

THE
Evangelical Repository;

DEVOTED TO THE

PRINCIPLES OF THE REFORMATION,

AS SET FORTH IN THE

FORMULARIES OF THE WESTMINSTER DIVINES,

AND WITNESSED FOR BY THE

ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF NORTH AMERICA.

Edited by Joseph C. Couper,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION, PHILADELPHIA.

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

**The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness
instructing those that oppose themselves.—2 TIM. II. 24, 25.**

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THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE PSALMS OF DAVID IN THE PRAISE OF GOD.

"God's worship is
That only He inspires, and His bright words
Writ in the red-leaved volume of the heart
Return to Him as dews to heaven.
Our proper good we rarely seek or make."

FESTUS.

THE essential glory of God is not affected by the worship due to him by his intelligent creatures.

The attributes of Jehovah are unchangeable; it is not in the power of any created being to diminish or increase them; but His declarative glory, His glory as emanating to thinking beings is much dependent on a true and spiritual worship; of which the singing of his praise, especially in Presbyterian churches, forms a most important part; for in this alone, the worshippers are expected with one voice to unite. It is therefore all the more necessary, that it be performed in accordance with scriptural principles. We intend laying before you a few hints in support of the use of the psalms of David, without the admixture of human compositions.

And 1st, As inspired poems, they are better adapted to be employed in the worship of God than human compositions.

The service of God can only be performed in spirit and in truth; and the emotions are evidently chiefly dependent on the themes presented to the mind. Eternal verities may find their expression in poetry and music; but the spiritual emotions of contrite homage of the heart before God, reverential awe, devout acknowledgment of blessings, which those who worship him should cherish, are not produced by these. Most of all, a true exhibition of the nature of God and of man's relationship to him is necessary, for unless the means by which God is worshipped be suitable to his nature, they are entirely defective, and an abomination to him; and on the other hand, nothing can be clearer, that unless these means be adapted to the relation in which man stands to God, they can be of no advantage to man. All false religions and all false phases of the true religion, when weighed in the balance of these two tests, will be found wanting. In the psalmody, the moral attributes of Deity—their blending together in the

are we to think of persons who will pay all their debts which are collectable by civil law, and neglect those which are to be given voluntarily. But perhaps they quiet their consciences by giving a trifle. For instance, a man with property amounting to five, ten, or twenty thousand dollars, and an income far beyond what is necessary for a comfortable support, will comfort his conscience by giving twenty-five or fifty cents two or three times during the year, and encourage himself with the hope that "his barns will be filled with plenty, and his presses burst out with new wine," because he has given twenty-five cents towards the spread of the gospel. But has that man paid his honest debt? Certainly not. He has paid in part a sum, which, when compared with his income, would hardly make an appreciable fraction; but he is still honestly in debt until he has contributed as the Lord has prospered him, and if he neglect to pay he does not possess the true spirit of voluntary honesty. But there are sometimes arguments urged why persons should withhold their contributions. Perhaps, in some instances, the church has manifested a want of skill in financiering, or perhaps, in some cases, funds have been appropriated to purposes they do not approve. All this is very probable. The church court and church officers are fallible, and are just as likely to make mistakes in the management of their funds as any thing else; but this cannot free persons from their obligation to contribute. If the church would habitually divert her funds from the purposes for which they were contributed, it would be a different matter; but an occasional mistake cannot be consistently urged as an excuse for refusing to contribute until it can be made appear that we are under no obligation to make contributions until the church can appoint infallible officers to receive them.

But sometimes persons express a "willingness to contribute if others will do the same, but they are not willing to give beyond a reasonable proportion." This objection would be plausible if there were no other obligation resting upon them than the example of others, but has no force as a reason why they should not fulfil a moral obligation imposed on them by the law of God. If others are remiss in duty, that is no reason why they should imitate a sinful example. But we only refer to these as specimens of the mode of reasoning sometimes employed; whether originating in the conscience or the pocket, we decline expressing an opinion. As a conclusion from these reflections, we should be reminded that we should honour the law of God no less than the laws of men; and while some obligations are not imposed on us by civil enactments, yet when the law of God demands, we should voluntarily pay all our honest debts.

SKETCHER.

(From the Christian Instructor.)

AN ORIGINAL LETTER FROM REV. ROBERT ANNAN.

The following letter was addressed by its author to the Rev. Adam Rankin, a clergyman who settled in Lexington, Ky., about the year 1785, and was among the first ministers of his denomination who laboured in the country lying between the Kentucky and Ohio rivers. At the time of his removal west he was a member of the Presbyterian Church, and in connexion with the Synod of New York and Philadel-

phia. Having had his attention directed shortly afterwards to the subject of Psalmody, which was then greatly agitating the churches in various places, in consequence of efforts being made to substitute the hymns of Dr. Watts and others in the worship of God for the authorized version of the Psalms, he was led to decide in favour of the songs of inspiration. In this, however, he encountered strong opposition; and after years of unhappy strife and debate, and even of personal trial, he applied to the Asso. Ref. Church for admission to her membership. About that time, and while the case was still pending, he seems to have written to the Rev. Robert Annan, stating some of the difficulties with which he had to contend, and asking advice as to the course he should pursue. Mr. Annan replied as follows:—

Philadelphia, Feb. 7th, 1793.

