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## **MARTIN LUTHER'S HYMNS AND EXCLUSIVE PSALM SINGING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP IN GERMANY AMONG LUTHERANS**

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**"When the Lord brought the testimony of his witnesses out of obscurity in Piedmont, Bohemia, &c., by the ministry of Luther, his contemporaries and successors; then the psalms were restored to their place in the churches of the Reformation. Luther was skilled in music, himself composed many hymns; but he carefully distinguished between the Psalms and his hymns. An old lady in eastern Pennsylvania is said to have in her possession 'a German Psalm-book, published by Luther himself.' The book closes with a collection of Luther's hymns; but the old lady says that in her young days in Germany, 'its directions were**

**rigidly obeyed, and in public worship they sang only the Psalms of David.' The same order, as is well known, prevailed in all the other reformed churches of Europe and the British Isles."**

**Cited in: David Steele, "Psalms and Hymns," *The Original Covenanter Magazine* (Vol. 3:1-3:16, March 1881 to Dec. 1884), p. 41. Available from Still Waters Revival Books as a cerlox bound photocopy (\$13.99 Canadian) or as a hardcover photocopy (\$23.00).**

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### **MARTIN LUTHER ON THE ORGAN IN WORSHIP**

**"The organ in worship is the insignia of Baal... The Roman Catholics borrowed it from the Jews."**

**(Martin Luther, *Mcclintock & Strong's Encyclopedia*, Volume VI, page 762).**

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All titles below available from Still Waters Revival Books at:

<http://www.swrb.com/pcopy/photoc.htm>.

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## **BUSHELL, MICHAEL**

### **The Songs of Zion: A Contemporary Case for Exclusive Psalmody**

Contains one of the best explanations of the Scriptural law of worship (also known as the regulative principle of worship) in print today. For this and a number of other reasons this is one of the most significant books published this century concerning worship! Furthermore, it demonstrates and defends (from Scripture, history and the creeds) the Reformation practice of exclusive Psalmody. It dovetails splendidly with Eire's celebrated War Against the Idols, setting forth foundational principles that lay at the very heart of Reformation thought, theology and practice. For as Bushell points out, "Purity of worship and uniformity of worship go hand in hand because they are both founded upon the assumption that the Scriptures contain clear, sufficient and authoritative directions as to the proper way of worshiping God. The diversity of worship practice that we see in our churches arises ultimately from a denial of this assumption, and it constitutes, therefore, a denial of a central aspect of the doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture. There is much more at stake, then, in this whole discussion

than the mere observance or non-observance of a few external rites" (2nd edition, 1993, p. 3). If you are a Calvinist and have not read this book, you are missing a real treat!

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## **ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE**

### **The Ancient and Modern Mode of Singing the Psalms (Sept., 1863)**

Historically demonstrates how the Old Testament saints, the early New Testament Christians and almost all Presbyterians (after adopting the Westminster Standards) sang the Psalms by "lining them out" (e.g. see the Westminster Directory for Public Worship). Musical instruments, a Papal innovation, were also unheard of among faithful Reformers and "denominated the ensigns of Baal." Basically a blast against "all the refined idolatries of the churches" of the author's time. It also lays out the numerous advantages of lining out the Psalms and shows how "things in themselves indifferent, or even commendable, become unlawful when they have been made instruments of dishonour to God or peculiar temptations to men."

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## **DICK, JAMES**

### **Hymns and Hymn Books (1883)**

Greg Price calls this one of the best short defences of exclusive Psalmody. It is excerpted from *The Original Covenanter* magazine (Dec, 1883, vol. 3, No. 12). Here is a taste of Dick's writing, "Hymns of human composition are used so commonly now in public worship by Presbyterian churches that it is difficult to believe that the practice is not a hundred years old, and that in some of the churches it is of very recent date. On the supposition that it is good and dutiful and wise to sing such hymns in worship, it is equally difficult to account for the neglect of the churches at the time of the Reformation, and for generations afterwards. What could have so blinded the reformers as to make them reject hymns and sing the Psalms alone? How could the Westminster Divines, in framing their Confession of Faith and Directory for Worship, have been so unanimous in the blunder that the service of praise is to consist of the 'singing of Psalms?' And apart from the aspect of duty, how could the Presbyterian churches, for about a hundred and fifty or two hundred years after the Westminster Assembly, have been so insensible to the power of hymns as an attractive addition to their public services? We cannot by any means understand how it was that, if it was dutiful to use hymns in worship, the reformers did not discover the Scriptural warrant for the duty,

especially as hymns had been used for centuries by the Church of Rome. Nor can we understand how they rejected the hymns and used the Psalms alone, unless on the supposition that they believed the use of hymns to be part of the will-worship of Rome. If they were wrong on this point, then Rome and our modern Presbyterian churches are right. In that case, the Puritans and Covenanters were fanatics, and Romanists were truly enlightened! And most of our Presbyterian churches of the present day were fanatical too, and did not become truly enlightened and liberal till they got back to the Romish practice!"

