

over the internet. At the same time, other (competing) views have come to expression: high church liturgy (sometimes in the form of “Reformed Catholicity”), covenant renewal, New Life approach, contemporary worship, “informed principle of worship,” and “covenantal worship.”

Various “Presbyterian” denominations, even “conservative” and “evangelical” ones, have refused to take the regulative principle of worship seriously; and, far from enforcing this doctrine, tend to drive out (whether formally or otherwise) those who seek to uphold it. Those denominations, we would suggest, will not in the long run experience God’s blessing.

As in the time of the Protestant Reformation, the church today has tremendous opportunities to communicate rapidly. What the printing press was to the sixteenth century, the Internet is at the beginning of the twenty-first century. As information spreads more quickly, the truth regarding the regulative principle of worship will also spread, and, in God’s providence, be maintained.

The church today faces tumultuous times—new ethical issues, times of war, persecution, proselytizing by Roman Catholicism, doctrinal decline, even a Muslim threat. But, the church in the Reformation faced the same kinds of issues. And it was out of that turmoil that there was a reawakened, apostolic, perhaps we could say prophet-like, vision of what it meant to worship God.

For those whose breasts beat in harmony with a millennial hope of a Golden Age for the church, it may not be too whimsical to believe that someday, not only will the fluff which passes for worship be swept aside, but also the worship offered by Christ’s Bride will be self-consciously in accord with her Lord’s commands. But the expectation that the traditional Presbyterian advocacy of regulated worship will eventually triumph, will only be realized when men’s hearts are changed. It will only become a reality when the gospel itself triumphs, in a day when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.

APPENDIX: THE MEANING OF “PSALMS” IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS.¹¹⁹

To many it is perhaps surprising that so much ink is spent on disputing what the Westminster Assembly meant at Confession of Faith chapter 21.5 by the phrase “singing of psalms.” There is a long history of changing doctrinal standards when some Churches have determined they

have scriptural warrant to expand the corpus of sung praise in the worship of God to include uninspired hymns,¹²⁰ and so if there has been a misunderstanding, it has certainly been a long standing one. On the other hand, there has been perhaps some overstating of the case by the opponents of uninspired hymnody in public worship in portraying the Confession as teaching exclusive psalmody. It most certainly authorizes only the singing of psalms in public worship if the conclusion of this paper stands, but it is going beyond and against the known information to conclude the Divines did so because of an exclusive psalmody principle that developed through the “worship wars” of the succeeding centuries after Westminster. That it is clear that some of the Divines did not hold to exclusive psalmody as we know it, may explain why some have sought to go to sources external to the productions of the Assembly to seek a broadened interpretation of “singing of psalms.”

If one turns to the Oxford English Dictionary, the term “psalm” has a general and a specific use. In general, the term refers to “any sacred song that is or may be sung in religious worship; a hymn: esp. in biblical use.” Specifically the term “psalm” means “any one of the sacred songs or hymns of the ancient Hebrews which together form the book of Psalms; a version or paraphrase of any of these, esp. as sung (or read) in public or private worship.” As already noted it certainly seems to have been the case that churches over the years have understood the term in its specific sense when they changed their doctrinal standards accordingly. However, as they may have been mistaken, asserting a definition is not going to be persuasive.

Recent controversies hopefully demonstrate the pitfalls of going to individual writings of the Westminster Divines or simply contemporary writings, and imposing intent or meaning on their productions. However, there is a reasonable and fairly persuasive approach that clearly identifies what the Divines meant by “psalm” at WCF 21.5 which does not get one tangled up in going to sources external to their work or tripped up in anachronistic claims that they were an Assembly of exclusive psalmodists.

