

PSALM SINGING REVISITED

The Case for Exclusive Psalmody

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The singing of the Psalms of the Bible to the praise of God is a practice which goes back at least to the time of David. There is no doubt that the people of God in Old Testament times used the Psalms in their worship of God. Similarly, it is acknowledged that the Psalms were used in worship by our Lord and by the Apostolic Church.

For many centuries preceding the Reformation, the introduction of non-inspired songs into the worship of the church caused a corresponding decline in the use of the Psalter, but one of the characteristics of the Reformation was the fact that Psalm singing was restored once more to a place of prominence. In churches of the Presbyterian and Reformed family, including Episcopalians and Congregationalists, Psalm singing was the standard recognized practice. Those who participated in The Westminster Assembly practiced exclusive Psalmody and formulated the Westminster Standards on that basis.

The first book published in America was the Bay Psalm Book, produced by the Congregationalists in Massachusetts, who at that time and for many years afterward sang only the Psalms in the worship of God. From the Reformation until about 1800—over 250 years—the almost universal practice of Presbyterian and Reformed churches was exclusive Psalmody. The United Presbyterian Church ceased to hold this position in 1925. The

Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod (now part of the RPCES) gave up exclusive Psalmody at about the same time, but in a more gradual manner; in 1965 only one congregation still practiced it. There are still a number of smaller denominations throughout the world who maintain this historic position. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America is one of them. We have not made exclusive Psalmody one of our distinctive principles; rather, those who have given up this position have made it distinctive for us. We still stand where all the Presbyterian and Reformed churches once stood.

Yet the real reason for exclusive Psalmody is not the maintenance of a glorious heritage or a stubbornness to accept change. The case for exclusive Psalmody rests upon the Scriptures. It was the concern to be faithful to the Scriptures that brought about the Reformation. We need to look again at what the Bible says about our worship of God.

From the perspective of a Biblical theology, which recognizes the order in which truths are revealed in Scripture, we see God's creation of the heavens and the earth as a backdrop to our worship. We see that man was created for God's glory and that the Triune God must be adored and worshipped, first of all, as our Sovereign Creator. All of God's creation is to praise Him, but only man, created in God's image, has the capacity to worship Him. Before his fall, man naturally adored and enjoyed God. It was man's disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit that broke his fellowship with God. Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord because they no longer desired to walk with Him in the cool of the evening.

Then we see how God took the initiative in restoring man's fellowship and worship. Fallen man did not desire fellowship with God, nor did he know how to approach God. It remained for God in His grace to call His people and to reveal to them how He

is to be worshipped.

The first principle of Biblical worship might then be stated in this way: **GOD WHO IS THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP HAS REVEALED IN HIS WORD HOW WE ARE TO WORSHIP HIM.**

From the very beginning we can see that worship is God-centered and is to conform to God's appointed standards. God approved of Abel and his offering. Abel not only had his heart right before God (Heb. 11:4) but he also worshipped according to the command of God.

The Scriptures give a progressive account of God's commands concerning worship. He told His people how to build their altars and what kinds of sacrifices to bring. He gave detailed instruction concerning the construction and worship of the tabernacle and of the temple. He provided a Book of Praise as part of His inerrant Word. The Bible includes and defines acceptable means of worship and sets forth acceptable attitudes and actions for the worshipper. The God Who by His grace renews in us the desire to worship Him has in His Word told us how.

A second principle of Biblical worship, contingent upon the first, might be stated in this way: **WHATEVER IS NOT COMMANDED BY SCRIPTURE IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD IS FORBIDDEN.** This is frequently called the regulative principle of worship.

Although the regulative principle applies particularly to worship, its basis in Scripture is far broader. Norman Shepherd tells us that "the broadest context in which we must view the regulative principle is nothing less than the authority of God over the world."¹ We see God's authority in His eternal decrees, and in His works of creation and providence. God controls or "regulates" whatever comes to pass. Man is under that authority, and is to obey the commands which God gives. These commands to man are regulative; they are given in both the Old and New

Testaments to regulate the life and conduct of God's people. To Israel God said, "You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2) Deuteronomy 12:32 is quite similar: "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it." These passages express a principle which applies to all of life including worship.

