

## **The Development of the Scottish Psalter**

*David Silversides*

Christians are to sing Psalms. Many of us believe that only the 150 inspired Psalms of the Bible should be sung in the worship of God. We regard the three terms "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph.5:19, Col.3:16) as all referring to the contents of the book of Psalms. The Psalms speak much of Christ and it is not without significance that, in defending the glory of Christ and the fact that "God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb.1:1-2), the first two chapters of the book of Hebrews contain quotations from Psalms 2, 104, 45, 102, 110, 8 and 22.

Nevertheless, the question arises that if we are to sing the Biblical Psalms, is the 'Scottish Psalter' of 1650 a sufficiently careful and accurate translation for this purpose?<sup>1</sup>

### **1. History of the Scottish Psalter**

#### **Psalters before the Scottish Psalter of 1650**

Among the earlier Psalters of note were the following two:

##### *The Anglo-Genevan Psalter (1556-61)*

John Knox and the English congregation at Geneva used this version and it received commendation from John Calvin. Two men, Sternhold and Hopkins, were chiefly responsible for its production. It formed the basis of the English Psalter (1560) and the first Scottish Psalter (1564). Many parts of Psalms in our Scottish Psalter have come down from this version as well as a few complete, or nearly complete, Psalms (for example the first version of Psalm 100 and the second versions of Psalms 124 and 145).

##### *The Bay Psalm Book (1640)*

This was the first book the New England Puritans published and quite a number of lines from it were incorporated into our Scottish Psalter, including the whole of the first version of Psalm 6.

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<sup>1</sup> The present writer's position on Bible translation is that of the Westminster Confession, "The Old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the scriptures, may have hope." (*Westminster Confession of Faith, i/viii*)

## **The Production of the Scottish Psalter of 1650**

### *The Beginning of the Process in England*

Despite its customary name, the origins of the Scottish Psalter are in England where, on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1642, the Long Parliament passed a bill calling for 'an Assembly of Divines' or theologians. Initially, the purpose of this Assembly was simply to revise the Articles of the Church of England. As a result, however, of the 'Solemn League and Covenant' of 1643 between England and Scotland (brought on by the English need of help in the civil war), the remit of the Assembly was greatly enlarged to seek fulfilment of the Covenant's commitment to "uniformity in religion, confession of faith, form of church-government, directory for worship and catechising..." in the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland. The result was the production of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Presbyterial Church-Government and the Directory for the Publick Worship of God. In addition to all this, they also went to great lengths to produce a metrical Psalter that was to be part of the uniformity they sought. In so doing, they wanted to produce a Psalter that was not only more accurate and more smoothly running than those in existence, but also simpler in metre so as to be more easily used by all.

Francis Rous, who was not a minister but a member of both Parliament and the Westminster Assembly, had produced a version of the Psalter in 1643 and this was to form the basic starting point for the Assembly.

### *The Doxology Question*

The Assembly considered the practice of appending a Trinitarian doxology to the singing of a Psalm, e.g.

*To Father, Son and Holy Ghost  
The God whom we adore  
Be glory as it was, is now  
And shall be evermore.*

This practice was a matter of some dispute in Scotland and it must be acknowledged that Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish commissioners to the Assembly, was initially a strong defender of the practice, notwithstanding objections from within his own congregation. The Assembly as a whole, however, rejected the practice, and Baillie himself evidently changed his view, ultimately writing:

But in the new translation of the Psalms, resolving to keep punctually to the original text, without any addition, we and they were content to omit that [*i.e. the doxology*] whereupon we saw both the popish and prelatical party did so much dote, as to put it to the end of most of their lessons, and all their psalms.<sup>2</sup>

Later Scottish Covenanters, like Brown of Wamphray and McWard (contending with Bishop Burnett) opposed the sung doxology, not because they deemed its content doctrinally unsound, but because of the regulative principle of worship and the absence

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<sup>2</sup> *Letters and Journals of Mr Robert Baillie*, Edinburgh 1841, Vol.2 p.259

of Scriptural warrant to add anything to the 150 Psalms given by God.<sup>3</sup> From the deliberate exclusion of the doxology we learn that the Westminster Confession means by the "singing of psalms" (in ch.xxi, para. v) simply the use of the Biblical Psalms.

