

H. A. Connelly.

Supplement

Harris, James,

TO THE

PLOUGHMAN'S LETTER,

IN ANSWER

TO SOME INQUIRIES

ON PSALMODY,

BY HIS YOUNG FRIENDS.



CHARLOTTE, N. C.

PRINTED BY LEMUEL BINGHAM,

.....
1827.

A SUPPLEMENT, &c.

YORK DISTRICT, S. C. SEPT. 3, 1827.

My dear young friends: It being more than three years since I wrote last to you, I will now offer you a few more ideas on Psalmody, especially as there is a call at present for some one to write, and none that I have spoken to, will undertake it.

The first thing I will begin with, is the conduct of Dr. Watts in leaving out verses, and making the Psalms shorter. The first I shall notice, is the 18th Psalm, which is 19 verses shorter. The 22d is 7 shorter; the 35th is 22 shorter; the 89th is 11 shorter; the 105th is 25 shorter; the 119th is 82 shorter; the 136th is 16 shorter. In these 7 Psalms there are 182 verses left out. And if it were only so many dollars, short of what it should be, it would be worthy of particular notice in settling an account properly. Nevertheless, one of these verses left out is of more value to the Church than thousands of dollars. The 136th Ps. which is so much curtailed, was sung at the dedication of the Temple; and the cloudy Pillar filled it while thus exercised, *2 Chron.* v. 13. Also they sung the same at the laying of the foundation of the second Temple, *Ezra* iii. 10 & 11. And while they sung the *same* Psalm, their feelings were very different. Some were weeping; others were shouting for joy. This shews us that the foundation that Wottonians build so much upon is false, viz. that we should make our songs of praise according to our *frame*. If the Israelites had acted on the Wottonian principle, they would have made two songs at least, and set aside the 136th Ps. which God had given them. But the Israelites' principles and practice were somewhat like those of the Seceders; and that is, to endeavor to bring their hearts and frames up to what God has given in his own Songs of praise. To take it the other way, we must have as many songs as singers. This principle at once destroys all social praise. Strange, that they lay that for a foundation, which will destroy social praise altogether; but no stranger than true. If any one had a right to make an appropriate hymn, Christ might have made one to sing on the Cross; as such an event never did take place in time, nor ever shall. But he set us an example to take the word of God as the matter of our songs of praise and prayer also; for he made use of the Psalms of David in both. And we think that his prayers and praises were accepted

of God ; and why not ours, if we exercise faith on his word as he did ? In Exodus xv. we find that Moses and the children of Israel sang one song, notwithstanding the different feelings of so great a number, being more than 600,000 warriors. Nor did Miriam make an appropriate hymn, but sung the very same words that the rest did. It would be a terrible restriction on modern worshippers at a Camp Meeting, to be confined to God's word for their songs of praise, especially the Psalms of David. They would take christian liberty, as they call it, to sing as they please; without having respect to any command, human or divine.

You may see the evil of altering God's word as Dr. Watts has done, as the Dr. acted in the same way that the serpent, (or the *Devil* in the form of a serpent,) did ; *Gen.* iii. 4 & 5. In the 4th verse he added "*not ;*"—"ye shall (not) surely die." In the 5th verse he added "and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Our first parents taking it with this alteration, and acting on it in this way, it became the ruin of the whole human family. Yet Wattonians would have us to take the book of Psalms as W. has added to, and diminished from it. And can we expect any better effect to result from our using it in that way, than what attended our first parents using it in the same way ? It made them fly from the voice of God and hide themselves, and caused them to shun the light. A correct history of the Church will show a similar effect on those that treat God's word in this way.*

A translation of the Scriptures is not considered any alteration of the word of God. But Dr. Watts has made the 109th Ps. 25 verses shorter, and in place of setting forth the righteous judgments of God on the wicked, he patches up 6 verses which he calls "*love to enemies.*" Certainly this is acting in the very way that the Serpent did, as mentioned above in Genesis. God told our first parents, "in the day thou eatest thereof thou *shalt* surely die : " the Serpent said "*ye shall not.*" God says in the 109th Ps. that he will let his wrath fall on the wicked : Watts says, Christ will bless. The last line of the 4th verse in W. is,

"And blest his foes in death."