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## **PSALM SINGING ON CASSETTE and CD (INCLUDING THE PSALTER THAT MATCHES THE RECORDED MUSIC).**

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### **THE PSALMS OF DAVID IN METRE with Notes, Exhibiting the Connection, Explaining the Sense, and for Directing and Animating the Devotion**

**John Brown of Haddington (annotations). Psalter by Francis Rouse, the  
Westminster Divines, and the Scottish General Assembly (from 1646-1650)**

This is the Psalter mandated, approved and used (for public and private worship) by the Westminster Assembly and all those who covenanted to uphold the Biblical Reformation that these Divines proclaimed. The text of the Scottish Metrical Psalms was authorized by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1650.

Concerning the care and preparation that went into this unsurpassed Metrical Psalter, the January 15/93 issue of *The Original Covenanter and Contenting Witness*, magazine cites an earlier article which notes, "Rouse bestowed upon it his greatest pains. This was not enough. For six Years it endured the scrutiny of, and was revised by, two of the

most learned Assemblies that ever sat in the British Isles; at a time, too, when these men were zealous for truth and suspicious of error. Every word was weighed, and every expression made exact, before admitted into any statement of Biblical truth. They wrote not so that they might be understood, but so that they could not be misunderstood. This exactness and conscientiousness they carried with them in their translation of the Psalms. In versifying them, they labored not to clothe the mind of the Spirit in poetic finery, but to cause the muse to bow to the exact expression of the Holy Ghost. The rhyme and rhythm are often defective; but what of that? it is the very word of God. That it is, is the testimony of many eminent Christian scholars. And so far from the poetry and style being deserving of contempt or ridicule, men of great literary taste have seen much in it to admire. Walter Scott says: 'The expression of the old metrical translation, though homely, is plain, forcible, and intelligible, and very often possesses a rude sort of majesty which, perhaps, would be ill exchanged for mere elegance.' For more than two centuries they have stood the test, and every attempt to render them more elegant has resulted in a departure from the exact expression of the Spirit. Let us hold fast to this good old version until another proves itself worthy of its place. History makes this sacred to us, These very words our forefathers sung'mid the rocks and glens o'bonnie Scotland. Our fathers sang them in the mountain wilds of Pennsylvania and the forests of the western wilderness. With these words they lightened their labours, mitigated their sorrows, assuaged their griefs, comforted their hearts, and lifted their souls to heaven." The notes added by Brown are suitable for explaining the Psalm before singing and are a great aid to daily family worship. Every father should have a copy of the version with Brown's notes. If money is a factor, the smaller, inexpensive hardcover, containing just the Psalms (see below) should suffice for other members of the family. All the Psalms, excepting one, are rendered into common metre (with occasional alternate version added) and thus can be sung by even those with almost no knowledge of music. For example, the tune to "Amazing Grace" is one of the many tunes that work with all common metre renderings. And even Psalm 136, the one Psalm not in common metre, can be sung to any common metre tune, as it adds only one extra syllable to the end of ever second line. Maybe not a delight of the accomplished musician, but certainly calculated to make the Psalms most accessible to young and old alike. This is sure to please God and be most conducive to national reformation. The Scottish Metrical Psalter is a faithful translation and without a doubt the best Psalter (when covenanted reformation is in mind) in existence today.

**(Hardcover) OUT OF PRINT, but free as etext at:**

<http://www.swrb.com/newslett/FREEBOOK/ScotPsal.htm>

**Also available as a hardcover or cerlox bound photocopy at:**

<http://www.swrb.com/catalog/b.htm> under "**BROWN (of Haddington), JOHN.**"

For the hardcover without Brown's notes see just below.

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**A smaller hardcover version of the Scottish Metrical Psalter containing only the words of the Psalms is also available from SWRB at:**

**<http://www.swrb.com/music/psalm.htm>**

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## **SCOTTISH METRICAL PSALMS ON CASSETTE**

These cassettes contain Psalms sung (unaccompanied, i.e. without musical instruments) from the Scottish Metrical Psalter (1650, available above) by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland Northern Presbytery Choir.

