

A BOOK OF PRAISE.

A REALLY good book of praise as a means whereby this part of worship may be best conserved and promoted, is something of the utmost importance. We are glad to observe the amount of attention which Presbyteries are giving to this matter. It is to be regretted that it should have been thought necessary so soon after its introduction to remodel the hymnal now in use in the church. To compile one anew or amend the old one is a matter of very considerable difficulty, for the reason that, in the matter of hymns, tastes so widely differ that probably no two persons could be equally well satisfied with the same collection, or make the same collection were they intrusted with the work. Those intrusted with this work are therefore well entitled to the sympathy and helpful co-operation of the whole church. The very abundance of material now forms a difficulty. While, however, there is a great abundance of hymns, good, bad and indifferent, the number really suited for the public or private worship of God in song, and to the genius and spirit of this or that body of Christians, is not so large as at first sight it may seem. This is evidenced by the fact that, out of any given hymnal, however large the collection may be, the number actually used in worship will not be found to be very large. There is a subtle essence or spirit of devotion in some hymns which alone fits them to be the true vehicle of worship in song, and in the most of cases this can only be discovered and tested by actual trial. Owing to this it will be necessary from time to time to recast a book of praise, both to eliminate what experience has proved to be unsuitable, and to add from the stock of hymns in the possession of the church new ones which have proved themselves suitable for church use. Such hymns of the past as have stood the test of long use, or such newer ones as may prove themselves worthy, are a most precious treasure in the church. Like all really good things of the kind, poetry, paintings, music, the older they are, the better, richer, more prized do they become. Long and varied associations with times and seasons of worship, public or private, or personal experiences of joy or sorrow, enrich and endear them until they become sacred to the heart, and an indissoluble part of our spiritual life and history. So that this work of providing the best hymnal for the church is worthy of its best care, and to employ the best minds and hearts of the church.

The method followed by our church, having first a committee for selection, willing and glad to receive suggestions from all quarters, then submitting the hymns so selected for the consideration of all the Presbyteries of the church should result, if due time and attention are given to the matter, in the compilation of a book of praise which should meet the wants of our church, give suitable expression to and promote true devotional feeling, and so minister to a living piety as well as sound views. Seeing that this matter is so important in every aspect of it, and also that it is exceedingly undesirable that a book of praise should need frequent revision, it is well worth while to take time to the work. This is emphatically a case in which it will be well to hasten slowly. The two questions at present before the church in this regard affect the hymnal and the psalter. With regard to the first, the question is, what hymns to delete from our present hymnal, and what new ones to insert; and the second concerns the best method of preserving in our congregations the use of the psalter as a book of praise. To the consideration of these we may turn our attention at an early day.

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

AS was to be expected, the abjuration of the Roman Catholic faith by Mr. Papineau and his becoming by open profession a Protestant, has provoked considerable comment from the press in all parts of the Dominion, but especially on the part of the Romanist press in the Province of Quebec. It might have been interesting and profitable had such an incident as that referred to, led to a calm reconsideration or re-statement of the points of difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. This could scarcely be expected, except in the very briefest manner, in the daily or weekly press. But the fact of an influential man changing his religious opinions and allegiance, one might, at this period of the nineteenth century, and in this country, expect to take place without subjecting him to abuse or uncharitable attack. It would have been gratifying had this been so, and a very noteworthy sign of a better day having come at last in respect of men's

