

**A COLLECTION OF
SACRED TRANSLATIONS,
PARAPHRASES, AND
HYMNS**

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A Collection of Sacred Translations, Paraphrases, and Hymns by Stevenson MacGill

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Bible: English. McGill. Selections.
1813

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SACRED TRANSLATIONS,
PARAPHRASES,
AND
HYMNS.

By **STEVENSON MACGILL, D. D.**
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PREFACE.

THIS Collection consists of sacred pieces, selected from various Authors, with a considerable number of Original compositions. Many of the pieces thus selected, are altered; some of them slightly, but others to so great a degree as to retain little of their original appearance. Besides those alterations which were occasionally necessary in the language and rhyme, alterations and additions have been made where the idea appeared to be in danger of being mistaken, or required from its importance to receive greater prominence and interest. On the other hand, verses have been sometimes omitted where they seemed to be either unnecessary, or inconsistent with that unity which should mark such short compositions. It seemed also of importance, that each hymn should be so condensed or divided into parts, as that either the whole, or each division might be sung at one time with propriety and ease.

No composition of any living author, so far as is known, has been introduced, except the 77th paraphrase; for which the author was so good as grant his permission. Three of the original compositions, excepting some alterations, were written by a friend; for the rest, the Editor must be solely

accountable. The authors to whom this collection is chiefly indebted, are Watts and Doddridge, particularly the latter.

This Collection is divided into FOUR PARTS. Three of these consist of Translations and Paraphrases from sacred Scripture. The passages of Scripture in the FIRST, belong to the period before the coming of our Saviour: in the SECOND, to the period of our Saviour's incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection. Under this division, it was judged expedient, to bring together those passages from the different books of the Gospel history, which relate to the same great events. The passages of Scripture in the THIRD part, belong to the period after the ascension of our Lord. Under the general title of Translations and Paraphrases, pieces of different kinds are comprehended. Some are passages of Scripture without amplification, simply translated into verse; others are Paraphrases in which the sentiment is adhered to, but enlarged and illustrated; others, are more properly the expression of devout feelings, taking their rise from the leading sentiments of the passage. The FOURTH part consists of Hymns, which have not a direct relation to any particular passage of the inspired writings. Many Christians scruple to use compositions of this nature in public worship. It should be acknowledged, that it is safest to use them sparingly; and, in general, that only such should be thus employed, as have long received public approbation. Those in this collection, are chiefly

PREFACE.

adapted to particular occasions. Translations and Paraphrases will also be found appropriate to such occasions. But local circumstances, connected with countries, churches, and times, may often give a peculiar interest and effect, which, when judiciously improved, may happily combine with Scriptural sentiment, and increase the feelings and pleasures of devotion. Advantages may sometimes also arise from the number and variety of pieces which are thus afforded. And, as devotional poems, affording subjects of pious meditation, assisting and directing the thoughts and feelings of Christians in their devout exercises, it is to be hoped, they may prove profitable to families and individuals.

It has been an object of attention, to introduce a considerable degree of variety, both in the subjects and in the measures. Among so great a number of pieces, different degrees of excellence may be expected. This will arise not only from a difference in the execution, but from the different nature of the subjects.

Collections of this kind, when properly made, besides their importance for promoting the great objects of public worship, are greatly conducive to the improvement and comfort of Christians in the duties of personal and family religion. If there be seasons in which profit and pleasure may be derived from the perusal of poems on subjects of inferior moment; why should it not be supposed, that much pleasure and improvement may be de-

rived from the mere perusal of poems, on subjects the most sublime, and to the heart of Christians the most interesting and dear? They are also of great importance, for inculcating, in a pleasing form, religious knowledge on the minds of the young, awakening in them devout feelings and associations, leading them to a heavenly spirit, and an elevated character. But, in a peculiar manner, they are important towards the pleasing and profitable discharge of those personal and family exercises, in which music joins with poetry in expressing and cherishing pious affections, and in more deeply impressing on the soul, the great truths and sentiments of religion.

It is pleasing to observe a taste for sacred music, spreading among persons of every rank. How important is it, that this taste should be encouraged and wisely directed; that it should be accompanied with compositions which might render it subservient to the great purposes of religion; which might engage the mind, awaken the feelings, elevate the thoughts, and leave just and deep impressions of divine objects on the heart! How delightful to think, that even the youthful, when alone, or in the bosom of their families, may be heard in strains of heavenly melody, giving expression to devout feelings, and carrying their own souls, and the souls of all around them, in sacred rapture to the blessed regions of harmony and joy! And can there be an exercise more suited to the circumstances of man, more acceptable to God, more interesting to a feeling

heart, more directly fitted to touch, raise, and unite in piety and affection, the souls of human beings, than that of a family offering up their morning and evening sacrifices of praise, at the foot of the throne of grace? Would to God, that the publisher of this Collection, had power to persuade his readers, especially those for whose spiritual interests he ought to feel a peculiar concern, to engage often in these sacred and delightful exercises! That he could persuade persons who may think themselves incapable for directing in such a holy employment, to encourage and cultivate the talents of those in their families, who may be more qualified; and so far to do justice to themselves, as to procure the pleasure, and the profit, of sacred psalmody in their houses, through the means of the powers and acquirements of those who are most dear to them! Often has devotion been awakened, languid feelings quickened, and the most delightful thoughts and emotions inspired by the youthful voice, thrilling through the soul, and touching the strings of affection in the hearts of parents and of friends. To God let all our powers be devoted; to the service of God let the young be taught to consecrate chiefly those delightful talents which are too often wasted on vanity and folly. As this is their duty, so it is the noblest and most pleasing employment of their powers; nor in any other direction of them, will they ever appear so truly amiable, or communicate so high a pleasure to those friends who have a heart to feel true excellence and beauty.

To contribute his humble share for the encouragement and right direction of such personal and family exercises, has been a great motive with the Editor in the present publication. Nor will he deny that he was sometimes animated with a secret hope that he might perhaps thus also bring some small mite to the public Treasury, which, under the direction of superior talents, might be employed for the benefit of one of the most important and delightful parts of the service of the SANCTUARY.