

nothing in the Church of Christ, for which we have not Christ's express command, singing is abrogated as a part of "the beggarly elements" of a dispensation now superseded. If, on the other hand, the practice of the temple service be pleaded as authoritative in the case of singing psalms, then arises the embarrassing question, by what authority have we dropped the use of those musical instruments, trumpets, psalteries, harps and cymbals that were invariably employed in that service, and are commanded to be used in those psalms themselves, and introduced the "innovation" of a metrical version, tunes of modern composition, the reading of the lines, and the institution of a precentor? Is not this "will-worship?" "Who hath required this at your hands?" Are not the inspired psalms dishonoured; these unauthorized, presumptuous alterations and additions? This music, which is undeniably part of the service of praise, is a mere "human invention," just like the pulpit, and the sermon in its modern shape.

Those who condemn hymns forget that the psalms are simply poetical prayers, intended to be chanted, or sung, or uttered with musical modulation of some kind or other; and just as we are at liberty to express the desires of our heart to God in words other than the prayers recorded in scripture, so is it with our praises. Yet, strange to say, those who condemn us for going beyond the words of the psalms in praise, use extempore prayer without compunction; and never feel that a sermon, founded on a text of scripture, disparages the word of God, which is perfect and inspired, or impiously attempts to add to it, or to place itself "on a level with it."—How a hymn, embodying the verities and doctrines of Revelation, is to be regarded as an impious attempt to place human compositions on an equality with inspiration, while a prayer addressed to God, and doing exactly the same thing in prose, is to be considered right and acceptable, it is indeed difficult to conceive. If free prayer be allowable, let it be stated expressly, in what portion of scripture free praise is forbidden. Let the divine command, limiting us to the psalms, in praise, be pointed out, that we may bow to its authority. The truth is, that in the new testament we have no *Leviticus*, regulating the minutiae of worship. The gospel is not a thing of rigid rules, but of grand principles, to be applied under the guidance of the sanctified understanding and the teachings of the Holy Spirit. There is no precise law laid down regarding the words to be employed in praise, any more than in prayer, beyond the general rule,—“let everything be done decently and in order;” “let all things be done unto edifying.” “If we insist on some scriptural war-

rant more particular than these, in order to render our service lawful, we shall find that we neither have nor can have any warrantable praise at all. “Hymns and spiritual songs,” equally with “psalms,” can claim apostolic sanction. Paul says, (Col. iii. 16, 17) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord,” &c. It is indeed “passing strange,” nay, “wonderous pitiful,” when we have this solemn injunction to use “hymns and spiritual songs,” as well as “psalms,” and to “give thanks to God and the Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ,” (v. 17)—that is the historical Christ, not the promised Messiah known to the ancient church,—but “the one Mediator, the man Christ Jesus,” to find men arguing that we are “offering strange fire upon the altar,” if in our songs of praise we name the name of Jesus, at which every knee is to bow, and which every tongue is to confess. These “hymns and spiritual songs” which the apostle enjoins are not given us; we must, therefore, either compose them ourselves, or neglect and explain away a clear injunction of scripture. It is for them to show how they are justified when in praise they fail to “give thanks *always for all things*, unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It might well shake their self-satisfied confidence in their own views, and awaken doubts as to the justice of their angry denunciations of others, “whose consciences are not satisfied with a psalmody in which the name of Jesus does not occur;” to find that they are condemning men for singing the grandest psalm in the whole bible—the *Psalms Psalmodium* of the gospel dispensation—that glorious passage which concludes the eighth chapter of Romans, and which is as truly poetical and lyrical in spirit as any part of the psalms, or that their principles lead them to prohibit the singing of such words as those in 1 Peter, i. 3—5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” &c.

When the English reformers, who took refuge on the continent during the time when the Marian persecutions were raging and the fires of Smithfield were blazing, returned on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, it became evident that they had, during their exile, imbibed a love for the protestant forms of Geneva. Their influence was sufficient to secure the adoption of singing a metrical version of the psalms of the Old Testament in public worship, and wholly to exclude hymns. The same order was observed in the worship of the church of Scotland; and the effect was, to discourage the growth of a native hymn-literature in Bri-