has only been more strikingly confirmed by the assaults of its enemies.—The three-fold weapons of argument, ridicule and persecution have been turned against it, but it has risen superior to every attack, and its contents have been more fully proved to be the faithful and true sayings of God. The shades of error that obscured its light have passed away—sinners have been corrected—saints edified—and Jehovah has pronounced a blessing upon his accepted people—even life that shall never end.

II.

ERRATA.

In the February No., page 122, 2nd column, 6th line from bottom—for Marcus Aurelius read Marcus Aurelius. Page 123, 2nd col., 21st line from bottom, for superiority read inferiority. Do. 18th line from do., for wealed read revealed.

[FOR THE CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.]

ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

BY REV. ANDREW KENNEDY.

There is a rich variety of matter and composition in the Scriptures. The several books, as historical, prophetic, devotional, preceptive, doctrinal, practical, or poetic in their structure, are each distinguished by admirable excellencies worthy of their Divine origin. The book of Psalms is one of the most wonderful of the whole, and has ever been highly esteemed, and diligently made use of by the spiritually minded. John Knox, the illustrious Reformer in Scotland, and a man of great and good mind, found it so beneficial, that he read it carefully once a month; and another eminent man declared, on his death-bed, that if he had another year to live, he would spend it in reading the Psalms and Paul's Epistles.

The object of the following observations, though coming far short of the subject, is to throw some light on this precious portion of the Divine Word, and to give a few rules for the profitable perusal of it. May all the readers of the magazine be Scripture readers, and disposed to act upon the directions given by two inspired Apostles,—"is any merry? let him sing psalms." "Speak to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

The general title of the book in Hebrew, is *Sepher tehillim*, that is, the book of praises or hymns—the praises of God being their chief, though not their only subject-matter. Our word "psalm" is of Greek origin. It signifies a song, because their sacred compositions, as used among the Jews in public worship, and private devotion, were accompanied with the music of the voice, and also of melodious instruments. It is likewise called the *psalter*; from the *psaltery*, one of the musical instruments, a kind of harp, along with the notes of which these songs of the Lord were sung.

It seems to have been David, who was a great proficient in instrumental music, and passionately fond of melody, and had consecrated his attainments of this kind to the noblest purpose—the glorification of God—it seems to have been he who gave form and system to the employment of music, together with suitable sentiment, in verse, in Jehovah's service. Doubtless this had been done prior to his day, but he brought the exercise to far greater perfection, and furnished much of the materials for it, guided by Divine inspiration. From his time the practice continued to occupy a prominent place in the services of the Jewish Church, and thence it was transferred to the Christian Church, only the simplicity and spiritual character of the gospel dispensation, made the use of musical instruments to be dropped, remaining alone the music of the human voice—the finest of all music when rightly cultivated, and, when connected with proper exercises of mind and heart, the fittest of all organs for celebrating the Divine praises, and expressing the devout feelings and desires of the soul towards Him. And as the exercise of psalmody was taken from the Jewish into the Christian worship, so likewise the book of Psalms received Christian adoption, as the matter of the exercise. Jesus himself, with his disciples, sang the psalms; they sung a part of them after the institution of the Sacramental Supper, just before He suffered; the first Christians being Jews, would naturally use them; and thus it is easy to see how they obtained a general introduction into the Christian Church. But these remarks do not fairly imply that the *Psalms alone* are allowable in Christian worship. There are other pieces of sacred poetry in the Scriptures, besides the Psalms, and no one can show that the former were not employed in the Jewish service, as well as the latter, nor prove that Christians may not use both with equal right; neither does what has been stated above foreclose the discussion of such a question as this.—What is the best mode of adopting the sentiments expressed in the Psalms and in the Scriptures at large, to Gospel-worship, so as to make our *psalmody* most suited to the Christian economy, and most calculated to accomplish the ends to be gained by it—the adoring and praising of God by the people of Christ, and the promotion of piety in their souls? Here, enlightened and liberal thinking men will admit, that there is scope for inquiry, and for the exercise of the freedom wherewith Christ hath made his people free.

A question readily arises concerning the Book of Psalms—who was its author? It generally goes by the name of the Psalms of David, but he was not the sole penman of them, though certainly of a large part of them. Hence he is styled, 2 Sam. xxii. 1, "The sweet psalmist of Israel." Some of the Talmudic Jewish writers attribute the Psalms to ten different authors, viz.: Adam, who they say, but not on good grounds, composed the 92nd Psalm; Abraham, to whom they give the name of Ethan, and ascribe to him the 89th; Moses, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and the three sons of Korah; these are nine, and the tenth is David, of whom, however, they allege that he was merely the collector of the Psalms into one volume or book. But this opinion of theirs rests on no proper foundation. As to Adam being the author of the 92nd Psalm, a slight examination of its structure, will be sufficient to convince any one that it is of much later date than the time of the Father of us all; and it is very unwarrantable to affirm that David was only the collector of the Psalms: for he is repeatedly spoken of in the New Testament as the writer of at least several of them. Christ himself thus refers to him in Mat. xxii. 43, and Mark xii. 36; the Apostle Peter makes a similar reference to him in Acts ii. 3, 4. In Acts iv. 25, 26, he is mentioned as the author of the 118th Psalm, and in Heb. iv. 7, as the author of the xcvi. Psalm: and many of them evidently bear much reference to the events and trials of his very chequered life, as to afford internal evidence that he composed them, while pouring out his heart unto God, either in prayer for deliverance from impending evil and danger, or in thanksgiving and praise for deliverance, as having been realized.

A much better opinion respecting the authorship of the Psalms is, that their penmen were Moses, David, Solomon, Asaph, Heman, Ethan, Jeduthun, and the three sons of Korah, and doubtless others were also employed by the Spirit of God in inditing these divine songs, especially as some obviously appear, from their contents, to have been written either during or after the Babylonian captivity. But whoever were the particular holy men who gave them to the Church, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, they are all the product of his inspiration; and therefore, as has been well remarked, "whether David or any other particular prophet was employed as the instrument of communicating to the Church such and such a particular Psalm, is a question which, it cannot always be satisfactorily answered, need not disquiet our minds. When we discern in an epistle the well-known hand of a friend, we are not solicitous about the pen with which it was written."

In our Bibles most of the Psalms have titles prefixed to them, ascribing them to particular writers, especially to David, and often stating the occasions on which, or the purposes for which, they were composed.—But these titles are not to be considered as a part of the original text, or of canonical authority. They appear to have been added to their respective Psalms; in particular instances, they may, or may not be correct. Consequently they do not serve to determine positively the writing, and the time, or the circumstances of the Psalms with which they stand connected. Three things must be ascertained, as far as it is possible to do so, by investigating the Psalm itself, and by comparing it with such parts of the Old Testament history as it seems to bear upon. But in many cases conjecture is all we can attain, and as has been already stated, certainty of the points in question is not of essential importance. It should be sufficient for us to know that the Spirit of the Lord is the real au-