

**THE SCOTTISH PARAPHRASES,
BEING TRANSLATIONS AND
PARAPHRASES IN VERSE OF
SEVERAL PASSAGES OF SACRED
SCRIPTURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649129546

The Scottish paraphrases, being translations and paraphrases in verse of several passages of Sacred Scripture by Douglas J. MacLagan

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DOUGLAS J. MACLAGAN

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THE TRANSLATIONS AND PARAPHRASES
IN VERSE
OF SEVERAL PASSAGES OF
SACRED SCRIPTURE.

*COLLECTED AND PREPARED BY A COMMITTEE OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,
IN ORDER TO BE SUNG IN CHURCHES.*

AN ACCOUNT OF THEIR HISTORY, AUTHORS, AND SOURCES; TOGETHER WITH THE MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND EXTRACTS FROM PRESBYTERY RECORDS RELATIVE THERUNTO; REPRINTS OF THE EDITIONS OF 1745, 1751, AND 1761; INFORMATION REGARDING HYMNS CONTEMPORARY WITH THE PARAPHRASES; AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE SCRIPTURE SONGS OF 1706.

By DOUGLAS J. MACLAGAN.

472677
19/3/48

EDINBURGH:
ANDREW ELLIOT, 17 PRINCES STREET.
1889.



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P R E F A C E.

THIS present work is not an ambitious literary effort. If it be ambitious in anything, it is that the historical and literary information it contains should be as full and as correct as possible. The Scottish *Paraphrases* have now become part of the standard religious literature of Scotland,—almost as much so as the Metrical Version of the Psalms,—and the object of this book has been to consolidate, as far as possible, into one volume much interesting matter regarding the Scripture Songs of the Scottish Church. Unfortunately, at the time when the Paraphrases were being compiled, it does not seem to have been considered so important to have regard to an author's original text as it is now-a-days. Not that, even yet, we have arrived at perfection, but we of the nineteenth century may at least claim a greater veneration for the genuine text of an author than our forefathers of the eighteenth century. Nor does it appear to have been the custom in those days, when preparing a miscellaneous collection of pieces, whether of prose or poetry, to indicate in any way the authorship of the various compositions. With these two difficulties those who have interested themselves in the Paraphrases have had to contend. As a matter of principle, the Paraphrases stand as a conspicuous warning of the confusion arising from *hymn-tinkering*; as a matter of fact, however, they have in many cases benefited by the changes made upon them. These changes have led to great difficulty regarding the authorship, and much of the information on this point is traditional. Many lists of the authors of the Paraphrases have appeared at various times, each differing more or less from the other. A large number of these have been consulted for this work, and the results appear in the following pages. It has been my endeavour, however, not to rest satisfied with mere statement, but, when possible, to adduce proof. With that object, the main portion of this

book is taken up with the reprints of the three editions of the Paraphrases, and, where it appears that any of these have been adopted or adapted from any author, the original hymns or poems have also been given. It occurred to me, while investigating the authorships, that Presbytery Records might throw some light upon the alterations, and, accordingly, circular letters were addressed to Presbytery Clerks requesting their assistance. It is with much pleasure that I record here my grateful thanks to very many Clerks of Presbyteries who took the trouble to examine and give me extracts from the Records under their charge. A selection of these is given in Appendix II. In most cases Presbyteries appear to have paid little or no attention to the preparation of the Paraphrases. I have also to record my warmest thanks to the Rev. Dr. Christie, Librarian of the General Assembly's Library, for the kindness and assistance shown me in procuring extracts of the minutes of Assembly. Having noticed in a preface to the Paraphrases, "with Notes, Explanatory and Devotional, by Thomas Brown, Minister of the Gospel, Dalkeith," that the Paraphrases had been authorized by the Associate Synod for use in the congregations under its inspection, I applied to the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, Clerk of the United Presbyterian Synod, for information regarding this statement. To Dr. Kennedy I am greatly indebted for permission to search the Records of the Associate Synod, and the Extracts taken from these Records have been embodied in Chapter II. To James Thin, Esq., Edinburgh, and W. L. Taylor, Esq., Peterhead, many thanks are also due for their valuable assistance given to me in the preparation of this volume. To many other friends who have afforded help, I here record my indebtedness.

It only remains to be said that in preparing the various biographical notices, the "Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae," by the late Rev. Dr. Hew Scott, has been much consulted; and that the Records of the Ministers' Widows' Fund of the Church of Scotland have also afforded some information.

I am well aware that the subject of the *Paraphrases* has not been exhausted; but I would express the hope that this attempt to gather together scattered information concerning what may truly be regarded as the Scottish National Hymn Book will meet with the approval of those interested in Scottish Hymnology, and perhaps lead to yet fuller information regarding our "Scottish Paraphrases."

D. J. MACLAGAN.

EDINBURGH, December 1888.