I defy any one to show such an idea in the 109th Psalm.

For Dr. W. to bless those whom God curses, is as sinful as to curse those whom God blesses. And to bless, when God curses, is Serpent or Devil like, be it Watts, be it what, or be it who it may. To be more merciful than God is, is what we are not commanded. Did God approve of those that kept back their sword from blood in destroying those Canaanites, who were devoted to destruction ?

* When God's word is altered as the Serpent and Watts have done, it is no more the word of God, but the word of them that altered it.

Numbers xxxiii. 55. Did not Hiel pay dear for building Jericho? *1 Kings xvi. 34.* Did not Saul lose the kingdom of Israel for sparing Agag? *1 Sam. xv. 18-35.* It does not become the servants of God to say or do, contrary to what their master saith; and all who do themselves act, or try to get others to act, contrary to the command of God, shew plainly that they are acting under another master.

Dr. W. might as well have said, "I bless you, O ye Scribes, Pharisees, Hypocrites," as to have said what he did in the 109th Ps.; as the same characters are mentioned there as in *Matthew xxiii. 13.* And in the 109th Ps. from the 1st to the 6th verse, and in the 20th verse, it is in the plural number, and so will not all be applicable to Judas, but to all of that character.

I should like to hear what spiritual meaning a Wattonian would give to Leviticus xxii. 24—"Ye shall not offer unto the Lord that which is *bruised*, or *crushed*, or *broken*, or *cut*; neither shall ye make any offering thereof in your land." I think that a lamb, that had passed through between the Cog-wheel, and the Trunnel-head of a Grist Mill, would not be more *bruised*, *crushed*, *broken*, and *cut*, than Dr. Watts has *bruised*, *crushed*, *broken*, and *cut* the 109th Psalm; and yet the Wattonians prefer it to a sound offering.

When I first began to study the subject of Psalmody, I would read a portion of the Psalms, and then the Exposition of Mr. Henry, after which I would compare Watts' Psalms with the Exposition. I soon found that he did not pretend to keep any regular order. But when I came to the 109th Ps. I found that the *Dogs* had left *more* of the *carcase of Jezebel*, than *Dr. Watts* had left of *that Psalm*. Indeed it cannot be said that it is the 109th Psalm; for there is not the *scull*, and *feet*, and *palms of the hands* there, as there was of Jezebel, when they went to bury her.

God commanded Ezekiel, *Chap. iii. 17, 18*—"When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." Now, has Dr. Watts, in the 109th Ps. said unto the wicked man that he shall surely die? Or has he given him warning of his danger, and so delivered his own soul? Or rather has he not reversed it, and said, that he shall *not* die? We are bound to obey those commands of God which have no reason annexed to them, much more when they have, as set forth in the above mentioned Chapter. Blood will be required at all such Watchmen, as lead their hearers on to such dangerous undertakings, as to reverse God's word, either in principle or practice. For Dr. W. to pretend to have the example of Christ for his blessing Christ's enemies in the 109th Ps. is as much as to say, that the will

of *God* in his word, is not the will of *Christ*. This plan would undo the whole plan of salvation; for if we do not believe that the will of the Father, and the will of Christ is the same, we have no sure ground to stand on. Christ, when on the cross, did not pray for the characters mentioned in the 109th Ps., but for such as were *forced* to crucify him. The Roman soldiers did not hear his trial before Pontius Pilate perhaps, and so did not know his innocence. We cannot think that he meant the Scribes and Pharisees who were his malicious foes, when he prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." These knew more than the Roman soldiers did, and of course knew what they themselves did. It was not so with the soldiers;—"Now, when the Centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man." Christ's prayer on the cross was a Mediatorial prayer, and must agree with another of his prayers, *John xvii. 9.* "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." These two prayers are perfectly consistent with each other; and those characters in the 109th Ps. are, of course, not prayed for in his mediatorial prayer. Yet Watts saith in the last line of the 4th verse,

"And blest his foes in death."

In Rouse's Version it is,

"And let his prayer be turn'd to sin,
"When he shall call on thee."