*The Procedure within the Westminster Assembly*

The Assembly was divided into three committees, each responsible for the scrutiny of 50 Psalms. All 150 were subsequently read line by line before the whole Assembly. The Assembly included some excellent Hebrew scholars, such as John Lightfoot, famous for his knowledge of oriental languages and rabbinical writings. The revised versions were sent in batches to Scotland for further examination by the Scottish church. Baillie writes, "the Psalter is a great part of our uniformity, which we cannot let pass till our church be well advised with it".<sup>4</sup>

*The Work of the Scottish General Assembly*

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647 appointed four men to take an initial look at the version sent north by the Westminster Assembly, the first three of them taking forty Psalms each and the last man taking thirty. These were John Adamson, Thomas Crawford, John Row and John Neavy. John Row is of particular interest as his grandfather, also John Row, was one of the 'six Johns' (John Knox being one of them) who drew up the Scots Confession. Evidently, the family had a particular gift for languages and the first John taught his son John to read Hebrew by the time he was seven years old. He likewise taught his son, the John mentioned above as one of the four initial examiners of the Psalter, in similar fashion. Neavy, as a Covenanter, was later banished to Holland and died there.

The General Assembly of 1648 appointed that the version should be examined first by the Edinburgh ministers, then by seven more ministers with them (including James Guthrie, the Covenanter martyr). A Commission of Assembly (of which Samuel Rutherford and Hugh McKail were members) appointed another Committee (of which George Gillespie was a member) to have yet another look at the draft.

The draft version was sent to the presbyteries of the Church in 1648 with instructions from the General Assembly to send any suggested corrections to the Committee of Public Affairs.

In June 1649 an Assembly Commission appointed certain members to go over the material. This included George Hutcheson, an early opponent of the doxology and therefore, we may assume, a man committed to singing only that which was appointed by God in his own worship.

Another Commission in November of the same year (which included Hutcheson, Rutherford and James Guthrie) spent five sessions seeking to improve the version. This Commission also included John Livingstone - a name known to many on account of his famous sermon on Ezekiel 36:25-26 in 1630 at Kirk O'Shotts which was the means of the conversion of many souls to Christ. Livingstone was particularly able in Hebrew,

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<sup>3</sup> See *Hold Fast Your Confession*, Knox Press, Edinburgh, 1978, chapter on 'Purity of Worship' by Hector Cameron, pp.102ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Baillie's Letters* op. cit.p.120

Greek and Syriac, but also studied Arabic, French, Italian, two forms of Dutch and Spanish. When in Holland at one time, he went through a Latin version of the Old Testament correcting it from the Hebrew.

In 1650, the General Assembly finally approved the Psalter in the form it has come down to us today. The men who worked on it were not only noted for their abilities, but also for their godliness and humility.

## 2. Testimonies to the Accuracy of the Scottish Psalter

### *The Participants*

...more plaine, smooth and agreeable to the Text than any heretofore...  
*General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1650*<sup>5</sup>

...yet the other version [*i.e. the 1650 'Scottish'*], so exactly perused and amended... with long and great labour, is so closely framed according to the original text, as we humbly conceive it will be useful for the edification of the church.  
*(Westminster Assembly)*<sup>6</sup>

The Psalms are perfected, the best without doubt that ever yet were extant  
*(Robert Baillie)*<sup>7</sup>

(It) has come through the hands of more examiners...(Its accuracy) is good compensation to make up the want of poetical liberty and sweet pleasant running which some may desire.  
*(Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie in correspondence with the Scottish Church)*<sup>8</sup>

But surlie now, in anno 1650, we have, through the rich blessing of God upon the long travails of many faithful and painful brethren, expert in the Hebrew and poesie, the most exact, near, and smooth paraphrase [*i.e. metrical version, not loose rendering as the term now implies*] of the psalms (a part of the intended uniformitie) that ever the Christian world did afford.  
*(John Row)*<sup>9</sup>

### *External Testimony*

The best which we have seen.  
*(Richard Baxter)*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> From the title of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland's first addition of 'the Scottish Psalter', 1650