Rev. and Dear Brother,—Your favour by Mr. Wright I received with much satisfaction, and communicated the contents to my session. They were all well satisfied with the decisive steps which you have been directed to take, and it is their opinion that you ought to be countenanced and supported. I reserve your letter; and will, if the Lord spare me, lay it before Synod at their next meeting, on May 1st, in this city. But I hope you will send up the papers which you mention again that time. I have no doubt of your being publicly and honourably received. What! Should we hesitate to embrace a faithful witness for the cause of truth, and one, too, suffering in that cause? Surely not. It is not the cause of a party.

The question between us and our antagonists is, in my opinion, come to this—Is the Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ one Testament? Is it given by the inspiration of God, or not? Did holy men of God speak as moved by their own passions and local prejudices, or as moved by the Holy Ghost? If the book of Psalms be such as many represent it, and if it must be set aside from the peculiar use for which the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ intended it, I see not but it is a thrust at the whole Bible, and implicitly dishonours and subverts the whole. I believe the men have no such intention, they mean not so. But they appear to me to be under the influence of most dreadful and dangerous temptations; and to yield to them would be the greatest evil we could do to them, the greatest cruelty and injustice to themselves and their posterity, as well as unfaithfulness to the Lord. This has been long my opinion, and I yet see no cause to alter it. The cunning adversary of the church is never at rest. By various artifices and deceptions he endeavours to subvert the faith of Christians, and weaken their attachment to the Word of God. I cannot help ranking the present opposition to the pure scriptural Psalmody in the same class with Deism, Socinianism, Arianism, Arminianism, Universal Salvation, Antinomianism, and that it is a trial of the faith and patience of the saints. May the Lord enable us to stand fast, and to keep clean garments. Conscious of much unworthiness, and that I am less than the least of all saints, yet I should shudder to chime in with the prevailing defamation, not to say blaspheming of that part of the Word of God, the book of Psalms, which indeed falls equally, though indirectly, on the whole of the Old Testament, and from that rebounds with equal force on the New Testa-

ment; for without faith in the one, I cannot see how there can be a true and saving faith in the other. The saying of the apostle respecting the law, is equally applicable here—"He that offends in one point, is guilty of all." Whoever lifted up a tool on God's altar, was guilty of polluting it. But what impure tools have proud, carnal, daring mortals, lifted against the Bible, with the pretext, as they say, of smoothing and polishing the rough stones thereof! But they have by their foolish and sinful attempts diminished its majesty, sublimity, grandeur, and dignity, and made it like the works of men, and not of God. If those men could with equal ease form our globe into a smooth surfaced ball, no doubt they would try their hands on it, and imagine they had greatly improved it. But it is not as easy to spoil God's works, as it is to reproach and blaspheme his Word.

I pretend not to be wiser than others, much less to infallibility; but I must judge for myself, and I see no great danger of being too strongly attached to the Word of God, or any part of it, not even to what they call the old, obsolete Jewish Psalms. The danger is all on the other side. Often, too often, my carnal heart has started objections against the book of God; and had not the Lord made me frequently taste the goodness and sweetness of it, I might have been a Deist. And what good fruits have proceeded from those men's innovations and polishings? New, who were the first offended with the scriptural Psalmody, and most forward to introduce the new? To my certain knowledge, in New York, (where it first began in the Presbyterian churches,) they were the carnal and worldly part of professors, who could find no spiritual delight in any part of Divine worship. And have their attempts been blessed? Have conversions been promoted? Have saints been more edified, united, and sanctified, by their improvements? Is the worship of God more spiritual, heavenly, and holy? Let the fruits declare it.

For my own part, sir, I wish you support from Heaven. May the Lord bless you, and keep you and your family.

I am, with much affection, your brother and humble servant,
ROBERT ANNAN.

The Rev. Adam Rankin.

[For the Evangelical Repository.]

THE IRISH PAPISTS AND MIRACLES.

The following extract from an article in the "Christian Remembrancer," entitled "Irish Characteristics," is a striking illustration of the ignorance in which this deluded people are kept by their blind guides. Speaking of miracles, the writer says:—

One of the most notable, was of a fisherman of Dunmurray, in those parts, who had been wont to ply his craft to the neglect of the due observance of Saint John the Baptist's day; and who on that day, in the present year of grace, 1853, captured and sold a large draught of fish, reserving but one "for himself and the childer." "And when the fish came out of the pot," said our informant, "there as plain as ever I see, was rit the words 'the gospel of the day.'" This was the whole matter. But the fish so inscribed had been seen, he averred, by vast numbers of Romanists and Protestants alike, and may be seen at this moment, in a bottle at the house of the titular bishop.