Dr. Watts saith in his Preface to his Psalms—"Blessed be God) we are not confined to the words of any man in our public solemnities." Now what did Dr. Watts mean by this? In the first place, he gives us his principles, as it respects his not being under the control of any man; for you must know that Dr. Watts was a proper *Independent*, subject to no set of men. This information I had from Mr. Edmonds, a very respectable Clergyman of the Gen. Assembly Church in S. C. He said that he was personally acquainted with Dr. Watts, and knew his manner of life, and knew him to be Independent in principle and practice. He was too proud to acknowledge any man fit for him to associate with in public solemnities. No wonder that he thought thus of men and their performances, when he thought that the Divine Songs were not fit for him to use, until they came through his correcting hand. And he *thanks God* for this liberty! It may be inquired how he came by this liberty. Perhaps it was promised, and given him, by the same one, that promised to give to our Saviour the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them!

According to the Dr's. own words, we are not confined to his Psalms or Hymns. Suppose that we should put in practice the thing

that the Dr. says he had in view, viz. that the Clerk should substitute some other word, than the one in the line given out, according to his pleasure; and that he should say, "*Curse*" instead of "*Bless*," would it not show that the Clerk had too much in his power? Or were he to reverse it, as the Dr. himself did, and put "*bless*," for some other "unpleasant word" which God himself had given, would it not be a very material thing? Have the Clerks in our Legislative Bodies, or in our Courts of Law, this privilege? If they had, could they not make a paper read what they pleased, and destroy itself? And why not the same in a Song of praise? With this privilege, a good Clerk in any Denomination, could slip in a word when he wanted, and so make it suit his own principles, be he Arminian, Deist, or any thing else.

But if the Dr. means that we are not confined to the words of any inspired man, such as David, Asaph, &c. then he will appear in his true character as a *Deist*, who would have all other books as well as the Psalms modelled by himself and others of the same cast, to their own mind. The liberty, which Watts gives to the Clerks, is the same that he took himself, where he says in his Preface to one of the Psalms, "In some places, among the words, *Law, Commands, Judgments, Testimonies*, I have used *Gospel, Word, Grace, Truth, Promises*, &c." Were not these the words of an inspired man, that he was taking this liberty with? Certainly they were; and a very important part of Revelation where they are found, if any part can be more so than another. Watts doth this under a pretence of its being more agreeable to the New Testament. This is *to sugar over his Deistical Pills*. The truth is, there is no part of divine Revelation, but what is in New Testament language; for instance, the first promise that was given to our first parents, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the head of the *Serpent*, was in N. Testament language, or the same language that was used in the N. Testament. It is said in 2 *Cor.* xi. 3—"As the *Serpent* beguiled Eve," &c.; and in *Rev.* xii. 9. "that old *Serpent*"—that is, the same one that was to have his head bruised, according to the first promise. If Watts had said that he had substituted European, for Asiatic language, it would have had some color of common sense, but the way it is used by him and his friends makes nonsense. If there had been any part of the Old Testament language that was not known under the New, then there might be some ground for Watts to go on; but until that is shown, we will hold our opinion of his unmeaning language. But I shall let scholars decide this matter, for I am none.

The word "*law*" which Watts has thrown out, and substituted some other one, as more suitable to the N. Testament, is used 38

times in the N. Testament. I wonder how often W. would have a term mentioned in the N. Testament, to make it N. Testament language. The word "*truth*" and "*grace*" which W. has substituted in the place of "*law*," is not as often mentioned in the N. Testament as the word *law*; and yet W. has the impudence to hold it forth to the world as if it were not suitable to the N. Testament. I am sure there is not a term or word that is made use of in the Old or New Testament either, that is more plain and easy to be understood, than the word *law* is; nor will it ever, to the end of the world, become an obsolete word. And for Dr. Watts' taking from the word of God, words of such importance, and substituting others that are not of the same meaning, I call him a *Deist*. It is not necessary to constitute a Deist, that a man should deny the whole of Divine Revelation. If he admits a principle, the result of which would lead to the destruction or denial of God's word, he deserves the name. Would not a man deserve the name of a *thief*, if he would break a lock, go into the house, take but one article, leave the door open, and allow others to go in and substitute one article for another, as a Newspaper for a handful of Bank notes, or any thing else at pleasure? Beyond any doubt he would. And has not Watts broken the lock that God himself has put on every word of the O. Testament, as well as the New? *Revelations* xxii. 18, 19. And has he not confessed, in his Preface, that he has taken five *important words*, and substituted others of his own devising; and allowed the Clerks of Congregations the same privilege? Now suppose that W. has only thrown away the tenth part of the book of Psalms, which is a very moderate calculation; that the next, who would undertake the Digest, would only leave one tenth of the Psalms; that a third would throw away the five books of Moses; that a fourth would throw out Kings and Chronicles;—then, at this rate, the whole of God's word would be laid aside, or stolen, or lost. Would you think that he, who broke the lock, and made the first grab, would be free from guilt? Certainly not.