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly* by S.W. Carruthers, Reformed Academic Press, Greenville, SC, p.164

<sup>7</sup> Baillie's Letters, *op cit.* vol.2, p.326

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Carruthers, *op.cit.* pp.166f.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in *The Making and Marring of the Scottish Psalter*, John Locker Clugston, Reformer Print, Sydney, 1974 p.8

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from *Reliquiae Liturgicae*, vol.iv, Savoy (1847), Bath, p.44 in *The Worship of the English Puritans* by Horton Davis, Soli Deo Gloria Publications, Morgan, PA, 1997, p.165

...and to us *David's* Psalms seem plainly intended by those terms of *Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, which the Apostle useth, *Ephes. 5.19, Col. 3.16*. But then 'tis meet that these Divine composures should be represented to us in a fit translation, lest we want *David*, in *David*; while his holy ecstasies are delivered in a flat and bald expression. The translation which is now put into thy hands cometh nearest to the Original of any that we have seen, and runneth with such a fluent sweetness, that we thought fit to recommend it to thy Christian acceptance; Some of us having used it already, with great comfort and satisfaction."

*subscribed by Thomas Manton, Henry Langley, John Owen, William Jenkyn., James Innes, Thomas Watson, Thomas Lye, Matthew Poole, John Milward, John Chester, George Cokayn, Matthew Meade, Robert Francklin, Thomas Dooelittle, Thomas Vincent, Nathanael Vincent, John Ryther, William Tomson, Nicolas Blakie, Charles Morton, Edmund Calamy, William Carslake, James Janeway, John Hickes, John Baker, Richard Mayo.*<sup>11</sup>

The metrical version of the Psalms should be read or sung through at least once in the year. It is truly an admirable translation from the Hebrew...

*(Robert Murray M'Cheyne)*<sup>12</sup>

The Scottish Version of the Psalms is not perfect, nor is the English version of the Bible; but both are so near perfection, and so interwoven with Christian faith and feeling, that it is a question of the gravest character whether either of them should be changed.

*(Dr. John Edgar, 1798-1866, Professor of Theology, Presbyterian Church of Ireland)*<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Examples of Carefulness of Translation

We can look at a few simple examples of the care taken in translation of the Scottish Psalter, showing how they sought to bring out the meaning of the Hebrew text.

In Psalm 46:1, our prose version (AV) speaks of God as "a very present help in trouble", whereas the metrical version has "in straits a present aid". Both are perfectly legitimate translations, but the Hebrew word (*tsarah*) translated 'trouble' is from a word that means 'to press'; and so the word 'straits' brings out even more of the original sense. It is the idea of being 'pressed', of being in a tight spot, of being under pressure. The converse is found in those Psalms where the psalmist refers to the Lord setting his feet in "a large room" or "a large place" (Psalm 31:8 and Psalm 118:5 & 6) in contrast to being hemmed

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<sup>11</sup> *Letter to the Reader* in an edition of the 1650 Psalter, for the Company of Stationers, London, 1673

<sup>12</sup> *Memoir and Remains of R.M. M'Cheyne*, Andrew Bonar, Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1966, p.621

<sup>13</sup> Preface by Dr John Edgar to *The True Psalmody*, by a Committee of the Reformed and United Presbyterian Churches of Philadelphia, pub. James Gemmell, Edinburgh 1878

in or being under pressure - thus the word 'straits' is a very good rendering of that expression.

In some places where extra syllables are needed to fit the metre, very simple methods are used. For example, whereas in our Authorised Version, normally 'Jehovah' in the Old Testament is rendered LORD (in capital letters to tell us that it is referring to 'Jehovah'), in Psalm 31:5 it is simply left as Jehovah in the metrical version.

To give perhaps a less well-known example, in Psalm 78:63 the metrical version reads, "The fire consum'd their choice young men". The phrase 'young men' (*bachur*) is rendered 'choice young men'. At first sight, we might think an extra word has been added only to make it fit the metre. It is certainly true that they have made the line fit the right number of syllables, but it isn't just 'padding', because the word 'young men' in this place is a word derived from a verb (*bachir*) that means 'to choose'. It is the same word which is used in Isaiah 40:30 "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall". It means the 'cream' of the young men, the 'choicest' of them. The metrical version, in adding the word 'choice' is not just plucking a word out of the air and putting it in to make the line fit, but in making it fit the metre, they have included the idea of 'choice' or 'chosen' which is actually implied in the Hebrew.