Jesus confirms the regulative principle as applied to all of our faith and life. In Matthew 28:18-20, He does not say that we should teach an eclectic theology in which His regulations are included. Rather, we are to "teach them to observe all that He commanded." Christ is sovereign. In His Book we see, as the Catechism puts it, "what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man."²

Worship may be seen as part of our faith and duty. Shepherd writes, "If Christ determines how we are acceptable to God in terms of the totality of our lives, it is obvious that He determines how we make our specific approach to God in acts of worship."³

Shepherd develops this thought further,

In the Scriptures we see Christ directing His people in the worship of God. He teaches His disciples how to pray (Matt. 6:6-15). He leaves instruction concerning the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 28:19, 20; I Cor. 15:23-34). The instruction is not always in didactic form. He sets the pattern for the reading and exposition of Scripture (Luke 4:16-27) in His church and authorizes His people to join Him in a song of praise (Matt. 26:30). Beyond these obvious examples, we must realize that the whole Scripture is the Word of Christ and therefore what is warranted in the Word is warranted for

the people of God. When a church adopts what is frequently called "a directory for worship," it is not adding a second directory to the Scripture, much less substituting a new one for the Scripture. If it is properly drawn up, the directory merely applies the directions of Scripture to the immediate needs of the people, much as the confessions of a church set forth the truth of the Word with reference to the needs of the people.⁴

The Westminster Confession of Faith describes the regulative principle as follows: "The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devises of men . . . or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture."⁵ This was the acknowledged doctrine of worship of the Reformed churches at the time of the Westminster Assembly. The Scriptural support for that position is seen in the following passages:

Exodus 20:4-6. In the second commandment, man is forbidden to devise forms of worship which might please him, but not be commanded by God. The jealousy of God in protecting His worship should make us exceedingly careful not to offend Him. Larger Catechism 109 tells us that the second commandment forbids "all devising, counseling, commanding, using and anywise approving any religious worship not instituted by God Himself . . . all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed." More succinctly Shorter Catechism 51 tells us that "the second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in His Word."

Deuteronomy 12:32. We have already cited this verse in connection with the broad view of the regulative princi-

ple, but notice that this verse is also applicable to the specific situation of worship. In contrast to the practice of those who worshipped other gods, and in order that God's people would not be ensnared in false worship, God said, "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it."

Leviticus 10:1, 2. The offering of strange fire by Nadab and Abihu is quite significant because this was worship of the true God by men who were scripturally qualified to offer worship. There is no specific prohibition of such strange fire. (One alternative that is offered to the regulative principle is: "Whatever is not forbidden by Scripture in the worship of God is allowed." Yet in this instance what was not forbidden was also not allowed.) Nadab and Abihu were consumed by fire from God because they presumed to do in worship what God had not commanded. This is probably the clearest example in the Old Testament of the application and enforcement of the regulative principle in worship.

The above passage is an example of an almost universal tendency to ignore the regulative principle of worship. It is the idea—frequently very sincere—that man can improve upon God's way. Nadab and Abihu may have felt that their strange fire would be more pleasing to God than the fire from the altar. Some of the people of God might have thought that an altar of cut stones would be more attractive and worthy for worship than an altar of rough boulders, yet God said, "If you build an altar of stone for me, you shall not build it of cut stones, for if you wield your tool on it, you will profane it." (Ex. 20:25) Other examples of those who felt they could improve on God's way of worship were Uzza (I Chron. 13:9, 10) and King Uzziah (II Chron. 26:16-19). In each case God's judgment showed His dis-

pleasure with those who would go beyond his commands about worship.

Turning to the New Testament, we find the same principle expressed:

Mark 7:6-9. "And He said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.' He was saying to them, 'You nicely set aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.'" In this passage Jesus not only shows that man-made traditions in worship are not binding and that worship from the heart is essential, but He also illustrates that worship is vain when it neglects the commandments of God. The Pharisees and scribes had not only neglected God's commands regarding worship; they had established traditions so securely that the present generation was probably not even aware of God's command. (Is it possible that many of God's people today have grown up with such a firmly entrenched tradition of hymn-singing that they have no knowledge of the Biblical and historic practice by the Apostolic and Reformation churches of singing the Psalms? Here in Mark 7 Jesus told the Pharisees and scribes that man may not approach God in any way other than that which is prescribed in His written Word.