The case can be made that as an assembly the Westminster Divines authorized the singing of only

119. See the review of Nick Needham’s work on page 201 of this issue of *The Confessional Presbyterian*.

120. The Calvinist Baptists (1689) changed their Confession to read: “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,” the PCUSA (1789) authorized uninspired hymns via their revised Directory for the Public Worship of God, and the ARP (1946) approved the validity of singing evangelical hymns and subsequently added a note to the Confession reflecting that in 1959.

the 150 psalms in public worship for the three kingdoms over which their deliberations were intended to cover. There is nothing in this position that conflicts with Nick Needham's conclusion: "The only logical assumption we can make is that what Westminster actually sets down as the acts of worship authorized by God in Scripture are the *only* acts the Westminster divines believed were thus authorized."¹²¹ The 'worship wars' over the content of worship song had not begun, and the doubtful question of what else might have been included was simply not addressed. That

does not mean the Divines were prescient in using the term loosely and generally to "cover" future controversies. No; they were very precise. They simply authorized that upon which they could all agree upon was a biblical practice. This practice was singing the 150 Psalms of David, which can be illustrated by looking solely at the work and official documents of the Westminster Assembly itself.

Psalm vs. psalm

Before proceeding, it may be useful to address the question of whether the usage of a capital or small "p" has any bearing on the intent of the Divines. Brian Schwertley writes regarding the term "psalm" at 21.5, that some

like to point out the fact that the word psalm is not capitalized, as if this proves the word is used in some vague, generic sense. The problem with this argument is the simple fact that the authors [of] the Westminster Standards only capitalized the word Psalms when it was used as a *title* of the whole book.¹²²

Daniel F. N. Ritchie, following Schwertley, argues as follows:

It is clearly evident that when the Westminster Divines referred to the title of the book of Psalms they used capitalisation. However, when they referred to an individual psalm or to a psalter (psalm book) they did not use capitalisation. So the fact that the word 'psalm' is not spelt with a capital in the *Westminster Confession* does not prove that it referred to any other songs outside the book of Psalms.¹²³

In this writer's opinion, making an argument one way or the other is not determinative of anything. The fact of the matter is that editions of the Standards vary in their usage. In the first edition with Scripture proofs, in Confession of Faith 21.5, the term is capitalized, which would undercut those who would use lower case usage to argue for the general sense of "psalm." In the manuscript of the Directory for Worship presented to the House of Lords, it is not clear that there is any distinction in the case where the word "psalm" is used in the section on "Singing of Psalms,"¹²⁴ and in one of the earliest published editions the word is capitalized in every instance, all which obviates the unneeded attempt to answer the first claim.¹²⁵ On top of this, as demonstrated elsewhere, the printers were usually the ones to determine usage as to the accidentals of the text

121. Nick Needham, "Westminster and Worship: Psalms, Hymns? and Musical Instruments?", in J. Ligon Duncan, ed., *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century: Essays in Remembrance of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly* (2004; rpt. Mentor Print of Christian Focus Publications: Fearn, Ross-Shire, Scotland, 2005) 2.247f.

122. Brian Schwertley, *Sola Scriptura And the Regulative Principle of Worship: Appendix B. The Neo-Presbyterian Challenge to Confessional Presbyterian Orthodoxy: A Biblical Analysis of John Frame's Worship in Spirit and in Truth*. This is online at http://www.reformed.com/pub/sola_b.htm. Mr. Schwertley apparently is directing this barb at Stephen Pribble who writes: "The Westminster Confession of Faith, in enumerating the 'parts of the ordinary religious worship of God,' lists 'singing of psalms with grace in the heart' (21:5). It is noteworthy that the term 'psalms' is used in its general sense of 'any sacred song ... sung in religious worship' (Oxford English Dictionary); the Confession does not specify 'singing of Psalms' or 'singing of the Psalms.'" In a footnote he elaborates: "Exclusive Psalmists make a good case that the Westminster divines' own practice was exclusive Psalmody. But even granting this, it remains true that the final wording they adopted was 'singing of psalms' not 'singing of Psalms' or 'singing of the Psalms.' Given their tendency to over-capitalize (e.g., Atheism, Baptism, Godhead, Idolatry, Holy Scripture, King, Mediator, Original Sin, Priest, Prophet, Supreme Judge, Surety, Trinity, Virgin Mary, etc.), it makes their choice of the small letter p in 'psalms' all the more significant. Presbyterians are not bound by the divines' practice but by the wording of the Confession." Stephen Pribble, "The Regulative Principle and Singing in Worship," online at <http://www.all-of-grace.org/pub/pribble/hymnsing.html>. As demonstrated, there is no solid basis for this argument, and the same applies to the missing "the" which usage also occurs in the Directory's section "Of Singing of Psalms."

