

neglect what is necessary in order to their attending to one of the ordinances of God's worship."

Let us notice some of the necessary features of any really great hymn. Any hymn claiming to be great must be Scriptural and full of Christ; it must echo from Mount Zion. It is in this quality that the hymns of the older writers like Milton and Dryden were often lacking.

Then a great hymn must be simple in language and easily understood. This is fundamental, and needs no comment. Again, a great hymn should be filled with reverence, veneration and solemnity. What a model in this respect is that hymn, "Holy! holy! holy! Lord God Almighty."

Every great hymn must be the expression in some form of a real religious experience and appeal to our inmost hearts. In the times of the Church's persecutions and trials her hymns have been her greatest source, next to the Spirit Himself, of consolation.

There are, it is computed, twenty thousand hymns in the English language, and a good many which all acknowledge to be among the great and mighty influences for good that are found within the pale of Christian effort. The Church needs to know more about the hymns before she can expect to sing them as they ought to be sung. Certainly some knowledge of a hymn, its origin and authorship, to say nothing of the music to which it is set or of the tender recollections with which it is associated, adds greatly to the fervour of our devotional singing. Let us remember that next to the preaching of the Gospel itself there is no more potent influence to win the heart back from the evils of the world to Jesus Christ than the sincere and beautiful rendering of the Gospel in melody and song.

If it were possible to accomplish it, there can be no doubt that a full

study of our most typical and sincerest hymns, with the times and circumstances under which they were written, would reveal to us the progress of the Church through the many stages of its progress and development to the present time.

The first hymn we shall mention, "Jesus, Lover of my soul," is perhaps the most widely known of all hymns, and it is said to be in every Christian hymn-book, including the Roman Catholic. This hymn, as is well known, is written by the great-



est hymn-writer of the modern world, Charles Wesley. It has been called the hymn of the ages, so truly does it voice the best sentiments of the human heart, and Eternity alone will be able to reveal how many souls have been helped heavenward by its comforting words. Two things it declares, and these bind the believer to the throne of God: Jesus Christ our sufficiency here and our portion for ever.

"Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within."

It is a beautiful expression of trust, confession and praise.

"All my trust on Thee is stayed;
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

One of the explanations of the