The Dr. says, "where any unpleasant word is found, he that leads the worship may substitute a better." The *unpleasant* and *better* words are, as the notion or sentiment of him that leads the worship is. We will suppose the leader to be a man under the reigning power and dominion of sin. Then any word that would awaken his conscience or shew him his dangerous situation, would be an *unpleasant* word; and any word that would encourage him in sin and lull him asleep, or countenance his erroneous sentiments, would be a *better* word; for every man, and every thing loves that which is agreeable to their own nature, and hates that which is

contrary thereunto. From this it would appear, that it is of importance to have a good clerk to lead the worship.

I have spent some time in examining Dr. Watts' psalms and other human compositions, and endeavored to point out some things in them that unfit them for an offering unto God, with hope of acceptance; but I might have saved myself the trouble, had it not been that I wished to shew others, that human composition was *wholly unclean* from its nature. Every beast that was designed to be sacrificed as an offering unto God, had to be examined to see if there was any blemish in it before it was offered; but those beasts, such as dogs and swine, were not to undergo any examination, because every thing of the kind was forbidden. So human composition, like dogs and swine, needs no examination, as to whether it has any blemish in it or not, for it and all such are *utterly unclean*, in God's account, when presented in the room and place of Divine Songs. He that offereth such sacrifices "is as if he cut off a dog's neck."

If erroneous sentiments should render a man's work unpopular, I think that Dr. Watts' productions should not be so popular as they are. He says in a letter to Dr. Coleman—"I think I have said every thing concerning the Son of God which Scripture says; but I *could not* go so far as to say with some orthodox divines, that the Son is equal with the Father." Dr. Watts ought to have told us, in what, and how much, the Son is below the Father. In the year 1725 Dr. Watts came out openly against the doctrine of the Trinity. No wonder that he disregarded the *doctrine* of God's word, when he disregarded the *word itself* so much, that he could dispose of it as he thought proper. The amount of his Preface to his Psalms, and what he actually did, is *this*, that he thought *himself* capable of making a *better* Psalmody for the Church, than *God himself* had done.



A sentiment has been circulated through our country in order to strengthen the Hymning system, that it has been the practice of the Church in her purest times, to have other Psalms and Hymns than the Psalms of David made use of in public worship, and that to confine ourselves to the Psalms of David alone is an innovation.* To prove this, the Rev. Ralph Erskine is brought forward, what

*See the *Appendix* to Ruffner's *Strictures*, written by Rev. John M. Wilson, of Cabarrus, N. C. An able answer to these *Strictures* has been written by M'Master.

he did and said, and what the Associate Synod wanted him to do, which are mentioned in the 10th vol. of R. Erskine's Works. Now let us see how far this proof goes to prove the Hymning System, as now practised, to be right. To lead us into the true knowledge of these things, I will take some dates of transactions from an historical account of the rise and progress of the Secession by Mr. John Brown, the Preface to the 1st vol. of Erskine's Works, and the several Prefaces in the 10th vol. which I have all before me. I shall not quote the page in these authors.

Ralph Erskine was licenced to preach in the year	- -	1709
He was ordained in Dunfermline in	- - - - -	1711
He wrote the Sonnetts in his youth, say	- - - - -	1720
The Secession commenced in	- - - - -	1732
He joined the Secession in	- - - - -	1736
His Paraphrase of Solomon's Song was published	-	1738
The Associate Synod formed in	- - - - -	1745
His Version of the Lamentations was put forth in	-	1750
His Version of Solomon's Song, his paraphrase of the first Gospel Promise, the Gospel Mystery, the ten Plagues of Egypt, and the ten Commandments, in	- - - - -	1752

Job's Hymns were written by Ralph Erskine some time before his death. His Scripture Songs were revised and prepared from his Short Notes by his son Henry Erskine, after his father's death.