123. F. N. Daniel Ritchie, *The Regulative Principle of Worship: Explained and Applied* (Longwood, Fla.: Xulon Press, 2007) 175-176.

124. MS draft of a Directory for fasting and thanksgiving and Of Singing of Psalms. Chad Van Dixhoorn does not note the latter as included in the MS, but it follows the directory for thanksgiving at the end of the draft, which is the House of Lord's copy (MP 1 Jan 1644/45). Chad B. Van Dixhoorn, "Chronological Bibliography of the manuscript and published papers of the Westminster Assembly," in "Reforming the Reformation: Theological debate at the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1652," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2004, item 66, 1.370. Dr. Van Dixhoorn notes that the main papers of the House of Lords are housed at the House of Lords Record Office, and the Westminster related documents are in Historical Manuscripts Reports 4-7, filed by date, which is not necessarily the correct date of writing (1.362).

125. See the editions of the Confession of Faith and the Directory

such as capitalization.¹²⁶ The tendency at the time was also to overuse capitalization, all of which was rather uniformly stripped out for the first time in the E. Robertson edition of 1756.¹²⁷ Thus the controversy over big “P” versus little “p” doesn’t really resolve anything as far as the meaning of the word “psalm” at Confession of Faith 21.5.

“Psalm” in the Context of the Westminster Standards

The Assembly’s meaning of the term psalm has to be understood in the context of the development of their various productions and understanding the guiding principle laid out in the Solemn League and Covenant that the subscribers would “endeavour to bring the Churches of God in the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government, Directory for Worship and Catechising; that we, and our posterity after us, may, as brethren, live in faith and love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us.” The Assembly had an outline for their work.

The Directory for Worship

The first document the Assembly produced was the *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, which states: “It is the duty of Christians to praise God publickly, by singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family. In singing of psalms, the voice is to be tunably and gravely ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding, and with grace in the heart, making melody unto the Lord. That the whole congregation may join herein, every one that can read is to have a psalm book...”

The Directory was completed late in 1644 and approved in January 1645. Those sections dealing with public worship included:

- Of Publick Reading of the Holy Scriptures.
- Of Preaching of the Word.
- Of the Sacrament of Baptism.
- Of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
- Of Publick Solemn Fasting.
- Of the Observation of Days of Publick Thanksgiving.
- Of Singing of Psalms.

The Psalter

Regarding “Of Singing of Psalms,” the idea to publish an approved Psalter for public worship, was first

proposed in late 1643, a year prior to the completion of the Directory.

“The first thing done this morning was, that Sir Benjamin Rudyard brought an order from the House of Commons, wherein they require our advice, whether Mr. Rous’s Psalms may not be sung in churches; and this being debated, it was at last referred to the three Committees, to take every one fifty Psalms.”¹²⁸

In the Directory the concern is expressed that “every one that can read” should have a psalm book, which at that point would have referred to the intended production by the Assembly. One of the guiding principles was that the new paraphrase envisioned be faithful to the original language; another, was that it would contain nothing but the 150 Psalms.

Prior to this time in Scotland, the practice had been exclusive or nearly exclusive psalm singing in public worship. Earlier Psalters did include what were called “conclusions,” and some “other Scripture songs,” and doxologies; but these were various introductions by the printers and were not authorized by the Scottish Kirk itself. The case presented over a century ago by the Scottish antiquary David Hay Fleming, is still sound, that it is very doubtful the other Scripture songs were used in public worship in Scotland.¹²⁹ On the other hand, the “conclusions,” and the Gloria Patria, neither

for Worship in *Westminster Standards: Limited Anniversary Edition*. CD version (Audubon, N.J.: Old Paths Publications, 1997).