Colossians 2:22, 23. Here self-made religion or will-worship is condemned as characterizing the life of a person before he becomes a Christian. The inclination of the natural man is to determine how to come to God through the ideas and teachings of men, but Paul shows that for

those who are Christ's—for those who have died with Him (v. 20), for those who are risen with Him (3:1)—there is to be a dependence upon God's Word, and a growing maturity which will not submit to the deceptive wisdom and freedom of do-it-yourself religion and worship.

Hebrews 9:1. The fact that “even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship” suggests that the New Covenant also has such regulations, but Norman Shepherd warns against that sequence. Although the first Covenant was first in the unfolding of the plan of redemption, its regulations were based on the original of which it was a type or shadow. “Everything in the worship of the Old Covenant,” Shepherd continues, “had to be done according to the pattern shown on the mount (Heb. 8:5) ultimately because only in the name of Christ can we have access to God and renewed communion with God. Communion with God, and therefore formal acts of worship, even life itself, are only possible through Christ. This is what the regulative principle is designed to reinforce and what it continues to reinforce under the New Covenant.

“Hebrews 10:19, 20 speaks of Christ as a new and living way. His blood has taken the place of the blood of bulls and goats. As the ceremonial law is set aside, the heavenly sanctuary replaces the earthly sanctuary so that through Christ both Jew and Gentile have access in one spirit to the Father . . .

“The worship of the heavenly sanctuary rendering obsolete the worship of the earthly sanctuary does not mean the end of formal acts of worship on earth. According to Hebrews 10:19-25, it is just because we have a new and living way that we are to draw near (v. 22). The approach is first in terms of total obedience, the obedience

of faith (v. 23) and the obedience of action (v. 24). But the approach is also in terms of formal acts of worship, for we are not to forsake our assembling together where we encourage one another (v. 25). Again, we note the close association of life and worship. As we stand under the law of Christ in all things (Matt. 28:20), so especially in matters of worship. Christ continues to govern our assemblies and the worship offered therein. This is the form of the regulative principle under the New Covenant . . .

“Christ orders worship by His Spirit and therefore by the Word of the Spirit, the inspired Scripture. Spiritual worship is not humanly devised worship, but worship in the Spirit of God according to the inspired Word. How do we know that our worship is acceptable to God? Not by some feeling that it is acceptable, but by reference to the Bible and its directives concerning the nature of acceptable worship.”⁶

God has determined the way of access to Him through Christ. God has also determined the way in which He will be worshiped. This is the essence of the regulative principle.

We must be careful to distinguish between circumstances of worship and worship itself. For example, Scripture does not prescribe the hour of the day when worship should be held. Neither does our Lord designate the size or style or shape of the place of worship, or the height of the pulpit or the number of chairs that are to be on the platform. Such circumstances will vary from time to time, and from place to place. The regulative principle requires that God's people will assemble at some time and some place for worship each Lord's Day, and that they will worship as He has commanded them.

Therefore on the basis of these Biblical principles of worship

we believe that THE BIBLE TEACHES THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE PSALMS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

We believe this because of the express commands of God in His Word for His people to sing the Psalms in worship. (II Chron. 29:30; Psalm 95:2; 105:2) On the basis of these and other references there would be few who would question the divine sanction of the Psalms in the worship of the Old Testament church. And except for some dispensationalists who relegate the Psalms to the Dispensation of Law, most Christians today do not as a matter of principle refuse to sing the Psalms. It is true, however, that many hymnbooks have only one or two Psalms in them (probably Psalm 23 and 100), and that some congregations with Psalter-Hymnals have a strong preference for the non-inspired hymns. Many people today have grown up in Reformed and evangelical churches without having an opportunity to sing the Psalms and appreciate them. While the command to sing Psalms may still be recognized, it is often forgotten in practice. Practically, like the true altar in II Kings 16 at the time of Ahaz, the Psalms frequently have been pushed into the background and neglected.

Yet God, in establishing His worship, commanded His people to sing Psalms, and His people obeyed, not only in the Old Testament church, but in the New Testament church as well. It's true, as we have pointed out, that the form of God's commanded worship changed in the New Testament church. Christ in His life, death and resurrection fulfilled the ceremonial aspects of worship, but the principles underlying worship remained unchanged: worship was to be according to God's commandment, and whatever was not commanded was forbidden.

In support of this, there is **no record that anything but the Psalms were sung in worship in the New Testament church.** The worship of the New Testament church was patterned after

the synagogue, and the Psalms of the Old Testament were the only vehicle of praise in the synagogue.