Having made these dates, I shall reject those things in the writings of R. Erskine, which were done before he joined the Secession, as bound to answer for them. Then the Sonnets are set aside; also the Paraphrase of the Song of Solomon, for although it was published after, yet it was written before he joined the Secession. Also I reject that Piece that stands as a Preface to the second Book of Scripture Songs, p. 625, as it was neither written by Ralph nor Henry E. Who put it in, or when, I know not. It is signed S. In this preface it is set forth as that some of the Psalms of David were particularly adapted to the O. Testament Dispensation of carnal rites and ceremonies; on this account not so clear and full of grace and the spirit of the gospel; the consideration whereof hath induced many piously disposed persons ardently to wish that our Psalmody were enlarged, by adding other Scripture Songs out of the Old and New Testament, &c. &c.

The advocates for Hymns must prove the signature of S. to be R. Erskine's before I will admit it as proof on their side. There are three prefaces all signed S. which must share the same fate of being rejected as the composition of R. Erskine. When he had prepared Job's Hymns for the press, he told his wife, that he had done all he ever intended to do with poetry. What Henry Erskine

did in preparing R. Erskine's Scripture Songs and others, and publishing them, was his own choice, and not at the request of the Associate Synod.

Let us look at the Preface which now stands in front of Erskine's Scripture Songs; though it was placed by him as a Preface to the Lamentations of Jeremiah. The proof for the Hymns from this is, that the work of turning all the rest of the *Scripture Songs* into metre, as the Psalms of David are, and for the same public use, was proposed by the Church of Scotland more than an hundred years ago, &c. and that a similar recommendation was made to R. Erskine by the Associate Synod. And what does Erskine say about this work proposed a hundred years ago? It has never been accomplished yet. And what became of the recommendation of the Associate Synod to him? Why, it shared the same fate. And what was the reason? Why, the Associate Synod did not see it expedient to use it. Erskine was appointed only to verify the *Scripture Songs*, and what he did in this way was well done, as he kept close to the text. He was not appointed to make *Scripture Songs of his own*, or hymns, or paraphrases; but in these his sentiments are evangelical; and for this cause the corrupt branches of the church will not use them. They will not answer the Devil's purpose, and therefore he does not excite people to use them; and so they remain for private use only, where they should be. Even if all the *Scripture Songs* had been used in public worship in the Church, would that be any proof or reason, that we should use human composition, called Scripture Songs, made on Scripture subjects? Surely not. For there is as much difference between Human and Divine Songs, as there is between the chaff and the wheat. Because we make use of wheat for bread, is this a reason that we should make use of chaff too?

Now to give the full weight of the whole of Erskine's Preface, it amounts to nothing but this,—that it was the sentiment of a number in the Scottish Church, that the *other Scripture Songs* might be used as well as the Psalms of David. But as this was never put into practice, it is no *innovation* in us to use the Psalms of David only. It is evident that the Associate Church cared nothing about it, when they never examined into the matter afterwards; whether it was prepared, or whether it was good or bad. If a man engages a piece of furniture with a workman, and he never more seeks after it, you will take it for granted that he does not want it, or that he was not in earnest when he spoke for it. It must have been so with the Church of Scotland, and the Associate Church, about their enlargement of Psalmody. But, suppose that both of them had accomplished what they attempted, and sung these Scripture Songs in public worship, this would not prove it to be lawful or expedient. Even if it were lawful, it might not be expedient. "All things

are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient"—(or profitable as in the margin.) It is the command of God that makes it lawful, and it is necessity that makes it expedient. If we were to add the whole of Erskine's Poetry to the Psalms of David, it would make it so large that the mass of worshippers would have new and strange things brought to them every day, and therefore would not be so much edified as they would be by having fewer, and those that they are acquainted and familiar with; for the command is to "sing with understanding." This is one reason why we should be contented with the book of Psalms. If some could receive more, others could not. God appears to have given a sufficient number for the common mass of the people to understand, and make a good improvement of; and it would be counted useless in all cases for any one to take more in hand, than he understood, or could make a good use of. It would be bad policy where people had to act in an united capacity, to make that a *rule*, which would *only suit* the greatest and strongest in the whole number; or the least and weakest either. But if some *accommodations* are to be made to the weak, as you see it ought to be from 1 Cor. ix. 22—"To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak"—then why not in the case of Psalmody as well as any other thing?