126. Chris Coldwell, “Examining the Work of S. W. Carruthers: Justifying a Critical Approach to the Text of the Westminster Standards and Correcting the 18th Century Lineage of the Traditional Text,” *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005).

127. *The Confession of Faith*, etc. (Edinburgh: E. Robertson, 1756). Prior 18th century editions capitalize “Psalms” at 21.5. This is the case in the important editions by Dunlop (1719) and Lumisden and Robertson (1728; 1736; 1744). The Reformed Presbyterian edition of 1725 (the rival to Dunlop’s collection of Scottish standards) and later reprints retained the capitalization of Psalms as well (*The Confessions of Faith, Catechisms*, etc. [Edinburgh: Lumisden and Robertson, 1725; 1739]; *The Confessions*, etc. [Glasgow: John Bryce, 1764, 1785]).

128. Lightfoot’s Journal, November 22, 1643 cited in *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie, A.M.*, ed. David Laing, Esq. (Edinburgh: Printed for Robert Ogle, [1841-1842]) 3.536–537.

129. David Hay Fleming, “The Hymnology of the Reformation,” *Original Secession Magazine* (January-June and September 1884). This was reprinted in *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature* 4 (1991) 223–246. How exactly to understand the fact that the Scottish General Assembly approved a project to render the “other Scripture songs” into meter at the same time they were working to improve the Westminster Assembly’s Psalter, which they would eventually adopt in 1650, is fraught with difficulties, since the original minutes are no longer extant. It clearly was not as serious a project as the Psalter and it may be doubted if the original intention was that it be for public worship, particularly since they had not been used before that time as demonstrated by Hay Fleming. Some

of which had any more official basis apparently than the other songs, probably slowly became customary to sing in worship from the time prelacy grew in Scotland until the 1638 Reformation (Hay Fleming, *Anthology*, 4.237). The singing of the doxology and another custom of the minister bowing in the pulpit were abolished as lacking Scripture warrant, the latter officially, the other left as Gillespie notes “to let desuetude abolish it” (*Anthology*, 4.242).¹³⁰

The “conclusions” were apparently commonly sung by both Scottish Presbyterian and English Independent

have used this fact to argue that the Kirk was open to expanding its corpus of song, but that this particular project failed because of the poor merit of the end result (William Annan, *Letters on Psalmody: A Review of the Leading Arguments for the Exclusive Use of the Book of Psalms* [Philadelphia, Pa.: W.S. & A. Martien, 1859] 134). If it was the desire of the Scottish Kirk to do so, it was still with the understanding the material had to be inspired Scripture. There is no hint in any extant material by the Assembly of Divines that they ever discussed whether the other songs in Scripture were to be sung in worship. This ‘other Scripture song’ project needs to be interpreted first in the context of the Scottish Kirk, before attempting to make it interpretive of the Assembly’s intent. Indeed, it is possible the project failed precisely because it did not square with the vision of uniformity laid out by the Solemn League & Covenant. Andrew Edgar writes in *Old Church Life in Scotland: Lectures on Kirk-session and Presbytery Records*, ([London: Alexander Gardner, 1885] 79): “Possibly Mr. Boyd’s labours were not found very satisfactory, for his Scripture rhymes have not the melody of Milton’s muse; but whether his labours were satisfactory or not, the deference thought due to the English Presbyterians in 1650, and the rise soon after of engrossing troubles in the kingdom, were sufficient to account for the temporary abandonment of the project compilation. After the great bubble of uniformity with England in doctrine, worship, and Church government, had burst, and the Church of Scotland was at the Revolution established anew on her old separate national Presbyterian basis, the attention of the General Assembly was again directed to the subject of Scriptural songs, as a supplement to the metrical version of the Psalms.”