treatment of each other in matters of opinion. *La Minerve* has distinguished itself by the abuse it has heaped upon Mr. Papineau and by its imputations of unworthy motives for his change of faith. The names it calls and the spirit it shows prove too clearly, it is to be feared, that had it the power it would not stop with barely calling names. We do not propose to discuss the conduct of *La Minerve*, but rather to point a moral for ourselves as well as those who differ from us on religious grounds, namely that it cannot commend our religious views to any to give reason for thinking that this is the spirit which our faith naturally begets. *La Minerve*, for the sake of the church which it holds dear, should not exhibit the spirit and temper which it does. If such conduct as that of Mr. Papineau is to be discussed at all, it is an evidence of weakness to call names instead of producing arguments. If *La Minerve* has a good cause let us hear its arguments. It should know that abuse is not argument. Neither is the imputation of motives which, however much it may believe to be the moving cause for this change, it cannot certify to be the real motives. The demand which Mr. Papineau considers to be unjust and uncalled for, for money to build a new R. C. church, may have been the occasion of his taking at this time the grave step which he has taken, but he declares the cause of it is that, for many years he has been studying the scriptures for himself and has in the course of time undergone a real change in his religious convictions. Surely this is quite possible, just as Protestants acknowledge that it is quite possible that one of their number may, on the ground of sincere conviction, adopt the Roman Catholic faith.

The history of all ages and lands teaches nothing more clearly than the slowness of men to learn the lesson of toleration and charity toward those who undergo a change, especially in their religious beliefs. Though now among civilized and enlightened people physical pains and penalties are not inflicted, the lessons of toleration and charity have been but very imperfectly learned and are very imperfectly practised. Has not Sir John Thompson, for example, had some very hard things said of him, and very unworthy motives imputed to him by Protestants, for his change of faith? So that we are not altogether in a position to throw stones or point the finger at others. If the conduct referred to is bad in Roman Catholics, it is still worse in Protestants, for the full right of private judgment, and not only the liberty but the supreme duty to act upon it, is one of the very corner stones of Protestantism. If the infliction of physical pains and penalties because of religious opinions is now a state of things that has been left behind, are there not yet, as evidence to show how slow men are to learn the lessons of tolerance and charity, social, civil and political distrust and alienations as between Protestants and Catholics and amongst the members of these bodies themselves because of differences in matters of faith? If an intolerant spirit, uncharitable judgments and unkind conduct are unlovely, unbecoming and reprehensible on the part of Roman Catholics toward Protestants, let us bear in mind that they are, to say the least, equally so when the case is reversed, and more so, because it is one of the boasts of Protestants that the liberty which they claim to think and act for themselves in all matters, they are willing to allow in the fullest extent to others.

MONEY NEEDED BY REV. DR. REID.

REV. DR. REID sends us the appeal which follows and which we gladly lay before our readers: "As most of the congregations have held, or are about to hold their annual meetings, the Treasurer earnestly requests that the moneys for the several missions be remitted as soon as possible. There is no reason why the moneys should not be promptly paid, so that debts may be wiped out and interest reduced. WM. REID."

(It has always appeared to us a particularly unbusiness-like proceeding which many, by far the majority, we suspect, of our congregations pursue, of keeping moneys lying idle in their hands, or in local banks, drawing little or no interest for a whole year, that they may have the satisfaction at the end of it of having a large sum to allocate, while the treasury of our church is kept low, and money has to be obtained from the banks at a discount to meet daily obligations. If there is little excuse for this at other seasons of the year, there is still less now, so that all should readily respond to the appeal of Dr. Reid, and by forwarding their contributions at once enable him to meet pressing calls upon the funds of the church.)

Knox College Students' Missionary Society will hold their twentieth public meeting in the Convocation Hall, on Friday evening, the 26th inst., at 8 p.m. Rev. Prof. MacLaren, D.D., will occupy the chair. An address will be delivered by the Rev. J. L. Henderson, Hensall, on the Home Mission Crisis.

The Rev. D. Torrance, Convener of the General Assembly's Committee on Statistics, wishes us to announce that slips for congregations and sheets for Presbyteries were duly sent out, addressed to Presbytery Clerks. Should any of the parcels containing these have miscarried, or should a sufficient number not have been sent, application should be at once made to him.

Books and Magazines.

ON THE ROAD HOME. Poems by Margaret E. Sangster. New York: Harper & Brothers.