Again, please see: <http://www.swrb.com/music/psalm.htm>

There are also CDs containing the singing of the 1650 Metrical Psalter at this URL.

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## **DOHMS FAMILY**

### **50 Suggested Tunes for Use With the Scottish Metrical Psalter of 1650 (1998)**

Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. **Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him**, talk ye of all

his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; Even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac; And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant (1 Chr. 16:8-17, emphases added).

This tape was produced by Elder Lyndon Dohms and his family to help those using or making the transition to **the Psalter of the Covenanted Reformation** (i.e. the *Scottish Metrical Psalter* of 1650). This Psalter passed through the intense scrutiny of -- and was authorized for public use by -- both the Westminster Assembly and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (at the height of her purity) in the mid seventeenth century. Concerning the care and preparation that went into this unsurpassed Metrical Psalter, the January 15 (1993) issue of *The Original Covenanter and Contenting Witness* magazine cites an earlier article which notes,

Rouse bestowed upon it his greatest pains. This was not enough. For six Years it endured the scrutiny of, and was revised by, two of the most learned Assemblies that ever sat in the British Isles; at a time, too, when these men were zealous for truth and suspicious of error. Every word was weighed, and every expression made exact, before admitted into any statement of Biblical truth. They wrote not so that they might be understood, but so that they could not be misunderstood. This exactness and conscientiousness they carried with them in their translation of the Psalms. In versifying them, they labored not to clothe the mind of the Spirit in poetic finery, but to cause the muse to bow to the exact expression of the Holy Ghost.... For more than two centuries (almost three and a half centuries now--RB) they have stood the test, and every attempt to render them more elegant has resulted in a departure from the exact expression of the Spirit (as in the case of the present RPCNA Psalter, *The Book of PSalms for Singing*--RB). Let us hold fast to this good old version until another proves itself worthy of its place.

**Moreover, this Psalter was produced to further national and international covenanted Reformation -- and to fulfill the intent of the Solemn League and Covenant for biblically regulated worship and biblical uniformity. It was crafted with faithfulness to the Word of God utmost in the mind of its translators and**

**fashioned in the manner most fitting for ease of use among the general population -- making it a most conducive engine for discipling the nations.** To accomplish this last goal the *Scottish Metrical Psalter* provides a version of every Psalm in common metre (except Psalm 136 -- and even this Psalm, with a little ingenuity, can be made to fit the various common metre tunes). With all this in mind it is easy to recognize how (and why) this "tune tape" has been created to help the contemporary Covenanter and Psalm singer make good use of this godly and judicious offering -- a landmark Psalter -- which we have received from the hands of our faithful forefathers.

On this cassette the Dohms provide us with fifty separate tunes (sung acappella), most of which are common metre -- but samples of other tunes used in this Psalter also appear (and are noted by name on the tape before each tune is sung). All the common metre tunes can be interchanged and used with all of the Psalms in the *Scottish Metrical Psalter* of 1650 (sometimes listed as *The Psalms of David in Metre* in this catalogue). However, because this cassette is primarily intended to familiarize the listener with a diverse selection of tunes, only Psalms one and 23 are sung in their entirety. The remaining 48 Psalms (Psalms 2-22 and 24-50) make use of two to four verses from each Psalm. This allows the listener to sample a wider range of tunes on one cassette -- and keeps the price of this tape down (as one is not forced to buy numerous tapes to cover the fifty tunes offered here). This is also very useful when it is remembered, as noted above, that all the common metre tunes can be interchanged throughout this Psalter, as all the Psalms (excepting 136) in the *Scottish Metrical Psalter* are provided in a common metre version. For those who are interested, Psalms 6, 25, 45, 50, 67, 70, 100, 102, 124, 136, 143, 145, 148 are also translated for use with an alternate tune in the *Scottish Metrical Psalter* (and at least one tune for each of these alternate versions is provided on this tape).

As an added bonus, at the end of this tape, Psalm one is also "lined out" (as mandated in the Westminster Assembly's *Directory for Public Worship*), with a short explanation provided by elder Dohms for the use of this ancient practice. The "lining out" is included to assist those seeking to utilize the venerable practice of the church as it was upheld during Old Testament times, the days of Christ and the Apostles, and during both Reformations.

In short, this cassette is provided as a valuable tool for those who love to sing God's holy Word, as a useful aid for song leaders (and singers) in preparing for public, family and secret worship, and for the listening pleasure and edification of all those who love to hide God's Word in their heart!

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