130. The case of the Gloria Patria is interesting. Gillespie cites it in his Notes, and presents Calderwood as defending the singing of it because Ambrose and Hilarius, despite their strict rejection of singing any songs composed by men, did sing the Gloria Patria (*Anthology*, 2.242). Gillespie’s reply was to correct the reading, by noting the canon cited actually imported that the two did not sing it. This would seem to imply that underlying the agreement to let the practice lapse was the fact that it was not inspired, and since bowing in the pulpit was rejected as lacking scriptural warrant, perhaps an additional assumption might be made regarding uninspired hymnody? Baillie, as keenly as he defended the “conclusions,” did so as Scripture paraphrases (*Anthology*, 2.241, 246). And Hay Fleming notes: “In conclusion, it is worthy of remark that Baillie, Burnet, and Edwards, in pleading for the doxology, maintain that it is founded on Scripture. And, further, that Baillie, in his conference with those yeoman who refused to sing it, says, ‘We have it but once almost in one *spiritual song*, for every portion of the *Psalm*, which is right divided is a full *spiritual hymn* to us.’ And this may be taken as an indication of what that ardent champion of the doxology understood by the words Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs” (*Anthology*, 2.246).

alike. Despite that, Baillie states that they were abandoned because the “Popish and Prelatical party did so much dote” on the practice. However, Hay Fleming, citing Livingstone, suggests that there may have been a more common objection to the “conclusions” among the Scottish populace (*Anthology*, 4.241). Whatever the reason, the result is that it was agreed to drop them in the new Psalter.

The Confession of Faith

The latter part of *The Confession of Faith*, including chapter 21, was completed in December 1646, and it was approved in Scotland on August 27, 1647. Not surprisingly, the parts of worship that they articulate correspond to the sections of the Directory. The ordinary parts of worship are:

“The Reading of Scriptures with godly fear”
 “the sound preaching, and conscionable hearing of the word”
 “singing of psalms with grace in the heart”
 “due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ”

And the extraordinary are:

Religious oaths and vows
 Solemn fastings and thanksgivings

This is the disputed passage where some wish to broaden the meaning of the term psalm beyond a reference to strictly the 150 Psalms of David. However, keeping in mind the work of the Assembly as a whole, and in the context of the goal of uniformity of worship as laid out by the Solemn League & Covenant, there is no reason to force another meaning upon the phrase “singing of psalms” in one document as opposed to the other. It is very clear the Directory is speaking of a Psalm book, the Psalter the Divines produced contained only the 150 Psalms, and the parts of worship noted in the Confession match those articulated in the directory. Thus the natural reading and reference in the full context of the Assembly’s work is to the singing of the 150 psalms of David as that which was authorized for the public worship of God in the three kingdoms.

Again, it has to be kept in mind that the work of the Assembly was a package deal outlined by the Solemn League & Covenant, and each production is not some disparate separate production to be interpreted without context. Further to illustrate this contention, the linkage of the Directory to the Psalter of just the 150 Psalms, and

both to the Confession, in conformity to the endeavor for uniformity in religion, is confirmed by the Scottish commissioners to the Westminster Assembly.

Gillespie said the following in his speech at the August 1647 meeting of the Scottish General Assembly:

For the next Head of our Commission, ye know the Directory for Worship is settled long ago by the Parliaments of both Kingdoms. I confess it is not yet observed by all there so as it ought, yet it is observed by many, to the great good of that land. We shall only add to that head, the matter of the Psalms; all grant that there is a necessitie of the change of the old Paraphrase. This new Paraphrase was done by a Gentleman verie able for the purpose, but afterward it was revised by a Committee of the Assembly of Divines, accordingly to the original, and was approved by the whole Assembly (Cited in Baillie, 3.451).

Baillie in his speech before the Assembly on August 6, 1647, remarks:

I was glad to be a carrier of a Confession of Faith; also of a Psalter, which to my knowledge had cost the Assembly some considerable paines, and is like to be one necessary part of the three Kingdoms uniformitie” (Baillie, 3.12).

