

ing day, the joyous sunshine, and the dewy flowers; and so with this time-honoured collection of five hundred and thirty-nine hymns. It contains immortal compositions—hymns that have shaped our convictions and moulded our lives—that have supplied words of faith and hope, in life and in death, to thousands and tens of thousands of the people of God. These are historic memorials of the first age of Methodism and of her honoured bard, whose compositions constituted an epoch in the psalmody of the Christian Church. They constitute a memorial grander and more enduring than Egyptian pyramid, or Corinthian brass. But if any number of hymns in that “collection” be defective in composition—striking no responsive chord of sympathy—failing to stand the crucial test of time—let them be replaced by others of tried and acknowledged worth. The Tower of David, we are told, was built for an armoury wherein were hung in thousands the shields of his mighty men. It was the Westminster Abbey of the Hebrew nation. And if inferior hymns must still be conserved as memorials, let them be consigned to the denominational repository for the “shields of the mighty men.” For such mementoes we can at the proper time and place cherish a grateful and reverential respect; but “why seek ye the living among the dead?” In the preparation of a hymn book which should, for a century to come, constitute a standard of worship, the greatest good of the whole Church of God ought to be the first and most imperative consideration.

The example of the Wesleys, to a most extraordinary degree, is in the direction opposite to that of stereotyped psalmody; their poetical publications followed each other in rapid and continued succession. One of these volumes, a “Collection of Psalms and Hymns,” now before me, and for many years used in early Methodist worship, contains many beautiful and eminently Scriptural hymns, which were left out of the book published in 1780, but which reappear in the new hymn book. According to Dr. Osborne, fifty-seven volumes in all were published. Four of these were selections from other authors; six were partly original and partly selected; nine were mainly compilations from their own previously published works; and thirty-eight of these volumes were purely original. “Those who would have no alteration in