There is an impression abroad that the age of poetry has passed away. Many minds are disillusioned. For all that, poetry is immortal. So long as the beauty and sublimity of nature continue, and so long as successive generations gaze thoughtfully on the grandeur and mystery of the universe, they will find expression in the impassioned language of the poetic seer. While life with its varied experiences, its trials and triumphs, and its deathless aspirations continues, the true poet will neither lack theme nor inspiration. The exquisite little volume whose title heads this notice, is an indisputable evidence that the clear limped fountain of genuine poetry flows on in refreshing and invigorating stream. Many readers in America and Europe are familiar with the tender and beautiful lyrics of Margaret E. Sangster. This little volume contains an admirable selection of them. They are grouped in the following order: "For Six Days Out of Seven"; "Looking Upward"; "Thanksgiving"; "Christmas Songs," and "Easter." The poems vary in form and expression with the subject treated, but the same beautiful simplicity, tenderness of feeling and exalted thought are traceable in them all. The opening verse of the first poem, "The Sin of Omission," is typical of the volume and its accomplished author:

It isn't the thing you do, dear,
It's the thing you leave undone,
That gives you a bit of a heartache
At the setting of the sun.
The tender word forgotten;
The letter you did not write,
The flower you did not send, dear,
Are your haunting ghosts at night.

The volume is full of fine things. It would not be easy to find a fitter companion for a quiet and meditative hour than "On the Road Home" affords. It is superfluous to add that the get-up of the book is worthy of the subject, author and publisher.

HEATHER AND SNOW. By George MacDonald. New York: Harper & Brothers.

The distinctive epithet the Germans applied to Jean Paul Richter, may in a sense be applied to George MacDonald. They called him Jean Paul the Only One. MacDonald long ago discovered a mine of precious literary ore which he has diligently wrought ever since, Within and Without; Alec Forbes and Robert Falconer saw the light. He is the copyist of no preceding writer, and for which he and his readers have to be thankful he has no imitators. The latest addition to his contributions to the literature of the time is *Heather and Snow*, which in some respects is a reversion to the earlier types which gave him an honored place in the literature of the Victorian age. The scene of it is laid amid the bleak grandeur of his native country, and the people that live and move in its pages are those which the region can so readily supply. A grand simplicity marks the place and execution of the work. It is marred by no straining or artificiality. The narrative, but for the stirring events, flows peacefully and majestically like a river. The *Snowstorm on the Horn* evidences a deep sympathy with nature in her wildest moods, and the possession of a rare descriptive power. The moral grandeur and wealth of affection possessed by the chief characters of the story, are such as he excels in portraying. Part of the charm of the work is due to his mastery over the strong and expressive Norland Doric, in which so much of the conversation finds expression. Steenie is a creation to which only George MacDonald can give existence. Though unlike much that in these days finds popular recognition, *Heather and Snow*, though only recently published in Britain, has already reached a second edition. On this continent George MacDonald has many appreciative admirers, and his new work will afford them profit and pleasure.

ESSAYS ON THE QUESTIONS OF THE DAY—SOCIAL AND POLITICAL. By Goldwin Smith, D.C.L. New York and London: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: The Copp, Clark, Co., Ltd. \$2.60, \$2.25.

In this volume we have Prof. Smith's mature and deliberate views on a number of the great social and political questions which have been for a number of years engaging the attention of the ablest thinkers and writers on both sides of the Atlantic. Some of them have appeared already, in substance at least, in Canada, United States or British periodicals, but all have now received, apparently, his final revision and last touches. The importance of the subject-matters treated of—Social and Industrial Revolution, Disestablishment, the Empire, Woman Suffrage, the Jewish Question, the Irish Question, Prohibition, etc., etc.—the close, thoughtful and critical attention the author is known to have devoted to them for years, and his exceptional power of lucid, brilliant and fascinating presentation of facts and opinions, should make this volume unusually acceptable to everyone interested in the great problems of civilization and humanity that are now demanding practical solution.