And finally, in a paper by the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly to the Grand Committee in London, December 29, 1646, and subsequently presented by Baillie to the Commission of the General Assembly in January 1647, it is written:

Wherfor in pursuance of the ends of the Covenant, in discharge of that trust which is committed to us, as likewise that some of our number who are now to returne into Scotland may be able to give farther accompt to the Parliament of that kingdom, and to the Commissioners of the Generall Assembly at Edinburgh (both being now assembled), we have taken this occasion (without the least presuming to prescribe any wayes or to impose conditions) to renew our most earnest desires to the Honourable Houses of Parliament, and to the reverend Assembly of Divines for their part, that all possible care may be taken, and greater diligence used, to expedite the begun Reformation and Uniformity, to supply and make up those parts that are yet wanting, and to put on and make effectually what is already agreed upon. More particularly we do desire that

some effectually course may be provided by Ordinance of Parliament for the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant, by all persons, as well as in all places of this kingdom, and some considerable penalty or punishment (such as the honourable Houses in their wisdom shall think fitt) may be appointed for such as refuse to take it (much more for such as reproach it or speak against it), and that by authority of both Houses of the Parliament of England, the Covenant, Confession of Faith, Directory of Worship, Forme of Government and Catechisms may be settled in Ireland as well as in England, according to the first article of the Solemn League and Covenant. Wee also desire that the Catechisme (now before the Assembly of Divines) may be perfected so soon as is possible: that the Confession of Faith may be established by authority of Parliament and immediately thereafter sent into Scotland (as the Directory of Worship was), to be agreed unto by that Church and kingdom, it being the cheefest part of that Uniformity in Religion, which both kingdoms stand bound by Covenant to endeavour: that course may be taken for the better observing the Directory of Worship, which is, in many places of this kingdom, either wholly or in diverse material points neglected. And because the singing of psalmes in Churches is a part of the publike worship of God, We desire that the Paraphrase of the Psalms in meter, as it is now examined, corrected, and approved by the Assembly of Divines here, and by the Commissioners of the Gen. Assembly in Scotland, may be likewise authorized and established by Ordinance of Parliament.”¹³¹

That the fulfillment of the need to provide for the

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131. See *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland Holden in Edinburgh in the Years 1646 and 1647. Edited from the Original Manuscript by Alexander F. Mitchell, D.D., LL.D. and James Christie, D.D. with an Introduction by the former* (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1892) 182–183. See also Baillie, 3.540, where the last portion about the Psalter is cited. It has already been noted that capitalization is not a sound guide to meaning, but interestingly Mitchell as cited above does not capitalize “psalm” in both occurrences, while Laing does so in his transcription given in Baillie’s *Letters and Journal*. Laing, who also edited Knox’s Works and other such material from manuscript, obtained the MS Records for his work in preparing Baillie’s journals for publication, and possessed them for nearly fifty years, until Mitchell arranged to obtain them for his work, which he did shortly after Laing’s death. Both men, working from the manuscript of the Commissions’ Records sought to reproduce the text accurately as for spelling and capitalization, which indicates perhaps that there may be difficulty determining if in this case the “p” is capital or lower case in both instances.

Fourth, the students are required to memorize the Shorter Catechism. Ideally they go through the catechism three times in the four year curriculum. (Students from Continental Reformed denominations may substitute the Heidelberg Catechism.)

Fifth, we encourage exegetical/doctrinal preaching. Our students are encouraged to relate the truth of the text they are preaching to the doctrines of the Westminster Standards.