A final example<sup>14</sup> may be given: "I intreated thy favour with my whole heart" (Psalm 119:58, A.V.) in the Psalter becomes, "With my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favour free". The Authorised Version has a marginal note attached to "favour" which reads "Heb: face", because the Hebrew idea of favour is of 'turning the face towards'. Our metrical version simply incorporates both terms.

We must not assume that when the metrical Psalter uses more words than the prose, that they are simply made up words. Generally speaking, when they use more words to fit the metre, the metrical translators are normally drawing out more of what is in the actual Hebrew. That is why competent authorities confirm that it is an accurate version and even hostile critics of the style frequently concede the accuracy.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Further examples are given in *Make His Praise Glorious*, Roy Mohon, WMP, Eaglescliffe, 1999, p.35

<sup>15</sup> Arguments based on the alleged inaccuracy introduced by versification of the Psalms are not new. Robert McWard, the Covenanter, responds to Bishop Burnet by saying, "Our metrical Psalms are no device of men, seeing they are the same in substance and sense, with these in prose, without any greater variation than the application of the command of singing to us Scotsmen does both require and warrant..." (*The True Non-Conformist*, p.279, quoted in *The Hymnology of the Scottish Reformation*, David Hay Fleming which is included in *Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature, Vol.4*, Naphtalie Press, Dallas, 1991, p.243). Later, Fleming quotes Principal Forrester replying to Bishop Honeyman, saying, "the framing of the Psalmes, commended for the use of singing (a commanded duty) into such a metrical composure, as is suitable hereunto, I mean keeping still (i.e. always) close to the Sacred Text and not varying from the true and genuine sense of the words, falls within the compass of the Divine commands enjoining the same". *Op.cit.p.245* John Cotton, the New England Puritan, argues similarly, "...presupposing that God would have the Psalmes of David and other Scripture Psalmes to be sung of English men...then as a necessary means to that end, he would have the Scripture Psalmes (which are poems and verses) to be translated into English Psalmes (which are in like sort poems and verses) that English people might be able to sing them" *Singing Psalmes a Gospel Ordinance(1647)*, p.61, quoted in *Worship.., Horton Davis, op.cit p.167*

## 4. Scriptural Aims of the Translators

Let us now consider the Scripturalness of the aims of the translators of the Scottish Psalter. What were their aims and were they good aims?

**1. Accuracy.** First of all, as we have seen, they aimed at accuracy and they achieved that to a very high degree. That this is a biblical aim is obvious. The Apostles quote sometimes from a Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. That tells us that Scripture translation is legitimate. But sometimes, the Apostles do not quote the Septuagint Greek version, they translate it themselves for greater accuracy. The Psalter translators' goal of an accurate translation was clearly a good and godly one.

**2. Simplicity.** They also aimed at simplicity. Francis Rous, who did the groundwork of what became known as the Scottish Psalter, in the Preface to his 1646 edition which formed the basis of our Psalter, stated this:

True it is, that in a former edition, Psalms have been set forth in measures fitted for more difficult tunes, which are still to be seen. But it was objected by very good judgments that if such difficult tunes were allowed, some man willing to make use of them, if not sure of his skill, might begin a Psalm in a tune wherein the congregation might be put to a loss. They might either fail to follow him at all, or follow him in a discord instead of a harmony. Indeed, it is suitable to charity that those that have skill should condescend to them that have none, and not by that skill hinder edification of the unskilful<sup>16</sup>.

It is a lovely biblical thought, is it not, that the Psalmody of the people of God should be such that as many as possible, even those of limited musical ability, can seek to join in? Yes, we should make our Psalmody as beautiful as possible, but without causing one of the saints of God to be left unable to attempt to sing because of its complexity. It should never become so elaborate that we end up with those who are musically skilled as the only ones who can really sing. At the Reformation, there was a deliberate reversal of Rome's practice of having the professional singers perform to a silent congregation. Our Reformers purposely sought to have the Psalms sung by the whole congregation of the people of God. John Calvin in Geneva resisted anything too complex in the singing of Psalms in order to ensure that the whole congregation could join in the praise of God.