The only record we have of Jesus singing was His singing the Psalms at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:30). There is general agreement that the "hymn" sung on that occasion was the Great Hallel, that group of Psalms (113-118) which were regularly sung in connection with the Passover. The significance of Jesus singing the Psalms on that occasion is great, as Jesus not only observed the Old Testament ordinance of the Passover, but also instituted the New Testament sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Paul (Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16) and James (James 5:13) call upon the church to sing Psalms.

A long exegesis could be given on the above passages in Ephesians and Colossians,⁷ but suffice it for this study to point out that Biblical scholars such as John Murray⁸ hold that "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" refer only to the Book of Psalms of the Old Testament. Both in the Hebrew Psalter and in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Book of Psalms, the translation commonly used by the New Testament church, these three terms—psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs—are used as titles for the Psalms. In this connection Murray warns us against determining the denotation or connotation of these three terms by modern usage of them. Contending that the interpretation of these terms should be determined by their usage in Scripture, Murray shows how the preponderance of their usage in Scripture clearly refers to the Book of Psalms. In addition to this, he points out that "we have no evidence whatsoever that a hymn, in the usage in Scripture, ever designates an uninspired composition."⁹ As Murray develops his argument, it clearly leads us to the conclusion that "when Paul wrote about 'psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs' he would expect his readers to think of what they were, in the terms of the Scripture itself, 'psalms, hymns,

and spiritual songs,' namely, the Book of Psalms."¹⁰

Coupled to the understanding of the usage of these terms is the example of singing the Psalms in the early church and the sanction of their use in Scripture. This makes a strong case for the singing of the Book of Psalms in the church today. The lack of evidence that any non-inspired songs were used in the apostolic church and the absence of any command or content in the Scriptures to replace the Psalms or supplement them is convincing proof of their continuance as the exclusive God-ordained means of praise.

It is instructive for us to recognize that the Psalms which God has commanded us to sing are actually *part of His inspired Word*. Since it is to the Bible that we turn for help in all aspects of our faith and life, it is not surprising that the divinely appointed manual of praise has its place at the very heart of His *inerrant Word*. Calvin, in the preface to his *Commentary on the psalms*, suggests that in the Psalms,

Not only is there opened up to us familiar access to God, but also that we have permission and freedom granted us to lay open before Him our infirmities, which we would be ashamed to confess before men.

Besides, there is also here prescribed to us an infallible rule for directing us with respect to the right manner of offering to God the sacrifice of praise, which He declares to be the most precious in His sight, and of the sweetest odour. There is no other book in which there is to be found more express and magnificent commendations, both of the unparalleled liberality of God toward His church, and of all His works; there is no other book in which there is recorded so many deliverances, nor one in which the evidences and experiences of the fatherly providence and solicitude which God exercises toward us, are celebrated

with such splendor of diction, and yet with the strictest adherence to the truth; in short, there is no other book in which we are more perfectly taught the right manner of praising God, or in which we are more powerfully stirred up to the performance of this religious exercise.¹¹

It is good to recognize that what a worshipper sings will have a profound influence upon his faith. This was probably a major reason that the Gnostics and other heretics as early as the Third Century began to introduce into Christian worship non-inspired hymns which included their heretical teaching. It would seem then that other non-inspired hymns came to be written to defend the truth and combat these heretical teachings. In commenting on this procedure Duncan Lowe argues,

Although a much broader array of non-inspired hymns is available today, expressive of just about every conceivable idea of doctrine and piety, the issue is still basically the same: are we going to rely on our own aids to piety as we approach God and celebrate His presence, or are we going to take hold of the spiritual instrument and vehicle which He Himself provides for us? The fact that Christian worship is a corporate act gives these considerations additional weight. Who of us has the authority to substitute for the singing of the Word of God (which is the true and proper basis of Christian unity) the singing of something else, something presumably better, as the basis of congregational praise? I think that only the force of custom and tradition makes us insensitive to the presumptuousness of such a choice.¹²

Lowe reminds us that the Bible is not only a necessary revelation for our faith and life—including worship—but that it is also a sufficient and complete revelation. God has given His people all the guidance they need in order to have the abundant life pro-

mised by Christ as they grow in Him in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. He urges,