We live in a day with amazing resources. We need to pray that God will raise up godly men and that our seminaries will labor to provide the churches with an academic, confessional, and practical program for ministerial training. Why should we settle for less? Why should the people in the pew settle for less when our forefathers who lived in a less educated age with fewer resources had a ministry so superior? But as long as the church settles for less, as long as the church settles for mediocre preaching, as long as the church settles for men that cannot carry on a logical conversation, she will have a poorly educated ministry. On the other hand, if the church is guilty of wanting her ears tickled and not wanting doctrine taught and sin exposed, she is going to get a ministry that will meet her expectations. ■

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“singing of psalms” is found in the approval of the Assembly’s “Paraphrase of the Psalmes,” which had been purged of nothing else, seems to confirm the specific use of the term “psalm” rather than a more general use to mean any spiritual song. Verifying the plain sense of the Divines from within the context of their work and the documents they produced is a sufficiently reasonable and conclusive approach to confirm their meaning, and avoids bean-counting opinions from outside their work to guess at what they “might” have meant by “psalm” in Confession of Faith 21.5. ■

In Translation: John Brown of Wamphray Singing of Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs in the Public Worship of God, Continued from Page 279.

each church would not be destitute of the ability to produce these songs, since in such public exercise the forerunning churches must take first place.²⁰ Christ surely has granted all necessary gifts to the church. This gift, however, is very rare, and not common either to the churches or its members.

(4) If Psalms and hymns so composed and written must be utilized, either the hymns must be examined or proved before they are actually introduced for public use, or not. If not, is it not likely that the church would end up with some erroneous, absurd songs and the like?²¹ If they were examined and approved beforehand, with regard to both substance and form, isn’t it also likely that sometimes the occasion would

be lost for which the song was especially prepared before it had a chance of being introduced for use? And so, too often in public gatherings, either there would be at times no sacred songs, or, composed ahead of time, or insufficient use would be made with regard to the current occasion.

(5) It is certain that the Psalms and hymns in Scripture were dictated by the infallible Spirit. No one will deny that those hymns are superior which were composed by the infallible Spirit than those composed by private individuals, regardless of how gifted they may be. Who is going to believe that it was God’s will to replace his divine songs left to us with purely human ones?

(6) If this sort of thing happens, it turns out as it did in the papal psalters, as Martyr witnesses concerning 1 Cor. 14: 26, “Indeed, let the church not be led by its own inspiration, nor let ignorant pastors in their own judgment and prudence substitute bronze for gold, in place of the Psalms and spiritual songs which they celebrate as praise to God. These traditions are most frequently absurd, mere fables, and ridiculous.” So also Nicephorus witnesses in Book 9, chapter 24, Athanasius and Photius in *The Epitome of Philostorgius’ History*, Book 2, section 2, that Arius and his followers changed certain among the received hymns, and composed new songs, including for sailors, millers, and travelers, so that he might furtively lead people to his own impiety.

(7) The ancients sang the Davidic Psalter, as Augustine witnesses, Book 10, chapter 33, *Confessions*; Theodoretus, *Histories*, Book 2, chapter 24,²² claims that Flavinus and Diodorus handed down the Davidic hymns to be sung. Augustine, Epistle 119, chapter 18, boasts that the divine songs of the prophets be sung solemnly in the church. He discusses the problem of the Donatists who abandoned the hymns of David and sang songs composed out of their own imagination. The Council of Laodicia, canon 59, forbid the speaking of private psalms in the church.

(8) How great an evil has arisen from this license in the Roman church has already been sufficiently noted.

(9) The apostle prescribes for us the substance of the songs in Eph 5:19 and Col 3:16, for *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs* are themselves titles of the Psalms of David and others....

(TO BE CONTINUED)

TRANSLATED BY N. E. BARRY HOFSTETTER, Th.M. ■

20. This argument is a bit obscure, but Brown appears to be making a reference to the practice in the ancient church, implying that the practice would have not only been clearly instituted by Christ, but would date back to antiquity.

21. Brown here appears to have risen to the level of prophet, considering some of the musical proclivities of the contemporary worship genre.

22. [Ed. This appears to be chapter 19 in *Nicene And Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*, Vol. 3, ed. Philip Schaff (1892; Rpt. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, n.d.).]