Did the Scottish Psalter achieve this aim of simplicity? Well, let us ask the question: How many tunes do you need to know to be able to sing the whole Scottish Psalter through? The answer of course is one. It may not be desirable, but if you can manage one tune, you can sing every verse in the Book of Psalms from the Scottish Psalter. Where there is only one version of a particular Psalm, it is always in common metre (i.e. the number of syllables in the four lines respectively is 8:6:8:6). If there are two versions of a particular Psalm, one of them is always in common metre.<sup>17</sup> This means that if you can remember the tune that our precentor used in singing Psalm 95 this

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in *Clugston, op. cit.* p.9

<sup>17</sup> A possible exception to this is Psalm 136 where the first version is, strictly speaking, 8:7:8:7, though in the writer's experience it is often sung to common metre tunes.

evening, then you could sing every Psalm to that tune if you use the Scottish Psalter. Now that is simplicity if ever it existed.

That it is a Scriptural thought to seek to make our Psalmody such that all can join in is clear from Colossians 3:16, for example, where we read that we are to "teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs". All are to be able to engage in this, not just those with greater musical ability. In James 5:13, when we are told "Is any merry? let him sing psalms", it does not restrict this to those who have a high degree of musical skill. It tells all of the Lord's people, "let him sing psalms." Our psalmody must be kept simple, so that these Biblical injunctions can be obeyed. And the people of God are to "exalt his name together" (Psalm 34:3); not just the musically gifted, but also the less skilled.<sup>18</sup>

**3. Uniformity.** The Westminster Assembly and the Scottish General Assembly also aimed at uniformity of worship. There are frequent references to this among the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly.

Alexander Henderson, one of the Scottish Commissioners to the Westminster Assembly, wanted "uniformity in the whole island".<sup>19</sup> Rutherford and Gillespie referred to the Psalter as "part of our uniformity, according to our Covenant".<sup>20</sup> And one of the committees of the Westminster Assembly reporting to the Assembly said, "If liberty should be given to people to sing in churches, and every one use the translation which they desire, by that means several translations might come to be used, yea, in one and the same congregation at the same time, which would be a great distraction and hindrance to edification."<sup>21</sup>

Was it right to think the whole church of God in these islands should sing one version of the Psalms? We believe it was. If biblical Hebrew were our native tongue, how many versions would we sing? One. Diversity of language requires the Psalter in various languages, but it does not require many versions in the same language. Why should one congregation sing one version and another congregation a few miles away sing another version? That is not a rich diversity, but confusion or, at least, unnecessary individualism. We should be able to go to the English-speaking congregations of the Lord and find the same version in use. "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:6).

**4. Long-Term Usage.** The translators of the Scottish Psalter aimed, as we have seen, at accuracy, simplicity and uniformity. They also aimed at long-term usage. They intended that the Psalm version produced would be used for a long time to come. They saw their work as the culmination of the process of Psalmody revision since the Reformation, not simply another part of an unending process.

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<sup>18</sup> A Commission of the Scottish General Assembly actually asked the Westminster Assembly that, "as much as may be, all the Psalms may be of the common time". See *Carruthers, op. cit.* p.163

<sup>19</sup> *Carruthers, op. cit.* p.161

<sup>20</sup> *Carruthers, op. cit.* p.166

<sup>21</sup> *Carruthers, op. cit.* pp.165f. The context was their refusal to allow the version produced by William Barton as an alternative



## The Scottish Reformation Society - Inverness Branch

In writing home to the Scottish Church, the Scots Commissioners at the Westminster Assembly (Henderson, Rutherford, Gillespie and Baillie) urged them to keep moving in examining the draft of the Psalter that had been sent to them, in order that "the Psalter might at this time be put in such a frame that we need not be troubled hereafter with any new translation thereof."<sup>22</sup>

Robert Ballie says, "These lines are likely to go up to God from millions of tongues for many generations: it were a pity but all possible diligence were used to have them framed so well as might be."<sup>23</sup>

Like the Authorised Version of the Bible, the Scottish Psalter reigned supreme for generations. These two productions date from a period when the Church, under the blessing of God, was in a strong condition spiritually, and relatively united, and both gained near universal acceptance.