Those who call Ralph Erskine the father and founder of the Secession, are not well skilled in the history of the rise of the Secession, or they mistake Ralph for Ebenezer Erskine; for Ralph did not join the Secession until the year 1736. The Associate Presbytery had been 4 years formed, and they had published a Testimony, and appointed Mr. Wilson to educate young men for the ministry, before Ralph joined the Secession; and therefore could not be either the father or founder of the Secession. It is very evident that R. Erskine did not go according to the request of the Associate Synod in all his performances, for it was a *version* they wanted, and not a *paraphrase*, (as the words are now used and understood, though then promiscuously used.) For a proof of this, see the Preface to Job's Hymns. In p. 454 he says, "I have not translated this Book in a Historical, but rather some parts of it in a doctrinal way." Again, "I did not see how a strict translation of this book, in a historical way, would answer the end of Psalmography; and therefore, that I might extract from it a number of songs, I have thought fit to pick out the places of this book, that appeared to me the most doctrinal," &c. Now who directed Erskine *to pick out the places that he thought fit for use*, and pass by others to make a Psalmody for the Church? If we were to take it for granted that the Book of Job is a part of the Scripture Songs, and that it is lawful to use them, when versified, in the worship of God, then who gave Erskine his authority? When Erskine, or Watts, or any

man, or any set of men, begins this sort of work, I am done with them on that point. And indeed I think the Secession Church did well to take no farther notice of it; and perhaps Erskine himself did not expect it would meet with general approbation, when he did not publish it before his death. It is a matter of amusement to me to hear men advocating and pleading for a gospel psalmody in New Testament language; and to enlarge this will select the writings of Jeremiah, Solomon, and particularly the writings of Job, one of the oldest books in the world, and the manners and customs referred to, are those of the Eastern parts of Arabia, which we have very little knowledge of. These very persons reject the writings of David as too old. But any thing that will supplant the Psalms of David will be entitled to the name of Gospel Psalmody, no matter if it was something that Cain did in the land of Nod.

Notwithstanding the high encomiums passed on Ralph Erskine for his sentiments on Psalmody, if we should turn to the subject of the falling-down work that took place in his time, and his sentiments on that work, those who at first praised him; would now call him—*Old Bigoted Seceder*. There are no men in America that are greater enemies to the Seceders, than the Hymners. And they will be so, as long as there is such a difference and opposition in their matter of praise.

Although there is a likeness between some of Erskine's Poetry and some of Watts', when they were writing on the same subject, yet there was a very great difference in their design or intention. Dr. Watts' intention was to supplant the Psalms of David with his Poetry. Erskine's design in those places referred to, was not even to be used along with the Psalms of David, much less to be used in their place; for it was only the Scripture Songs, that were versified strictly, that were intended by him to be used along with the Psalms of David. This will appear plain from his having made a paraphrase on the Song of Solomon, before the Synod recommended him to make a Version, with which he complied. In a version, if it is done, as it ought to be, there can be no error in sentiment conveyed; but in a paraphrase you may explain Scripture any way you please. Here lies the danger of admitting a paraphrase of our Songs of praise. Altho' I acknowledge that Mr. Wilson's quotation from Erskine's 10th vol. has his signature to it, yet the songs that immediately follow could not be designed to meet the recommendation of Synod; for the third song is on the 10 plagues of Egypt—a *historical* part of Scripture. Besides, that song of Erskine's contains only 5 verses, and yet it is the sum of 5 chapters; and so cannot be either a version or a paraphrase.