The fact that the Bible is pre-eminently a verbal and written revelation simply underscores its necessary and sufficient character. God did not just inspire men with "ideas" which they then would speak about according to their own interpretation (II Peter 1:20, 21); God inspired His Word as "words," words which the human authors often wished to understand better (I Peter 1:10-12), words which were to be written down and preserved for the church (Jer. 36:27, 28; I Thess. 5:20), words which believers were then to meditate upon and memorize (Deut. 6:6, 7; Psalm 119:99; Col. 3:16). God did not leave room for men's innovation in the inspiration of His Word or in the obedience He requires to it (Prov. 3:5-7; Matt. 4:4; 5:19, 20; Mark 7:7, 8; John 14:24). In terms of the sufficiency and completeness of the Bible, then, should we not expect its book of congregational praise, the Psalms, to be complete and sufficient for its enduring purpose?¹³

At this point some may argue that the Psalms are inadequate because they are tied to an Old Testament culture or that some important Scriptural doctrines are not explicitly developed. These objections are raised at least in part because of a failure to understand **the unity of the Scriptures**. This unity has a distinct bearing on exclusive Psalmody and is evident in at least three ways.

First, there is **the theme of the Covenant** which runs through the Scriptures from beginning to end. The reformers recovered this thread which ties together the people of God from Genesis to Revelation in a covenant relationship with God. They saw how the covenant made with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, at Sinai, with David and with the people of God in the Old Testa-

ment has its focus and meaning in Christ, and that those who are Christ's in the New Testament church also have their place in the covenant blessings and promises. Therefore, it is appropriate for both the church of the Old Testament and the church of the New Testament to sing the Psalms of the Covenant.

Attendant to the reformers' view of Scripture and the Covenant is the Scripture's view of **the continuity of the church**. The Old Testament people of God and the New Testament people of God were one people. They had one Savior, Jesus Christ, and one way of salvation, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation in Old Testament times was not accomplished on the basis of works or through the efficacy of sacrifices—how often God called His people back to a heart relationship with Him—but through Christ Who was the Redeemer of His people in every age. The difference between worship under the Old Testament and worship under the New Testament is not that one is ceremonial and the other is spiritual. Both are spiritual. Both are to draw the worshipper to fear, love, praise, call upon, trust in, and serve God with all the heart, the soul, the strength and the mind. The continuity of the church adds considerable weight to the position that the Psalms which were given by God for Old Testament worship are also given to be used in His praise today.

An interesting sidelight on the nature of the church is the fact that Isaac Watts, who was one of the first to introduce hymns into Presbyterian and Reformed churches, is claimed by the Dispensationalists as a spiritual progenitor. Charles Ryrie in his book, **Dispensationalism Today**, shows that Watts' six dispensations correspond exactly to the first six dispensations of the Scofield Reference Bible. Although he refers to Arian tendencies in Watts, Ryrie does assign Watts a role in developing dispensationalism.¹⁴ This is significant because Watts rejected the Psalms in worship and introduced his hymns because he did not

believe that the Psalms were fitting for the Christian church. Many of his disciples may not have realized that his hymns arose from an unbiblical view of the church.

A third aspect of the unity of the Scriptures is in the fact that **the whole Bible is the Word of Christ**. Not only those words printed in red ink in some editions of the Bible are the words of Christ, but every word in the Scriptures is His Word through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Not only that, but all Scripture reveals Christ from his work as Creator in Genesis 1:1 to the picture of His coming again in Revelation 22.

In Colossians 3:16 the Psalms in particular are referred to as “the Word of Christ.” In Luke 24:44 Jesus spoke specifically of those things which are written about Him in the Psalms. The Psalms are full of Christ. We have no argument with those who say that they want their praise to center around Christ. What has not been sufficiently realized is the fact that Christ is in the Psalms, not merely in clearly Messianic references such as in Psalms 2, 22, 45, 72, 110, etc., but as the central person throughout the Psalter. Our use of the Psalms in praise is not only in obedience to the command of God, but also because this part of the worship service, like the other parts, is to point us to Christ.

Though written long before His coming, the Psalms speak of a Christ Who has already come, Who has already suffered, Who has already ascended, and Who is coming again in judgment. This perspective adds to the evidence that the Psalms should be used in worship until the end of the world. Christ is set forth in His kingly, in His high-priestly, and in His prophetic offices. The Gospel of Christ is set forth in the Psalms with its great themes of atonement, of regeneration, of forgiveness of sins, of repentance unto life, of sanctification, and of a place in the Father’s house forever for those who place their trust in Him. Our Presby-

terian and Reformed forefathers saw this and found in the Psalms a sufficient and superior songbook for the Reformed church.