At present, when the Church is in a low and divided condition, the last thing that should be done is to attempt great enterprises of this sort. When the Church finds itself at a low ebb and in a fragmented state, as it is today, it is not the time to be trying to improve on what was the product of the Church when it was in a far better state. The result of trying to produce other Bible versions has been an inferior and a multiplied product, causing yet further confusion and division. A fragmented Church becomes more fragmented by unsettling what is good and established.

Since the Revised Version of the Bible appeared in 1885, we now have, apparently, over 100 versions of the New Testament in circulation. In other words, once the craze for revision starts, it does not stop. It would be an interesting study on its own as to why that is the case. But it may have something to do with the fact that when the Church is low, a certain kind of desperation can set in and novelty is sought. Nevertheless, when the Church is already weak and fragmented, the innovations produced by some fail to satisfy others, who want different, perhaps more radical measures. Even with Bible translation this is the case. Only where absolutely necessary should settled things be unsettled.

When we turn to the matter of Psalters, the section of the professing Church singing the Psalms in our day is, sadly, a small one. There are, in our opinion, grounds to think that such Psalter revision has not strengthened the practice of Psalmody.

Six American Psalm-singing denominations co-operated to produce a revised Psalter in 1912. Only one of them is still a Psalm-singing church today. One merged with another, and the others are no longer Psalm-singing churches. Six of them produced a new Psalter, but only one of them remains to use it exclusively in its worship.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Clugston, op. cit.* p.9

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> "Of the six Psalm-singing denominations which helped produce it in 1912 the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church is the sole survivor. The United Presbyterians adopted hymns in 1924, the Christian Reformed in 1934, the Associate Reformed Presbyterians in 1946, and the Reformed Presbyterians (General Synod), now merged in Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, did likewise. The Associate Presbyterian Church, reduced to 4 ministers and their congregations, was received into the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church in 1969. The number of Psalm-singers in

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland produced a revised Psalter in 1879 and a hymnbook in 1898.

It would be quite unjust, of course, to suggest that everyone who wants Psalter revision is really aiming to introduce uninspired hymns. Many sincerely (though we believe mistakenly) want a new Psalm version because they think it is both needed and in the interests of promoting the singing of Psalms. But if we unnecessarily unsettle what would be best left settled, then those who are actually against Psalm-singing will always support any degree of change attainable. Today, the Psalm-singing part of the professing Church is smaller than ever, but the number of Psalm versions increases. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America produced one in 1958 and another in 1973. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland is producing its own version.<sup>25</sup> The Free Church of Scotland (majority) has done likewise and there are also several versions among Australian Presbyterians. We submit that the multiplying of Psalm versions, by each small Psalm-singing denomination producing its own, is not the way to promote Psalm singing. Does each of these denominations think they, and they only, were able to get it right compared with those who tried prior to themselves?

This is not a time for novelty, but for holding on to what has been handed down to us from a better age of the Church's history. We have, in the Scottish Psalter, a Psalm version that has been demonstrated to be accurate and easy to be sung by all. If the Bible version and the Psalter we have from better times are good, then we should leave them alone.

Let us sing this accurate version of the Psalms. Let us memorise it and let us love this faithful translation of the Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, breathed out by the Spirit of God. In this way may we indeed, by the blessing of God, be filled with the Spirit, and have the Word of Christ dwell within us richly.

*This article is the substance of an address, "The Development of the Scottish Psalter", given by Rev David Silversides, at a public meeting arranged by the Inverness Branch of the Scottish Reformation Society, on 18 February 2002.*

*Rev David Silversides is the minister of Loughbrickland Reformed Presbyterian Church, in County Down, Northern Ireland.*

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North America is now scarcely one-twentieth of what it was in 1912. This stark reality should make the most ardent revisionist pause." *Clugston, op. cit.* p.16

<sup>25</sup> This has now been completed and published as *The Psalms for Singing – A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition*, The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, 2004