

PREFACE.

without a paraphrase so long as to be tedious in rhyme, and widely different from the original. Secondly, the governing law of Hebrew poetry (and, perhaps, it is not altogether needless to observe that the psalms were written in the Hebrew tongue) is not metre, but parallelism; the force of the sentences lying in their apposition to or contradistinction from each other, or in a repetition of the same sentiment in a different form. It is clearly impossible to convey a notion of this law by means of that jingling sound, in which, by long usage, our ears delight. And I think no one would ever gather, from our metrical version of the psalms, what is the nature of Hebrew poetry. Our very musical and excellent Prayer-Book version shows it sufficiently to the intelligent reader. Still, it must be admitted that many of the psalms in that version have taken such hold of the mind of our congregations, that it would be inexpedient to abandon them; but the reason is, that they are in reality used as Christian hymns, not as translations of the Psalms of David.

Every one, however, must feel, more or less, a want of direct reference, for the benefit of the unlearned Christian, to the great mysteries of our faith, to the Sacraments, and to the wants, fears, hopes, and joys of believers in a Saviour, not now to come in the flesh, but ascended into glory: and for these purposes, a collection of hymns has frequently been thought desirable:

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