Certainly the content of the Book of Psalms is appropriate for every facet of Christian worship. While the life of the worshipper may encounter many different experiences, the Psalms reflect these joys and victories, these struggles and defeats. Yet the Psalms are not problem-centered or even experience-centered; they are Christ-centered. Pre-eminently, they praise Him. They glorify Him. Praise is both to God and about God. It is to recall the mighty works of God. It is to celebrate the majesty, the glory, the goodness, the grace, the love, the mercy of God. Praise is not meant to be entertainment or a performance, but rather an expression of adoration, of thanksgiving, of repentance, of supplication, of faith, of hope, and of love. Themes such as these in the Psalms direct us in our worship and make the singing of God’s Word a means of grace.

The right attitude of the worshipper is tremendously important. Merely singing the Psalms without a proper attitude of heart is not pleasing to God. Psalm-singing is not an automatic means of grace. We are to come seeking to honor and glorify Christ. We are to sing with grace in the heart.

The writers of the Westminster Confession of Faith had this understanding of exclusive Psalmody. They described the parts of worship as follows:

The reading of the Scriptures with godly fear; the sound preaching and conscionable hearing of the Word, in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, and reverence; singing of Psalms with grace in the heart; as also, the due administration and worthy receiving of the sacraments instituted by Christ; are all parts of the ordinary religious worship of God.¹⁵

At a conference of evangelical seminary presidents, one man stated that *one* of the most popular hymns, "I Walked in the Garden Alone," gives an entirely false picture of the Christian life in its exaltation of privatistic piety. At one time or another I have heard *many* hymns criticized by hymnsingers as being "too sentimental, *too* subjective, theologically incorrect, or merely too trivial or *too* frothy." Contrast this with the depth, the richness, the tenderness, the strength, the comprehensiveness and the inerrancy of the inspired Book of Psalms.

Look also at the Biblical ecumenism of the Psalter. All true believers in Christ and His Word can sing them whole-heartedly. They are as unsectarian as the Bible itself, and yet they deny no Scriptural truth nor add any heretical doctrine.

I conclude *with* the words of the late W. I. Wishart, a former United Presbyterian pastor in Pittsburgh.

It has been demonstrated in long years of experience that the exclusive use of the Psalms as the matter of praise develops a strong and sturdy and devout type of Christian character. The same cannot be said of the songs of merely human composition. In these days when there is so much moral weakness and flabbiness of character, when convictions are held so lightly, and moral boundary lines are marked so indistinctly, there is need that the whole church get back to the strong old songs of divine inspiration. They will put iron in the blood. They will put strength into the purposes. They will make men humble before God, but mighty for His truth's sake when they stand before men. They will give us for these days character like that of the Covenanters and the Huguenots and the Puritans, men who know God and will dare to be true. And that is the sort of revival which the church most needs.¹⁶

¹ **The Biblical Doctrine of Worship, A Symposium**, "The Biblical Basis for the Regulative Principle of Worship," Norman Shepherd, p. 43.

² **The Westminster Shorter Catechism**, Q. 3.

³ Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁴ Shepherd, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁵ Westminster Confession of Faith, XXI:1.

⁶ Shepherd, *op. cit.*, pp. 53, 54.

⁷ See "An Exposition of the Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16" by Edward Robson in **The Biblical Doctrine of Worship, A Symposium**.

⁸ **Minutes of the Fourteenth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church**, "Minority Report of the Committee on Song in the Worship of God," John Murray, pp. 58-66.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Calvin, John, **Commentary on the Book of Psalms**, pp. xxxvii, xxxviii.

¹² **The Book of Books**, John H. White, ed., "Biblical Worship: The Place of the Psalms," Duncan Lowe, p. 79.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁴ Ryrie, Charles C., **Dispensationalism Today**, pp. 73, 74.

¹⁵ **Westminster Confession of Faith**, XXI:5.

¹⁶ **The Psalms in Worship**, John McNaugher, ed., "The Psalms as the Divinely Authorized and Exclusive Manual of Praise," W. I. Wishart, p. 58.