As Erskine's Works were not entered in *Stationer's Hall*, to prevent them from being altered, or any thing inserted in them by another, and no penalty was incurred for so doing in that case, no

doubt but some person has put in these three Prefaces signed S. in order to answer some private end ; probably to make it sell among a certain class of people. Surely Erskine would not write a Preface and put a fictitious signature to it, when he has set his name in full to others. These three Prefaces have nothing in themselves to shew that they were Erskine's, as the word *I* cannot be found in them any where. Perhaps *some* may have supposed that these Prefaces were the work of Ralph Erskine ; but I am at a loss to know how Mr. Wilson, who is a scholar, and was examining every corner of Ralph Erskine's 10th vol. could make such a mistake. Mr. Wilson must blame himself for making this mistake, and not blame me for showing it to him and the public. And as I am writing to young people who are fond of anecdotes, I shall give them one. About 40 years ago, it was common here for the Indians when they were out a hunting, and killed a deer near to any white man's house, that they would sell the venison to the white man. One day, an Indian came to a house, and told the white man that he had killed a buck near his house, and wanted him to buy it. The man agreed, and paid the Indian for it. He asked the Indian how he would find it. The Indian said that he had cut down bushes, and blazed saplings all the way to the buck. The Indian went away, and the man went in search for his buck, but never found him. Some time after, the white man met the Indian, and said to the Indian, "You cheated me, and told me lies ; there was no buck there." "Why," said the Indian, "Did you not find the bushes cut down ? And is not that *truth*?" "Yes," said the white man. "And did you not find the saplings blazed ? And is not that *truth*?" "Yes," replied the other. "Well," said the Indian, "there is *two truths*, and but *one lie*, and that will do *very well* for *poor Indian*." So Mr. Wilson has made *two fair quotations* from Ralph Erskine's writings, and *one not so* ; and that will do *very well* for one that is *vindicating human composition in the worship of God*.

The *page* I found, of these extractings,
 As clear and plain, as blazed saplings ;
 The *words* I found, without much hunting,
 But ERSKINE'S NAME, (the BUCK,) was wanting !

Few, that have gone before Mr. Wilson, have done as much as he has. And, even in his fair quotation, there is a wrong application of it ; for an addition of *the other Scripture Songs*, was never designed to countenance human composition, and human invention in the worship of God.

No doubt many may believe what Mr. Wilson has said, that a large and very respectable portion of the Associate Reformed Church have united with the General Assembly Church. To know how true this is, we will glance at the proceedings of the Associate Re-

formed Church, consisting of four Synods, and Nine Presbyteries, with a flourishing Seminary and funds, all under one General Synod, and all going on well, until one or two of her leading men joined with the G. Assembly in singing Human composition in the worship of God, contrary to our Standards; which, together with some other misconduct, gave such offence, that the Synod of the West withdrew, with almost half of the Ministers belonging to the G. Synod, after them. The Synod of the South withdrew by consent. At the same time, a plan of union with the G. Assembly was under consideration, and referred to the remaining 5 Presbyteries for their decision. A majority of the Presbyteries decided against the Union. There were seven Ministers only that voted when the Synod took the vote on it, and it was carried by one vote only; and every one that voted for it was in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, except one. Thus *four* were found to vote for it; and there could not be found four more out of the *sixty* belonging to the Associate Reformed Church to vote for it. Two only went there and took their seats in the G. Assembly; and one they have turned out of their communion since. Very few of the Congregations went with those pastors who voted for it. And since that time several ministers who had been in the habit of using Watts' Psalms and Hymns have joined the Synod of New-York. These statements, taken mostly from the Minutes of our Church, and the Evangelical Witness, will shew that there was *not* a large and very respectable portion of the Associate Reformed Church that joined the G. Assembly. Our Church is stronger this day than it ever was in America. In 1822 there was a Secession of 11 Ministers and 13 Congregations from the *Reformed Dutch Church* in America, which Secession stands on the same ground as we do, condemning human compositions in the worship of God, holding up Watts as an Arian, and approving only of the Scripture Songs. This body of Seceders declare that the 69th Article of the Dutch Church allows only the 150 Psalms of David and a few other Scripture Songs to be sung. If the Dutch Church had not made *innovations*, there would now have been 100 Ministers and 150 Congregations on our "side of the question." Besides many Ministers of the G. Assembly sing Rouse's Version, some principally, and some altogether. And when we consider the Ministers of the *Associate Church*, and the *Reformed Church* in this country, and the hundreds of Seceder Ministers in Scotland and Ireland, we may rejoice in the strength of our cause, which is indeed the cause of the King and Head of Zion.

The proper season is come now
To drop the pen and take the Plough.

JAMES HARRIS.